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March
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April
Focus: Client Education
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October
Focus: Legal Translating/Interpreting
Submission Deadline: August 1

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

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.

- **Business Owners Insurance**
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  cjones@hayscompanies.com or
  lmccormick@hayscompanies.com
  http://ata.haysaffinity.com

- **Collection Services/Receivables Management**
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  Mike Horoski
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  (484) 242-7226
  Horoskim@dnb.com

- **Credit Card Acceptance Program/Professional Services Account**
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  (800) 325-7000
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  cjones@hayscompanies.com
  http://ata.haysaffinity.com

- **Retirement Programs**
  Washington Pension Center
  (888) 817-7877 • (301) 941-9179

- **Website Development**
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  radtown@atanet.org
  www.atanet.org/radtown

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

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Fax (703) 683-8122 • Chronicle@atanet.org
33 A 10-year Retrospective on a Distance Revision Course: Most Frequent Translation Problems (Part I)
By Leandro Wolfson, Translated by Alicia Marshall
Since 1995, the Distance Translation Revision Workshop for English-to-Spanish translators has been implemented with great success. The following describes how the workshop came about and summarizes some of the most frequent translation difficulties encountered by participants through the years.

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ATA Financial Translation and Interpreting Conference
April 29—May 1, 2005
Jersey City, New Jersey

ATA will hold its Financial Translation and Interpreting Conference, April 29—May 1, 2005, in Jersey City, New Jersey.

This three-day conference will target practicing financial translators and interpreters seeking advanced-level training. A combination of non-language-specific sessions presented in English and language-specific sessions will be offered.

More details available soon!

Visit us on the web at www.atanet.org

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Requests for permission to reprint articles should be sent to the Chronicle editor at jeff@atanet.org.
About Our Authors...

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Alan Dages has been a full-time freelance translator of French and Spanish into English for 11 years. He is an ATA-certified French→English translator specializing in financial, accounting, and legal topics, mainly for translation companies in the U.S. and Europe and a few direct clients. He currently serves as treasurer of the Delaware Valley Translators Association (www.fortunecity.de/lindenpark/kuenstler/59/dvta.htm). He also leads the Delaware Translators Network, a group of some nine translators and interpreters who meet every month for lunch to discuss business and other topics. Contact: rightword33@cs.com.

Keiran J. Dunne, an assistant professor at Kent State University, holds a Ph.D. in French civilization from the Pennsylvania State University, as well as a D.E.A. from the Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg and a maîtrise from the Université de Haute-Bretagne/Rennes II in France. He has extensive experience as an English→French localization subcontractor for Fortune 500 companies and other corporate clients, and draws upon this experience in his courses at Kent State. His primary research interests are localization and project management. He is currently editing a volume on issues in localization for the ATA Scholarly Monograph Series. Contact: kdunne@kent.edu.

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Alicia Tavares Mascarenhas is a Portuguese teacher, translator, and localizer. She also teaches localization at the University of Quebec in Outaouais. She holds a degree in French language and literature and is pursuing a master’s degree in education. Contact: alicetm@sympatico.ca or alicie.tavares-mascarenhas@uqo.ca.

Alicia S. V. Marshall, an ATA-certified English→Spanish translator, is cofounder of TIP-Lab, an organization that created and has coordinated for the past 10 consecutive years the Distance Translation/Revision Workshop for Spanish translators who reside in the U.S. (with Leandro Wolfson as the reviewer). She retired as the supervisor of Spanish Translation of Rotary International in Evanston, Illinois, in June 2003, after almost 18 years of service. She is one of the founders and the first administrator of ATA’s Spanish Language Division. She has published numerous articles and translations of articles on translation and terminology in the *ATA Chronicle* and other professional journals. Contact: aliciamarshall@comcast.net.

Caitlin Walsh is a freelance translator living and working in the suburbs of Seattle, Washington. She’s been around long enough to remember typewriters, which only makes her appreciate word processing all the more. Not above using her own children as marketing material, she can be found trolling the hallways at ATA events and shamelessly promoting the ATA 2005 Annual Conference in Seattle. Contact: cwalsh@nwlink.com.

Leandro Wolfson is an Argentine scientific and literary translator. He has translated over 180 books and numerous articles for specialized journals, mostly in the field of social sciences. He has also translated a selection of poems from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, with notes and comments (2nd edition, 2002). Since 1995, he has been conducting distance translation/revision workshops for Spanish translators who reside in the U.S. and other countries. In his home country, he teaches the Spanish translation workshops called “El Placer de Traducir” (The Joy of Translating), and has authored many articles on translation. Contact: leandrow@arnet.com.ar.
ATA Awards Prestigious National Literary Prize
to American-Canadian Poet

The ATA has awarded the 2004 Lewis Galantière Award to Roger Greenwald of the University of Toronto for his translation from the Norwegian of *North in the World: Selected Poems of Rolf Jacobsen* (University of Chicago Press). Greenwald also edited the work.

The Lewis Galantière Award, founded in 1982 to honor the work of a charter member of ATA who translated many important writers between the two world wars, is given biennially for a distinguished literary translation into English from any language other than German.

The award was presented October 15th at a special ceremony at ATA’s Annual Conference in Toronto. This year’s award carried a $1,000 honorarium.

“It’s been said that writers create national literature, but it is translators who create international literature,” said ATA President Scott Brennan. “The Lewis Galantière Award recognizes the best in this tradition.”

The judges agreed. One wrote: “The poems are knockouts. Jacobsen is in the same league with poets such as Milosz, Herbert, Szymborska, Mandelstam, Pasternak, and Akhmatova. This book has been a very happy discovery for me. The translations function perfectly as English poems in their own right.” Another judge noted, “Jacobsen was one of Norway’s foremost poets, and this work offers an English-speaking public a wide selection of some of his finest work in an updated form. Greenwald’s consultations with Jacobsen also lend this work an authority that, since Jacobsen’s death, will be absent from other editions.”

*North in the World* presents 121 poems by Rolf Jacobsen in English and Norwegian on facing pages, as well as an introduction and notes supplied by the translator. Rolf Jacobsen (1907-1994) has been called “one of the West’s greatest twentieth-century poets, who may be ranked on a par with Auden, Eliot, and Montale” (David McDuff, *Stand Magazine*). *North in the World* is the fruit of 20 years’ engagement with Jacobsen’s poetry by Greenwald.

Roger Greenwald attended The City College of New York and the St. Marks in the Bouwerie Poetry Project workshop, and earned graduate degrees at the University of Toronto. He has won two CBC Literary Awards for his own writing, as well as numerous awards in the U.S. and Canada for his translations. He has published one book of poems, *Connecting Flight*, and several volumes of poetry in translation, most recently *Through Naked Branches: Selected Poems of Tarjei Vesaas*, which was a finalist in the U.S. for the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation.

Roger Greenwald is currently a senior lecturer and director of the Writing Centre at Innis College in the University of Toronto.
The ATA Board of Directors held its last meeting of the year, October 16-17. The meeting was held in conjunction with the ATA 45th Annual Conference in Toronto. Here are some highlights from the meeting:

Ad Hoc Internal Communications and Governance Committees. The Board approved establishing two ad hoc committees to review ATA’s internal communications and governance practices and procedures and to offer recommendations to enhance them. Director Beatriz Bonnet will chair the Ad Hoc Internal Communications Committee. Secretary Alan Melby will chair the Ad Hoc Governance Committee. Both committees will report back to the Board throughout the year. The committees will be disestablished following the end of the November 2005 Board meeting unless a motion is presented and passed during that meeting to continue the existence of the committee(s) for an additional period.

Divisions. The Board was updated on efforts to establish financial guidelines for divisions. In addition, the Board approved a proposal to support the Japanese Language Division’s participation in the 16th International Japanese-English Translation Conference to be held in Chicago next year (www.jat.org/ijet). ATA President Scott Brennan is scheduled to speak at the conference.

Certification. ATA Certification Committee Chair Lilian Novas Van Vranken updated the Board on the committee’s activities, including efforts to replace Deputy Committee Chair Celia Bohannon, who is retiring in May 2005. Related, the Board approved a proposal to fund a grader trainer for the Certification Program. More on this position will be advertised once it is set.

Dispute Resolution. The Board discussed mediation and arbitration options available through the American Arbitration Association. The Board subsequently approved a proposal to examine procedures and institutions for resolving business disputes between members, including but not limited to external arbitration services and conflict resolution procedures.

Member feedback. Board members shared comments they heard from members throughout the conference. These comments will be incorporated into planning for next year’s ATA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, November 9-12.

The minutes of the meeting will be posted in the Members Only section of ATA’s website (www.atanet.org/membersonly). Past meeting minutes are also posted on the site. The next Board meeting is set for January 29-30. (The site is to be determined.) As always, the meeting is open to all members of the ATA.

ATA Election Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director (three-year term)</th>
<th>Director (one-year term)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Three to elect</td>
<td>One to elect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Croese: 219</td>
<td>Beatriz Bonnet: 514</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicholas Hartmann: 516</td>
<td>Steven Hanley: 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothee Racette: 450</td>
<td>J. Henry Phillips: 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Roder: 271</td>
<td>Robert Sette: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Sette: 264</td>
<td>Lilian Clementi: 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Hanley: 81</td>
<td>Jost O. Zetsche: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beatriz Bonnet: 1</td>
<td>Robert Croese: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis M. Quesada: 1</td>
<td>Dorothee Racette: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Ennis: 1</td>
<td>Timothy Yuan: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jost O. Zetsche: 1</td>
<td>Nicholas Hartmann: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lilian Novas Van Vranken: 1</td>
<td>Laura Wolfson: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spoiled ballots: 0</td>
<td>Spoiled ballots: 0</td>
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James Lochrie, Inspector of Elections
October 14, 2004
Who: Ines Swaney is a freelance translator based in Oakland, California. Originally from Venezuela, she has lived in the U.S. more than half her life. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from U.C. Berkeley and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from the California College of the Arts. She is an ATA-certified English→Spanish translator. Ines enjoys wearing different hats: a court interpreter certified in California since 1979; a certified federal court interpreter since 1980; and a conference interpreter since 1980. She’s also been active as voiceover talent in various fields for the past decade.

Where: My work changes with the seasons. This being an election year, I’m currently working on mountains of election-related materials that need to be translated into Spanish for voters who request documentation in this language. This makes me one of the best informed voters in the area. When translation work is slower, I become a more active interpreter. Conference interpreting, court, depositions, jail visits, and community meetings are just some of the examples of where my services are needed.

How: As a member of ATA’s Spanish Language Division, I’ve been writing the column “Anecdolines” for Intercambios, the SPD newsletter, which gives me an outlet for one of my passions: collecting tips and anecdotes on all facets of my work. These often turn out to be eye-openers when shared with colleagues for the benefit of our profession. I plan to continue writing my column, since I know it counts toward ATA’s continuing education requirement. The fact that I’m an active court interpreter in California means that I must earn CIMCE (Court Interpreter Minimum Continuing Education) points in order to maintain my state certification. These points also count toward ATA’s continuing education requirement. My memberships in the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, the Northern California Translators Association, and ATA will also add to the 20 continuing education points I must earn over a three-year period. Occasionally, I wear yet another hat: I’m also a CIMCE provider—in other words, an instructor. Some years ago, I developed a workshop entitled “Improvisation Techniques for Interpreters,” which I’ve taught not only in California, but also in Seattle and Mexico City. Later, with a colleague, we developed another workshop: “Depositions and Other Civil Matters.” Both of these are approved by the Judicial Council of California. So when I teach, I also earn a limited number of points toward my ATA-required total.

For many years now, I’ve been attending ATA annual conferences. I’ve also attended two ATA professional development seminars offered in my area: one on legal interpreting and translating (San Francisco) and another on the entertainment industry (Los Angeles). Both of these relate to my work as an interpreter and voiceover talent. I look forward to attending other professional development seminars in the future.

Being self-employed, my schedule is in constant flux. Last November, about to board my return flight from Phoenix to Oakland after the ATA conference, I learned that my flight was overbooked and was given a voucher valid for a year. Fortunately, this year’s conference was in Toronto in

Continued on p.32
ATA 2005 German Translation Award—
Call for Nominations

The American Translators Association invites nominations for the 2005 Ungar German Translation Award. This award is bestowed biennially in odd-numbered years for a distinguished literary translation from German into English published in the United States. (The Lewis Galantière Translation Award for translations from any language except German is awarded in even-numbered years.)

Eligibility for the award, to be presented at the ATA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, in November 2005, includes a published translation that has been translated from German into English and published in the United States in 2003 or 2004.

The published translation must list the translator's name on the title page and preferably on the dust jacket. Preference will be given to published works that provide biographical information about the translator. The translator need not be an ATA member, however, the translator should have a strong connection with the U.S. through citizenship or permanent residence. The nomination must be submitted by the publisher of the translated work.

The nomination must include:
- a cover letter with complete publication information for the work being nominated,
- a brief vita of the translator,
- at least two copies of the nominated work with one extra copy of the dust jacket,
- two copies of at least 10 consecutive pages from the original work, keyed to the page numbers of the translation (this item is essential!), and
- two copies of the translated pages that correspond to the 10 consecutive pages provided from the original work.

Nomination Deadline: May 15, 2005. Publishers are encouraged to submit nominations early!

Award: $1,000, a certificate of recognition, and up to $500 toward expenses for attending the ATA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, November 9-12, 2005.

Please send your nominations to:
Marilyn Gaddis Rose, Chair, ATA Honors & Awards Committee
American Translators Association
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590
Alexandria VA 22314
Phone: (703) 683-6100, Fax: (703) 683-6122, Email: ata@atanet.org

ATA Annual Conference Sites and Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Seattle, Washington</td>
<td>November 9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
<td>November 2-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Miami, Florida</td>
<td>October 31 - November 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Help make an ATA association health plan a reality

ATA sent this letter to all 100 incoming U.S. senators, urging them to vote for legislation that would allow ATA to offer you affordable, quality health insurance. The bill has passed the House and is pending in the Senate (http://sbc.senate.gov/108bills/s.545text.pdf). A letter of thanks also went to the bill’s current sponsors.

You can help. Write or call your senators and ask them to support S.545. For more information on Association Health Plans, visit www.ahpsnow.com.

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November 12, 2004

The Honorable William H. Frist
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Frist:

I am writing on behalf of the American Translators Association and its 9,000 translators, interpreters, and others in the United States language industry, to urge you to support Senate bill S.545, which would amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to allow the creation of Association Health Plans.¹

Our nation’s professional translators and interpreters are a vital resource, crucial to success in today’s global economy. Most are self-employed, small business owners, or employed in small businesses. Passage of the bill would enable the American Translators Association to offer them Fortune 500-style health benefits now enjoyed by workers in corporate and labor union health plans. Our nation’s translators and interpreters have told me loud and clear that affordable healthcare is one of the greatest challenges they face in running their businesses.

Thank you for your time and support on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Scott Brennan
President

¹ http://sbc.senate.gov/108bills/s.545text.pdf
ATA Professional Development Seminar: The Business of Translation and Interpreting

By Caitilin Walsh

The question begs itself: why would an experienced freelance translator want to attend a seminar on a subject that she already knows well? Indeed, I’ve worked at home for years (like Eta Trabing) and have effectively targeted my market segment (à la Beatriz Bonnet), and I’ve even taught similar subject material. I’ve been through both the school of hard knocks as well as Courtney Searls-Ridge’s workshop on contracts, and, having worn a project manager’s hat before, I’d like to think I have a pretty good notion of how a translation company works (like Leah Ruggiero). So why go?

Well, to begin with, I am human, by definition imperfect. I not only welcome the chance for continuing education, but am excited at the prospect of it. I admit to having maxed out my ATA continuing education points for the year—before the annual conference. I also look forward to any chance to connect with colleagues, a direct result of my hermit-like tendencies common to our profession. But the deal clincher for attending the latest professional development seminar (The Business of Translation and Interpreting in Seattle, Washington) was ATA’s reputation for top-notch educational sessions—and this one was right in my backyard!

The Translation Company Unveiled

Like many freelancers, I started as a lowly project manager at a small translation company that was, frankly, uninterested in quality or value-added services. The first seminar presenter, Leah Ruggiero, turned out to be an embodiment of the maturation of the industry—a senior project manager at a translation company with a reputation for quality, with systems to support and streamline her work, and processes that add real value to the end product. Part of a team at Eriksen Translations in Brooklyn, she considers her work gratifying, especially when it comes to serving the minority populations in New York City.

But the more things change, the more they stay the same. Leah’s work consists of reviewing resumes, trying to find just the right translator for the project, and keeping the project on track. If you can make her life easier, you will be called frequently.

“…We would be fools to think that since we’ve been doing something for a long time that nothing has changed, and that we have nothing to learn…”

It all begins with the resume, and on this subject Leah made herself clear: no more paper! Leah explained that translators can use the Eriksen website to complete a vendor registration form and upload a resume (MS Word is the lingua franca). This puts a freelancer directly into their system, allowing Leah to find you when she needs you. She noted that cold-callers are also referred to this system—so, why not go there first? As for the resume itself, she appreciates short, accessible resumes that are kept up-to-date (this is very important for ongoing clients). A great tip: if English isn’t your native language, ask at least four native-English colleagues to review your resume before you send it out.

One of the most revealing insights Leah gave us concerned the daily use of Eriksen’s proprietary vendor database. Once a vendor’s name is in the database, it serves as a collective memory for the agency. While Leah confessed to posting sticky notes with eligible “bachelor” translators on her monitor, she told us that she uses the database to find both established and new vendors for projects that come across her desk. Eriksen also uses a subjective system whereby vendors are evaluated not only on the quality of the product they provide, but also on how smoothly things went. Tests and samples, or a smaller “real” project, may also be used by Eriksen for evaluation purposes, and the company often invites input from trusted peer reviewers. In addition, project managers are encouraged to comment in the system about how easy a person was to work with. Leah correctly noted that project managers are often short-lived, and these comments will preserve the relationship between the company and vendor, which is a benefit to both parties.

Leah also touched on parts of Eriksen’s standard vendor contract. Again, the song isn’t new: contracts protect both parties by pointing out the independent contractor relationship, and confidentiality is expected. She reminded us that subcontracting work to other translators and direct communication with the client should only occur with prior approval from the translation company. Leah got to be the first of the four speakers to tell us that it’s not okay to steal a client from a translation company. She also encouraged us to respect deadlines and the formatting requirements of a job.

She closed her talk by equating freelancers to individual project managers—we must be adept at managing our time, knowing our limits, and saying no if we need to.

Contracts and the Freelance Interpreter and Translator

Courtney Searls-Ridge was up next, presenting her classic contracts
workshop. Usually a four-hour workshop, the two-hours allotted on the schedule allowed for an overview of the subject and for participants to gather additional materials and references to follow up with.

Courtney delved into what a contract was, namely, a bargained exchange for some legally valuable consideration. She reminded us of a contract’s four elements: offer (often a simple phone call); acceptance (you say “yes”); consideration (often payment, sometimes credit); and prerequisites (you must be legally able to enter into a contract, and the contract cannot require an activity that is illegal). These elements must all be present for a contract to exist. In fact, a piece of paper isn’t necessary, but an agreement in writing can be quite useful when misunderstandings arise.

One of the best aspects of this workshop, which I have now heard on three separate occasions, is that Courtney is not trying to deal with absolutes. Do you absolutely need a written contract? It depends. Is it a long-term agreement? Is there a great deal at stake? Do you trust the person? Where a contract might be intimidating, perhaps a quick note of understanding might do the trick. Trust your gut.

Courtney has a background in the world of publishing, and talked at length about the many concerns that arise when a translation is to be published in book form. While many of these considerations are applicable for any freelance job, there is a permanence and public aspect to published works. As expected, much of what a contract deals with is consideration, which in most instances translates into payment (though book translators often deal with credit).

Contracts can also deal with many eventualities. However, Courtney reminded us that a contract that tries to deal with every eventuality can quickly become overly long and cumbersome. If you have certain concerns you want to have addressed, put them in writing. However, don’t be surprised when the client proposes language to protect their interests.

If you were looking for pat answers to questions about contracts, this wasn’t the place to get them. Instead, we got guidelines. Read everything carefully. Ask yourself if you are comfortable with something. Have a clearly articulated argument prepared to back up your requests for changes. And the biggest one: trust your intuition. You are the one who knows your comfort level, your abilities, and your business best.

Not that Courtney only stuck to theory. The session packet contained numerous concrete examples of good and bad contracts. She even left space in her handouts for us to write down our action plans. A few people shared which of her suggestions hit home, and which techniques they were likely to implement. Indeed, this “old dog” came away with no less than three new action items.

Market Segments and How to Pursue Them

Beatriz Bonnet examined the segments of our industry, and what a variety it revealed! She started at a very basic level (written or oral?), moving on through the types of clientèle and industry demands. Drilling down through different types of translation, localization, voice work, layout, interpreting, and other linguistic services, she pointed out the different skill sets that are needed for each type of work. Clearly, anyone who claims to “do it all” is either a linguistic Superman or deluded.

So how do you decide which of these numerous market segments to pursue? Beatriz pointed out it’s about knowing yourself. Your knowledge of your personal and professional strengths and weaknesses will determine the best fit for you. With a caveat that all generalities are (some-what) false, she noted the classic example of personality type differences between translators and interpreters: the one introverted and detail-oriented, the other extroverted and conceptual.

With years of personal experience in conference interpreting and translation company management, Beatriz provided us with valuable insights on the different kinds of documents and situations that might present themselves to translators and interpreters in various fields. Personal anecdotes served to drive points home as well as entertain. Only after a thorough overview of the market segments did we delve into marketing strategies. Once again, the resume (electronic only, please!) was key, with an emphasis on getting it to the right person.

She also reminded us of one lesson I struggled with as a newcomer: when you answer the phone, smile! The person on the other end of the line really can tell, and the warmth in your voice will set the tone for the conversation. Beatriz’s words reiterated what Leah Ruggiero had told us earlier, reminding us that people do business with people they like. Beatriz adores the “translator hero,” that rare soul who answers the phone with a friendly greeting, is professional in all aspects, and delivers top-notch work—ahead of the deadline!

The presentation pulled together ideas on how to target specific areas, including an enumeration of what works and what doesn’t. Volunteerism was cited as a terrific way to do a good deed and gain exposure for yourself as well.

Beatriz emphasized that
keeping your objectives in mind should keep you on track. You need confidence, but remember that just because you think you are wonderful doesn’t mean that you are entitled to a job—you need to earn it. Run a business, market your strengths consistently, and be a translator hero. Love what you do, and the money will follow.

**Running Your Translation/Interpreting Business Out of Your Home**

Placed in the unenviable position of addressing a room of tired, overheated, hungry folks while trying to keep the day from running too long, Eta Trabing gave us her opinions in a straightforward and entertaining talk. The session title says it all—it’s not about working at home, but running your business out of your home. She gave us numerous pointers on keeping that businesslike attitude in spite of our workplace’s proximity to the rest of our lives.

A brief overview of how to get started kicked things off, and much of what she said echoed Beatriz’s advice for choosing a market to pursue. (Indeed, Eta was Beatriz’s mentor once upon a time.) Good advice abounded: don’t try to do housework; don’t let your toddler/dog/elderly parent answer the phone; close the office door; and for heaven’s sake, choose a type of work that you enjoy and are good at! And always remember that this is a business, not a hobby!

Eta provided us with a quick overview of the legal and tax ramifications of self-employment at home, then moved on to an overview of finding your niche: translating or interpreting? What about a specialty? She emphasized improving your skills—she personally tries to learn three new words every day (if she gets more than that in one day, she can take a day off!). Tips on marketing yourselves were given, and ethics were touched upon: she likened stealing clients from a translation company to stealing a good babysitter.

Discipline in managing time was discussed, as well as the physical necessities of a home office. She dealt with estimating cost and quotes for jobs, with a special emphasis on quality control—a fancy way of saying you mustn’t get so comfortable that your work gets sloppy.

The translator-client relationship merited special treatment, reminding us once again that you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar. Then came the list of musts: you must accept criticism as constructive; you must turn out a good product; and you must enjoy yourself. Your career should not be a nuisance! With the clock running out, Eta delved into some of the nitty-gritty: bookkeeping and taxes (save 33% of your income for taxes); record-keeping (not in a shoebox!); and filing systems (back everything up).

Lest these subjects sound horribly dry, let me assure you that Eta brought concise information in a refreshingly opinionated and delightful way.

**Lunch and Networking Session**

Now why write about the free time? That’s not part of the seminar! Ah, but yes it is. A wise man once told me that it’s the breaks where things happen. This is where you make personal connections, which remain the single best way to get work. It’s the time where we can decompress and (re-)connect with our colleagues, take a stroll to enjoy the scenery, and enjoy a chat with the friendly bookseller, Freek Lankhof of InTrans Book Service (it wouldn’t be an ATA event without him!). In fact, delays due to facility issues gave us all an extra opportunity to mill around and meet some of the new faces.

Due to the lateness of the hour, many folks disappeared right after the final session, but by doing so they missed a time to chat with the speakers and other attendees. Spouses also emerged from the woodwork and lent a collegial atmosphere, aided and abetted by an energetic Marian Greenfield, ATA’s Professional Development Chair and seminar organizer, plying speakers with liquor. This is the time to share a laugh about the client from hell, with people who get it.

Seattle is slated as the venue for ATA’s 46th Annual Conference in 2005, so this seminar served as a sneak preview of sorts. On this occasion, the weather cooperated, and the ample lunch break gave us a chance to get out of the hotel and enjoy puffy clouds over scenic Elliott Bay. Attendees appreciated the list of nearby restaurants compiled by the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (www.notisnet.org). All this bodes well for a great conference experience. We do hope to see you here in 2005!

**Conclusion**

Like ballet dancers and other professionals who must make a constant effort to improve their skills, it does no harm to take a class in the basics. We would be fools to think that since we’ve been doing something for a long time that nothing has changed; and that we have nothing to learn. The fact that all four speakers reiterated ethics considerations and a positive attitude sends a clear signal to us all. I also note that the growth of...
Putting the “Professional” in Professional Translation

By Keiran J. Dunne

The ISO 9000 standard, widely accepted and implemented in industry worldwide, has established the notion that quality must be defined in terms of individual customer satisfaction. But just who is the “customer” in the agency-subcontractor relationship? In the larger scheme of things, the answer, of course, is neither. In fact, the agency and freelancer are both subcontractors performing professional services on behalf of the client. As such, both are responsible for satisfying the client’s quality specifications.

This contextually determined definition of quality poses a twofold problem to agencies and subcontractors. On one hand, outsourcing shifts the quality assurance burden from the client down the subcontracting chain to the agency, and ultimately to individual subcontractors. On the other hand, many clients fail to provide clear quality standards, metrics, or benchmarks; they simply expect “quality,” whatever that might be. When performing work for such clients, both the agency and the subcontractor risk being held accountable to quality standards that have been neither defined nor communicated to the project team(s). Moreover, many small businesses and middle market companies have no in-house reviewer. Instead, they subcontract “client” review to an external subcontractor or to an in-country distributor, whose notions of “quality” may be fundamentally different from those of the agency and the translation team.

Clearly it is in the best interests of all involved to avoid a Rorschach-test approach to translation in which each project participant interprets “quality” differently. Because quality is whatever the client wants, it is absolutely critical that the agency ask all the necessary questions to uncover and identify the client’s specific quality needs and expectations prior to commencing the project. These expectations must then be provided to the subcontractor(s) involved in the project in the form of clear and explicit guidelines in all relevant quality assurance areas (target locale, terminology, style, punctuation, document layout, date/time/currency format, and so forth).

“…By cooperating closely and taking a proactive approach to quality, agencies and subcontractors can forge strong working ties and optimize their relationship for ultimate client satisfaction…”

From the agency’s point of view, quality is defined first and foremost in terms of linguistic excellence. Translation quality is the Achilles heel of any multilingual services provider. Because the agency depends on individual subcontractors to provide this quality, it can only be as good as the freelancers with whom it works. From the agency’s perspective, quality presupposes accurate translation, as well as the use of consistent tone, style, and terminology appropriate for the target audience throughout the target text. If quality is not present in the product after the translation stage, it is much more difficult to get it back in later. In an era of downward price pressures and post-Enron budgetary scrutiny, translation expertise is arguably more sought-after than ever by agencies (although, unfortunately, strong demand does not necessarily translate into higher rates).

In order to optimize quality, agencies seek to work with translation subcontractors who possess solid linguistic skills as well as advanced translation competence, and who are true specialists with extensive subject-matter expertise in a limited number of vertical market segments. A vast amount of conceptual, factual, and terminological knowledge is necessary to be considered a subject-matter expert, so agencies will greet with great skepticism claims that an individual possesses true expertise in numerous vertical markets. Likewise, excellent research skills are highly prized by agencies. The better the translator’s research skills, the fewer queries she or he will submit (and, thus, the less time the agency will need to spend obtaining responses thereto from the client), and the more equipped she or he will be to justify stylistic and terminological choices in the event of negative feedback from the client.

All things being equal, agencies may well prefer to work with independent contractors who possess formal translation credentials, such as ATA certification, a university degree in translation (i.e., the M.A. in Translation offered by Kent State University or the Monterey Institute of International Studies), or a specialized certificate in translation, such as those offered by the New York University Continuing Education program. Although not a guarantee of quality, such credentials do demonstrate a certain commitment to professional development. Nevertheless, formal credentials should not be viewed as a means to an end, either by the agency or the freelancer.
Putting the “Professional” in Professional Translation Continued

The agency should have a system for objectively evaluating the performance of linguists, along the lines of the ATA evaluation framework or the quality assurance model of the Localisation Industry Standards Association (www.lisa.org). Freelancers, on the other hand, should devise and implement concrete strategies for ongoing language and subject matter development. Such strategies may take the form of regular, sustained reading of professional periodicals and publications, periodic attendance at conferences in one’s field of expertise, as well as specialized coursework or seminars.1 Perhaps the widest gap in the agency-subcontractor relationship is the one that separates the agency’s technological needs and expectations from the actual skill set of the average translation subcontractor. The average freelance translator conceives of market demand in terms of translation, editing, and proofreading. However, over the past decade or so, the rapid spread of the PC and the World Wide Web has facilitated the global expansion of corporations large and small. This, in turn, has fueled an explosive demand for the translation of materials in an ever-increasing variety of media and formats, including not only “classic” printed documents, but also software, websites, video games, online tutorials and media presentations, mobile devices, and so forth. In response to the rapid growth in translation demand, new translation-related technologies have arisen to help maintain productivity and profit margins, provide for reusability, and enable large-scale terminological control.

Downward price pressures and the need to continuously do more quicker and for less have confirmed and reinforced the convergence of translation and technology, transforming computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools from a competitive advantage into a necessity. Indeed, the market to a large extent now expects subcontractors to be proficient in the use of CAT tools. Moreover, most agencies would love to see independent contractors expand their offerings to include a wider array of specialized services such as localization (L10n), multilingual desktop publishing (DTP), functional testing of localized software and help, terminology mining and glossary compilation, and support for multiple platforms (Windows, Mac, etc.), among others. However, demand for subcontractors proficient in the use of CAT, L10n, and DTP tools continues to outstrip the supply;2 and even proactive freelancers can have difficulty keeping up with the rapid evolution of translation technologies and tools.

The wider the range of services independent subcontractors can provide and bundle into the package they offer to potential agency clients, the greater the number of potential revenue streams those subcontractors will have. Nevertheless, merely owning a tool is not sufficient for one to claim proficiency in its use. Indeed, independent subcontractors offer arguably the greatest value to the agency when they are self-reliant and able to troubleshoot problems commonly encountered when using specialized tools or working in complex file formats.

Regardless of one’s degree of technological proficiency, the following golden rules should be followed religiously during technology-intensive translation or localization projects:

1. If unsure how to carry out a given procedure, ask for guidance;

2. If unsure whether a given string, footnote, etc., requires translation, request feedback;

3. Whenever submitting queries, indicate as precisely as possible the location of the element in question (file name, page number, context, string ID, etc.) and include a screen shot to facilitate resolution. Queries must be actionable;

4. Do not ever make assumptions; if in doubt about anything, always request feedback. If circumstances leave no alternative but to make assumptions (in the absence of timely responses to client queries, for example), note them in a log to enable remediation.

The independent contractor’s critical perspective and analysis of the source materials is another important component of the agency’s translation quality assurance process. The translator must ask as many questions as necessary to resolve ambiguities and ensure full comprehension of the source text, especially when working on poorly written or even nonsensical source materials, which are an all-too-frequent problem with clients who do not employ a dedicated staff of technical writers. Nonnative speakers may be hesitant to raise questions or critique the source text for fear that a large number of queries may raise questions about their language ability. However, the source-language materials may well contain terminological inconsistencies, ambiguous turns of phrase, cut-and-paste errors, bits and pieces of text from different versions, or worse. If the source-language materials have not been subjected to a rigorous quality control check, no one involved in the project on the client or agency side may even be aware of these problems.

This situation provides agencies and subcontractors with an opportunity to provide additional value to the
client. Given the proper critical stance toward source materials, translation can function as another global quality control pass. To the extent that it is feasible to do so, the team should systematically document any terminological inconsistencies, typos, errors, functional problems, etc., and submit this error log to the agency, which can then forward it to the client. In the case of localization projects, translators are perhaps the only people who will ever see the full set of textual material in its entirety. As such, they are uniquely positioned to identify errors, inconsistencies, and provide feedback about overall coherence. Such feedback offers substantial value to the client (the question as to whether or not the client will act upon such feedback is another matter) and clearly demonstrates a strong commitment to quality on the part of both the agency and the subcontractor.

Perspective is also important to the agency in order to ensure that the best people are always chosen for a particular project, and vice versa. From the agency’s standpoint, it is critical that subcontractors objectively recognize their strengths and weaknesses, that they not commit to more words per day than they can reasonably expect to accomplish, and that they not pursue projects in fields about which they possess insufficient knowledge. Freelancers who bite off more than they can chew may jeopardize the success of a project, and by extension, the relationship between the agency and the client. Conversely, freelancers who stick to what they do best, who always deliver on time, and who always provide excellent quality will likely become key members of the agency’s team (assuming consistent demand, of course). Similarly, agencies greatly appreciate subcontractors who are willing to be flexible with regard to timelines and who are willing to negotiate discounted rates for high-volume projects.

Agencies also harbor a certain number of expectations with regard to professionalism and due diligence. Given the time pressures to which projects are frequently subjected, timely acknowledgment of and response to communications is highly valued, as is prompt acceptance or refusal of project offers. It is the subcontractors’ responsibility to check all receivables against the project offer, to confirm that they have everything they need to work on the project prior to commencing it, and to ask all general project-related questions up front. It is expected that the independent contractor will follow directions (although experience suggests that this cannot be taken for granted), and will adhere to the style guidelines and glossary (if provided). The subcontractor should provide feedback about obvious errors, but should not make preferential changes to approved terminology. Likewise, files should not be renamed except as stipulated in the project offer. (Imagine that you’re managing a translation project in five languages that includes 120 files; would you want to rename 600 files?!) After completing the project, the subcontractor should perform his or her own quality control check by reading attentively for typos and other errors, verifying formatting and punctuation, and spell-checking the work. Finally, before submitting the files to the agency, the freelancer should verify that the deliverable(s) being submitted correspond exactly to the file(s) requested. It is also advisable to check compressed archives for corruption and to scan for viruses before submitting via e-mail, FTP, or HTTP upload. And perhaps most importantly, after accepting a project, the freelancer must always deliver on time, except, of course, when emergencies occur that make timely completion impossible. In such cases, the worst thing the subcontractor can do is to fail to notify the agency that she or he will be unable to meet the deadline. Honesty and open communication between the agency and subcontractor are essential.

Finally, tacit risk management expectations are held by many agencies, which, we would argue, few independent contractors are in a position to fulfill. Agencies expect that freelancers have a reliable computer and Internet connection, as well as a dependable e-mail account that allows them to send and receive large attachments. The key word in the preceding sentence is “reliable.” A reliable computer is one whose owner follows safe computing practices, which include using a firewall, running anti-virus software, updating the virus definitions daily, and, in the case of Windows users, keeping the machine up-to-date with Windows patches. In addition, agencies tacitly expect subcontractors to have a disaster recovery plan, including storage/backup of critical project files and corollary assets, such as term bases and translation memories. Freelancers should ask themselves, “if disaster struck (i.e., catastrophic hard drive failure, laptop stolen, etc.), could I still finish this project by the deadline?” If not, they should formulate and implement appropriate strategies. All possible steps should be taken to avoid a disaster, but if one occurs, the subcontractor should inform the agency as soon as possible.

In sum, dependable translators who have excellent linguistic skills, solid subject-matter expertise,
good working knowledge of the most commonly used tools, and professional work habits—chief among them always-on-time delivery and commitment to project success and client satisfaction—are the ideal vendors as far as agencies are concerned. Subcontractors who strive to meet this profile are indeed attractive potential translation partners for agencies.

Having explored quality expectations from the perspective of the agency, let us now shift our focus to that of the individual subcontractor. From the translator’s perspective, quality means translating accurately. A translation can only be as good as the source files on which it is based. In the absence of high-quality, well written, transparent source materials and/or clear directives from the client, independent translation subcontractors require explicit guidelines from the agency with regard to quality processes and expectations.

As far as the translator is concerned, perhaps the single most critical factor in overall project success and client satisfaction is the clear expression of all expectations prior to project commencement. Such expectations include rules of usage and punctuation codified in the form of a style guide for the target locale, a glossary of client-approved core terminology (or at the very least, a bilingual term list), a list of items not to be translated, information about maximum string length and expansion limits (if applicable), instructions and/or documentation from the client (if any), as well as the most current version of the corresponding translation memory (if any).

Independent subcontractors expect to receive all source files, timeline and workflow information, and supporting materials up front. In this way, they are able to most effectively set up their schedules, manage their time, and commence work immediately. It is vital that the agency not burn up valuable time on project setup just because they are busy with other projects.

Professionalism is a two-way street, so subcontractors have the perfect right to hold agencies accountable to the same standards of professionalism and due diligence that agencies demand of freelancers. Given the fact that freelancers are self-employed, timely acknowledgment of and response to communications is highly valued, as are prompt confirmation of receipt of deliverables and timely payment for services rendered. Since translation quality—provided by the independent contractor—is the agency’s lifeblood, an agency that fails to pay subcontractors promptly is biting the proverbial hand that feeds it, and risks damaging its professional reputation among the freelancer community.

With regard to payment, freelancers consider it unreasonable for agencies to expect free work, even for 100% matches using a CAT or localization tool. If agencies want 100% match materials to be leveraged at no external charge, then they should perform such work themselves. After all, specialized CAT and localization tools are very expensive, and learning how to use them effectively requires a substantial amount of time. Freelancers must be able to recoup the costs incurred in acquiring and mastering these tools, lest they lose the incentive to keep abreast of translation technology developments. Likewise, agencies should expect to pay higher rates for rush service, as well as for projects that require the use of expensive or highly specialized software such as DTP or computer-assisted design (CAD) applications, and so on.

Subcontractors also expect that the agency will provide a clear channel of communication to the client for submission of queries about terms, unclear sentences, and so forth. It is expected that the responses to any such queries will be provided promptly (i.e., within one business day). Likewise, prompt assistance is critical in the case of glitches with CAT and localization tools, since such problems may effectively prevent the translator from working until they are resolved.

This latter expectation may cause tensions and frustration on the agency side. Because subcontractors are not employees of the agency, the agency may not feel compelled to contribute to their professional development. However, if agencies are truly committed to fostering greater technological proficiency on the part of their key translators, they must provide them with opportunities to acquire and develop such skills by easing them into, for example, localization or DTP projects. An agency might also author Web-based demos and/or a mini-knowledge base to address basic operation and troubleshooting of certain tools.

Technological proficiency poses a chicken-and-egg dichotomy that is emblematic of a larger breakdown in the agency-subcontractor relationship: translators rarely receive feedback about their projects, except when the client is dissatisfied. This lack of feedback makes it very difficult for subcontractors to assess their performance and identify areas needing improvement. From the independent subcontractor’s point of view, it would be very useful to conduct a mutual biannual performance review with the agency in order to take stock of each party’s performance, target areas for mutual improvement, and
discuss how each party might better meet the other’s needs.

Information technology (IT) is a fruitful area in which to begin building such bridges. Indeed, many freelance translators are not sufficiently knowledgeable in desktop computing, networking, and IT security to be able to devise and implement a secure, robust backup or disaster recovery process. Independent contractors who play a central role in an agency’s success could arguably warrant a limited amount of free storage space (say, 30MB) in the form of a password-protected folder on the agency’s FTP site to facilitate backups and recovery. Likewise, the important role played by such subcontractors might well justify providing them with a free Web-based agency e-mail account (i.e., “keytranslator@translationagency.com”) that supports large attachments (5-20 MB). Such actions would not only represent positive risk management steps, but would also serve to acknowledge the value of the subcontractor’s contributions and take the relationship to a higher level. This kind of commitment is of vital importance to the freelancer. If she or he provides good quality and value, she or he must reasonably expect to be able to develop an ongoing business relationship with the agency. FTP storage and a Web-based e-mail account constitute positive steps in this direction.

In the final analysis, neither independent subcontractors nor agencies want to be held accountable for shifting or non-existent “quality” standards. The big problem is that although all clients want “quality,” not enough of them take concrete steps to achieve it. It is for precisely this reason that agencies and subcontractors must cooperate closely and take a proactive approach to quality.

Each party has a critical contribution to make to the quality process. The agency can help achieve ultimate client satisfaction by assessing the client’s needs and expectations as comprehensively as possible, by clearly and concisely communicating these needs and expectations to the translation team(s), and by facilitating the realization of these needs and expectations by all involved in the project. The independent subcontractor can help achieve ultimate client satisfaction by implementing the project quality guidelines assiduously and globally, and providing excellent translation within this quality management framework. By cooperating closely and taking a proactive approach to quality, agencies and subcontractors can forge strong working ties and optimize their relationship for ultimate client satisfaction. Ultimately, both will benefit: the happier the client, the greater the chances of repeat business.

Notes:
1. The ATA’s newly instituted continuing education requirement will help ensure that certified translators are abreast of the latest developments in their field of expertise.
2. According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s 2004-05 Occupation Outlook Handbook, translation will enjoy faster than average growth from 2002-12, with the most significant source of training being long-term on-the-job training.
3. The question of rates raises a larger issue that transcends the scope of this article: should the agency pay and the freelancer charge the same rate for: a) linguistically straightforward, high-volume projects in well-known domains for which extensive client-approved glossaries exist; and b) terminologically dense, linguistically challenging projects of more limited scope that concern unique technology for which little or no target-language reference material exists?
4. Maintaining a backup Web-based e-mail account is also advisable.
5. The Internet has taken word of mouth to a whole new level. See, for instance, the Yahoo! Group “Payment Practices,” devoted exclusively to the payment practices of translation and interpretation clients. As of October 28, 2004, this group has more than 2,350 members.
SWOT Analysis: An Effective Method for Students’ Self-assessment

By Silvana G. Chaves

In all academic disciplines, the instructor’s role is of paramount importance to guarantee a successful learning process. Yet, perhaps there are few disciplines in which close interaction between the instructor and student is as crucial as in the field of interpretation. The proof of the importance of this interactivity is the fact that most interpreting classes consist of small groups (usually no more than 10 students). Why? Because instructors must be able to observe their students closely to properly assess their mental and attitudinal assets in order to effectively help develop their interpreting skills.

Interpretation is a discipline in which objectivity and subjectivity merge to a great extent. This being a profession in which the human being is the sole vehicle of a given message, all messages will eventually be tinted with some subjectivity. Such subjectivity will inevitably be borne in the message delivered by the interpreter. Even in the case of faithful renditions, the message the audience receives will always contain something of the interpreter’s own perception of the world. Despite this, it is the instructor’s role to set up a pedagogic framework that is as objective as possible.

During an interpreting course, the instructor presents different tools and techniques. He or she teaches students the mechanics of interpreting and the various processes involved. However, even when armed with the fundamentals of the interpreter’s craft, doubt always arises among students after their first—and subsequent—interpreting booth performance. Before walking into the booth, students know what they are supposed to do. When they walk out, however, students often feel that they have done something completely different, but find it difficult to put their experience into words.

Evaluating interpreting students is a difficult task, and one for which there seems to be no set framework. When assessing the students’ performance, the instructor focuses on several factors, including: a) faithfulness to the original text; b) accuracy; c) understanding; d) oral delivery; e) vocabulary adequacy; f) intonation; and g) attitude. This task is highly demanding since instructors must not only listen to their students’ delivery objectively, contrasting it with the original text, but also attempt to analyze their students’ mental processes in order to try and understand their rationale and, if possible, the root of their difficulties and errors.

The method of evaluation may vary considerably from one instructor to another. Sometimes instructors prefer to evaluate students on a class-by-class basis, others do so only at the time of exams. Personally, I believe that students should be assessed regularly for two main reasons. First, when students know they are being observed, it puts further pressure upon them and makes the interpreting situation more real (in the professional world, they will constantly be evaluated by their audience). Second, and more importantly at this stage, frequent assessments will allow the instructor to gain a better understanding of how each student decodes and encodes information.

Once the instructor has been able to figure out each student’s frame of mind, he or she should offer guidelines to students on how to gain insight into their own thinking patterns. The instructor can learn a lot of information about students from their interpreting performance. However, there is also a great deal that will remain hidden that only the student will be able to reveal. Thus, we should teach students to look into themselves, to describe the processes they go through while interpreting (either simultaneously or consecutively), and to convey the various sensations and perceptions they experience during the process.

Very often, we hear interpreters say that they do not know what happens inside their brain while interpreting. They just do it. In fact, psycholinguistics is still trying to determine how an interpreter’s brain works. Nevertheless, encouraging students to think about the process forces them to journey into themselves, which can be of great use in solving not only technical difficulties, but also those problems associated with their attitude toward the task. Therefore, although the instructor’s assessment is essential, there is still another type of evaluation that is virtually as important: the student’s self-assessment.

Professional interpreting has to do with certain mental capabilities that must be in place for any individual to do this job. In fact, we train students in all processes involved in simultaneous interpretation, which are roughly as follows:

1. Auditory perception of a linguistic utterance which carries meaning,
Understanding the language and comprehension of the message through a process of critical analysis.

2. Immediate and deliberate discarding of the wording and retention of the mental representation of the message (concepts, ideas, etc.).

3. Production of a new utterance in the target language that meets a dual requirement: it must express the original message in its entirety, and it must be geared to the recipient.

In addition to these purely “technical capabilities,” we must help students build the “right attitude” toward their task, which hinges upon three main pillars: self-control, self-confidence, and self-criticism.

To this end, I propose to subject students to a very interesting and demanding exercise: a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). This tool has proven to be very effective in the corporate world to boost self-awareness among employees and provide them with a better understanding of their individual capabilities and limitations. The purpose of this exercise is to help students enhance their skills through a self-awareness process. The more students know about themselves and how they think, the faster they will be able to overcome their difficulties and gain self-confidence.

This exercise may be conducted in the middle of the academic year. By then, students will have gathered sufficient information about their interpreting performance. It is also an ideal time because students will still have the second half of the academic term to overcome difficulties and hone capabilities.

First, the instructor should introduce students to various types of interpreting situations. By doing so, students will learn what they are capable of when faced with the unexpected, thus providing them with much “food for thought.” For many students, this exercise will mark the first time they have been asked to assess their own abilities. Initially, some students may feel unable to describe the mental processes they go through when interpreting. Others will be able to quickly identify their strengths and weaknesses, but may still find it difficult to pinpoint any threats or opportunities for further improvement.

A SWOT Analysis should be presented to students as a framework for analyzing their strengths and weaknesses, as well as for assessing the opportunities and threats they face. This will help them focus on their strengths, minimize weaknesses, and teach them to take the greatest possible advantage of available opportunities to improve their skills. Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating, both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done and in putting problems into perspective.

This analysis may be conducted orally in class. However, it should only serve as the springboard for further in-depth self-analysis. Students should be encouraged to prepare their own SWOT reports to submit to the instructor. The instructor should keep such reports and revisit them by year-end to assess each student’s actual progress.

Why Use this Tool?

As previously mentioned, the SWOT Analysis is a very effective way of identifying our strengths and weaknesses, and of examining the opportunities and threats we face. This type of analysis helps students focus their activities in areas where they are strong and where their greatest opportunities for improvement are located.

How to Use This Tool

To carry out a SWOT Analysis, students should write down answers to the questions below.

SWOT Analysis Model

Strengths:
What advantages do you have?
What do you do well?
What relevant resources do you have access to?
What do other people see as your strengths?

Consider the answers to the above from your own point of view and from the point of view of the people you deal with (for instance, the people in your class). Don’t be modest. Be realistic. If you are having any difficulty with answering, try writing down a list of your characteristics. Hopefully, some of these will turn out to be strengths!

Weaknesses:
What could you improve?
What do you do badly?
What should you avoid?

Again, consider this from an internal and external basis. Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you do not see? Are your classmates doing any better than you in certain areas? It is best to be realistic and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities:
What good opportunities do you see for yourself?
What are the interesting trends you are aware of?
Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- The chance to do an internship at some public institution or agency.
- Spending some time in any country where your B language is the mother tongue.
- Enhancing your strengths to make them your own differentiator.
- Partnering with a classmate with whom you cannot only practice with, but also someone who you see yourself entering a professional future with at some point.

A useful approach is to look at your strengths and to ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

**Threats:**
- What obstacles do you face?
- Do you feel unable to overcome those obstacles?
- Is it taking you too long to make any progress?
- Do you feel at a standstill?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your future performance as an interpreter?

Table 1 is an example of a SWOT Analysis report submitted by two of my students attending a master’s degree course on simultaneous interpretation.

Completing the SWOT Analysis exercise allows students to learn more about themselves and to gain a clear-cut perception of their individual status as future professionals. Hopefully, a student’s level of confidence will improve as the academic year evolves, and that many of the weaknesses and threats identified early on will eventually turn into strengths and opportunities. If students complete the course with this positive learning outlook in mind, we will have succeeded in helping them build “the right attitude.”

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### Table 1: Example of Student SWOT Analysis Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (mother tongue).</td>
<td>Good short- and long-term memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have difficulty understanding accents in English/Spanish.</td>
<td>Highly committed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural background.</td>
<td>Perseverant and ready to improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay calm when under pressure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor command of Spanish (second language).</td>
<td>Get nervous easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low level of concentration.</td>
<td>Lack of self-confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence with my Spanish.</td>
<td>Poor general culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control (may seem calm on the outside, but nervous on the inside).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As I am living in Spain, I have the opportunity to turn my Spanish into a strength.</td>
<td>Improve my comprehension of different English accents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through more practice/work, my concentration will increase.</td>
<td>Turn my nervousness in the booth into positive energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A combination of these will give me more self-control and confidence.</td>
<td>Pay more attention to what happens around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of confidence in Spanish may hinder my academic development.</td>
<td>My lack of self-control is so attitudinal and is such an intrinsic part of my personality that I fear I will never be able to maintain full control of myself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Instrumental Method Applied to the Learning of Portuguese for Translation

By Marco A. Fiola and Alice Tavares Mascarenhas

The effort to unite the economies of the Americas into a single free trade area began at the Summit of the Americas, held in December 1994 in Miami, Florida. Heads of state and government of 34 countries in the region agreed to construct a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in which barriers to trade and investment would be progressively eliminated. They agreed to complete negotiations towards this agreement by 2005. As the countries involved continue to work to globalize their markets to accommodate the four official languages of the FTAA (English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese), the demand for translation services in multiple languages is estimated to grow. To meet this future demand, many FTAA countries, like Canada, are rethinking the way they educate language professionals, especially where the market for all four languages does not yet exist.

Even though Canada has a reputation for being a nation of translators (given the fact that it has two official languages, French and English), this new paradigm means that Canadian translators, translation agencies, and, consequently, Canadian universities interested in training professional translators are faced with a new challenge. Right now, Canadian businesses requiring translation services in more than one language can either recruit several translators whose language pair matches their language needs, or else hire language practitioners who can work from more than one source language.

A significant challenge in expanding language services revolves around the fact that, thus far, the Canadian translation market has been centered almost exclusively around English and French. Translators working in languages other than French and English are a rare commodity in Canada. Of course, with the impending creation of the FTAA, there is an increasing tendency to encourage language practitioners to develop an interest in a third language. So far, Spanish has been the language of choice for many seeking to develop skills in a third language, and there are even a few training programs in Canada focusing on this.

Consequently, their goal is not French or Spanish translation (especially in grammar exercises), but it does not serve translation...

Spanish→French or Spanish→English translation. However, to ensure a fair representation of the four official languages of the FTAA, Portuguese translators will be needed. This is especially important, since the demographic weight of Portuguese-speaking Brazil cannot be ignored within the FTAA.

One of the main issues now facing Canadian universities is how to motivate current translators and translation students to learn a third or fourth language when, in the current translation market, demand far exceeds supply for French and English translators (cf. Industry Canada 1999). This pattern will most likely continue for the foreseeable future until the FTAA becomes fully functional. Therefore, it is unlikely that many people would be interested in dedicating years of study to learn a language for which there is no current demand for translation. When studying this problem, many have wondered if the practice of translation requires a perfect knowledge of the source language, that is, both oral and written skills. Of course, to teach oral, writing, and reading skills in Portuguese to beginners takes time. However, as Delisle (1980: 36, 37) suggests, translators may be able to do without an oral knowledge of a language as long as they have a thorough comprehension of its written form. Since translation competence essentially rests on reading skills in the source language and writing skills in the target language, it is hard to see how the ability to speak the source language fluently would make one a more competent translator.

This observation made us at the University of Quebec in Outaouais (UQO) wonder if the methods currently used to teach foreign languages are appropriate to the needs of language practitioners. In fact, one could say that foreign-language pedagogy uses translation (especially in grammar exercises), but it does not serve translation. As such, we thought that it might be interesting to see whether it was possible to teach translators to read and understand the general context of a text in a third or a fourth language, either for their own use or else to translate into their target language for a different readership.

In Brazil, among other places, the Instrumental Method, which is used for teaching language for specific purposes based on the interpretation and comprehension of written texts, has proven effective for several decades. Students exposed to this learning method seek to gain knowledge of a foreign language that is thorough enough for them to pass comprehension exams or to use literature written in the foreign language. Consequently, their goal is not...
to reach oral fluency in that language, or even written production capability. This method emphasizes text analysis, comprehension, and the study of grammar difficulties and cultural context, excluding the study of phonetics and oral communication.

As far as we can tell, this learning method is not very well known in Canada, especially within traditional language programs which prepare would-be translation students. We believed that it would be interesting to see if it could be adapted to the teaching of Portuguese and to the needs of Canadian language practitioners. Thus, the idea of launching a pilot project to teach Portuguese through reading exercises was born at UQO. The objective of this project was to apply the Instrumental Method to teach Portuguese to francophone translators and translation students in order to determine whether or not this method could help meet the needs of future practitioners. If the results of the study were successful, we would consider the possibility of creating Portuguese courses using the Instrumental Method at UQO. Francophone participants were chosen because of the commonalities between French and Portuguese, which makes the learning of grammar rules easier than if students had no knowledge of a Romance language.

**Recruitment of Volunteers**

In November 2003, teachers, session lecturers, and employees at UQO, as well as members of the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec (OTTIAQ) of the Outaouais region were invited to participate voluntarily in this project within the framework of an experimental course over a 45-week period. In order to participate, volunteers had to be francophone speakers with no prior knowledge of Portuguese. Although the course was taught at the university, it was free to volunteers. The course benefited from the support of the Department of Language Studies. Ten people participated in the project, including five translators, one translation student, and one translation office manager. Interestingly, the course also attracted one sociology student, one business administrator, and one commercial diver. In total, 70% of the participants had a professional language background.

**Learning by Reading**

The method of learning a language through reading exercises presents several advantages over traditional language teaching methods. It is based on two fundamental principles: the reader’s personal knowledge base, and the increasing level of specificity of the texts used in class.

Individuals who need to learn a foreign language, either to broaden their professional horizons or to further their personal cultural knowledge, generally have very specific goals. For instance, people who contemplate taking a trip abroad need to understand the language at a conversational level and to express themselves orally. However, people who wish to read texts in a foreign language in order to perform research or to translate texts into their mother tongue may not need to develop oral competence, as we indicated previously. Their primary need is to be able to understand and decode written texts. It is with this in mind that the learning through reading method was developed. Using this method, one can quickly begin to read and decode various texts. The vocabulary of the learner grows rapidly as different topics are covered, and grammar skills are learned relatively easily, since text analysis is based on contextualized situations. Because “real-life” texts (newspapers and magazines articles, not texts designed to fit a given learning method) are used in class, the grammatical content is quite diverse. One quickly and simultaneously encounters several verb tenses and syntactic constructions. As a result of this exposure, students are more apt to understand how verbs are used at a faster rate, as opposed to what happens with more traditional learning methods, where, for example, one spends several months learning a single verb tense at a time.

Within the framework of this project, all the learning was based on Portuguese texts, which were chosen by the instructor according to their level of difficulty and the students’ interests. At first, texts written for a general readership, with few technical terms and colloquialisms, were used. For example, students expressed an interest in working on news articles, and found them relatively easy to understand.

Upon receiving their text, students began analyzing those parts that seemed most “appealing” to them, such as the types of graphics used, the title, the general organization of the text, etc. Then, they identified the following elements: the type of text (advertisement, news articles, websites, etc.); the target readership (age, gender, social class, etc.); the author (published author, advertiser, journalist, etc.); the intention (selling, raising awareness, informing, etc.); and the time at which the text was published (current or past). Students also expressed hypotheses on the level and quality of language used, including the frequency of familiar expressions. Some went so far as to
guess the writer’s political allegiance (right or left wing). Up to this point, students had yet to read the text thoroughly. They were then asked to underline the words they could decipher. By doing so, they were working from the known toward the yet to be learned. This part of the Instrumental Method is crucial, as it is fundamental to the understanding of the texts. Following a group discussion on the content of the texts, students began reading the texts and underlining the main ideas. This process was in line with the Instrumental Method, which also includes comprehension exercises before or after group discussion. Finally, the grammatical structure and vocabulary were explained and studied with the help of tables that included excerpts from the texts.

**Assessment of the Pilot Project**

At the end of the semester, students took part in a round-table discussion, where they were asked to express their overall view of the experience. According to students, the teaching method used in the project helped them build comprehension skills in a foreign language. At the end of the course, students were able to read general texts on various topics and made very few comprehension mistakes. Students indicated that this method helped them develop their vocabulary quickly, in addition to providing a good introduction to the Portuguese language and culture. The method was found to be interesting and stimulating, mainly because it is based on real texts dealing with various topics, and also because, unlike traditional methods, it does not include long and arduous grammar exercises. Finally, students agreed that this teaching method was well adapted to the needs of adult learners, although it could also be used for younger learners.

Gaining skills and confidence in reading and understanding Portuguese early in the course made students want to continue their studies. They felt that, thanks to this method and the type of texts used in class, they were able to improve their skills. They also felt that they never stopped learning about the language and various topics. Students commented that this method was much less “compartmentalized” than conventional language learning methods, as they were exposed to many verb tenses simultaneously, which is much more similar to real-life situations. In that sense, this method of language instruction imitates first language acquisition.

Participants found the sequence of classroom activities quite profitable. Comprehension assessment exercises helped students interpret the meaning of texts. Students said the exercises represented a relevant learning method and that the content was varied, lively, current, and stimulating. Because of the highly motivating content, their progress was enhanced. Finally, students appreciated the variety of texts used in class, and found the levels of difficulty appropriate.

Some students began reading other texts outside the classroom, mainly off the Internet, and indicated that they understood them quite well. In their opinion, learning Portuguese through the Instrumental Method broadened their personal and professional horizons, encouraged them to read more, enriched their general knowledge, and motivated them to consider learning other foreign languages. Some even felt that it provided them with tools to help their children learn how to read their own language. Students also felt that this method could also be used to teach other languages, such as Spanish and English, provided that the language to be taught had some commonality with the learner’s native language.

The success of the pilot project was also obvious in the results of an objective comprehension test administered at the end of the course, in which the success rate reached 97%.

Those language professionals who took part in the pilot project intend to develop their newly acquired skills and to eventually apply them to their work and leisure activities.

**Conclusion**

This pilot project was a huge success. The response of students was extremely positive. They willingly agreed to trust their instructor and the teaching method. The level of success and achievement of students, as well as their level of satisfaction, bear witness to the relevance and applicability of this method. The results of this pilot project indicate that this method is well suited to the teaching of Portuguese to francophones.

As for using this method to teach translators to work from more than one foreign language, this learning method would be ideally used at the core of a series of courses on Portuguese civilization and language, as the knowledge of a language goes hand in hand with the knowledge of the culture in which it is used. One cannot be learned in isolation of the other. This may be one of the ways through which university departments interested in training the translators of tomorrow may be able to meet the challenges posed by the globalization of the translation industry.

*We want to thank the University of Quebec in Outaouais for allowing us...*
As a conference interpreter for 25 years, I had long hoped to see conference work included in the Translation/Interpretation Program at Florida International University. Established in the early 1980s, the program offers certificates in Legal Translation and Court Interpreting and Translation Studies (Spanish → English), as well as a certificate in Portuguese Translation and Interpretation. The program is being revamped to teach interpreting in a “language neutral” mode.

This past spring semester we taught a course in Spanish conference interpreting for the first time, activating a course that had been on the books for some time. It is to be the first of a series of courses that may eventually lead to a certificate, that is, as long as interest holds up.

Challenges

So how does one start a new course, or sequence of courses, in simultaneous and conference interpretation where none has existed before, and without a grant or other major funding source (thus, the “shoestring” in the title)? There are major challenges:

1. Curriculum
2. Instructors
3. Technical facilities
4. Training materials

The first two challenges are handled administratively, or by dedicating faculty time and effort that would otherwise go to other teaching and research duties. In our case, we have been willing and able to undertake this task. The second two challenges have required both money and space.

Some excellent and practical ideas on curriculum development, identifying instructors, equipment, and materials are provided in a recent Chronicle article by Cynthia Miguélez (Ref. 4). A much more technical approach to the subject can be found in various articles in the collection by Cay Dollerup and Annette Lindegaard (Ref. 1), particularly in the section on “Interpreting and Class.” Also of interest is the collection by Sylvie Lambert and Barbara Moser-Mercer (Ref. 3), focusing on empirical research.

“…Students who could barely be heard on their tapes at the beginning of the semester were speaking up confidently at the end…”

Curriculum

It was decided to teach the course once a week on Saturday, both to accommodate working students and to provide a block of time long enough for flexible instruction involving setting up equipment and prolonged exposure to the practice of simultaneous interpretation. We use two textbooks, one authored by Danica Saleskovitch (Ref. 6) and the other by Yves Gambier, Daniel Gile, and Christopher Taylor (Ref. 2).

The course works like this. At the beginning of the semester, students read one or two chapters a week from Saleskovitch and a selected article from Gambier, et al. Students discuss the material at the beginning of class. Following this discussion, the professor makes a presentation on a relevant topic: ethics and practice, voice and diction, pace and lag, the business of conference interpreting, working with colleagues, developing and using glossaries, and so forth.

The second part of the three-hour class is devoted to interpreting practice. The most important part of that period is working on a new oral text provided by audio or videotape, which is played to all students simultaneously through headphones in 5- to 10-minute segments. Between segments, we discuss what has been heard. The mode of practice is first shadowing and then actual interpretation. Most source tapes are in English, with a few in Spanish. Virtually all of the students are natives of Spanish, so we do most of our work into that language. The tapes are ordered throughout the semester, beginning with simpler material and progressing to more difficult tapes.

Students take home cassette tapes (30-60 minutes in length) of the week’s material. They are required to practice at home or in a language laboratory. Each week, before listening to the new material, students record a sample of their interpretation of a short portion of the previous week’s practice tape and turn this in to the instructor. The instructor listens to and rates each student’s interpretation, and returns the tape along with an evaluation sheet. The next week, students have a few minutes to listen to the tape and study the evaluation sheet.

In summary, the practice portion of each class (about an hour and a half at the beginning of the semester, and about two and a half hours at the end of the semester) consists of the following stages:

• Students listen to the tape they recorded in class the previous week while looking at their evaluation sheets;

• Students record a short portion of the past week’s practice tape for the instructor to evaluate;
• Students listen to and practice the new material that they will record the next week.

In addition to practicing new material each week, students prepare a glossary for each assignment that they hand in. For some material, the instructor distributes a simple source-language list of terms designed to aid students in preparing their own glossaries.

During the last four weeks of the term, students each give a 10-minute oral presentation on a topic of their choice that deals with issues related to interpreting. The other students listen to this presentation via headphones and actually interpret it at their seats. This gives students a feel for interpreting in real time. This exercise is an eye-opener for the student doing the speaking, as he or she faces the challenges of being interpreted and making the appropriate adjustments to the oral delivery. The instructor records these presentations and adds them to the base of available practice recordings.

Occasional written quizzes are administered during the course, briefly covering the readings and the presentations by the instructor. A midterm examination comes as most of the readings are concluded, and covers the topics presented. The exam also includes an oral portion consisting of recordings of about four minutes each from four of the take-home practice tapes (one to be shadowed and the other three to be interpreted, two into Spanish and one into English). The final examination is oral only, and is comprised of about 30 minutes of recorded interpretation. The oral section of the midterm and the final are scored using a keyword system, wherein certain words and expressions have been selected for scoring. Only those selected items are evaluated on a simple point system for all students, thus providing a fair base of comparison. The selected items are not necessarily the most challenging, but represent a cross-section of the material. There is also an overall evaluation of voice projection, pacing (smoothness), and general impression.

Instructors
Part of the teaching of the translation and interpreting courses at Florida International University is done by adjuncts who are local professionals who take the time to share their skills with students. These individuals work under the direction of the head of the program, Dr. Erik Camayd-Freixas. However, there are three or four of us full-time faculty members in the Modern Languages department who are practicing translators and interpreters and are also capable of teaching the T/I courses, in addition to our regular language, literature, and linguistics assignments. For the initiation of the conference interpreting segment, I have been the sole instructor, but we will seek the assistance of some other highly experienced conference interpreters as the program grows, some of whom are teaching or have taught other courses for us.

In setting up a program in conference interpreting it is vitally important that the instructor have wide experience in the interpreting booth. A competent instructor of translation or consecutive interpreting, though able to follow a syllabus and lead a course, may not bring the needed background to the classroom, especially for sharing real-life experiences and evaluating student performance. In other words, a program director must be prepared to look beyond the existing staff to bring in someone who may be, first, a practicing simultaneous conference interpreter and, second, a person with classroom skill as a teacher. We who are active in the ATA know this is important, but many administrators, as well as some language instructors or even translation instructors, may not realize the importance of finding the best people available, even if it means hiring an outsider.

Physical Facilities
Although having at least limited availability of audio equipment, or even a full language laboratory, is important for any interpreting course, it is crucial for a course in conference interpreting. Such a course is impossible to teach unless students can reproduce an actual working conference environment, where they will be required to listen to the speaker through headphones while interpreting into a microphone at the same time.

When I began teaching the Portuguese interpretation courses, we occupied an old, seldom used audio language laboratory at a satellite campus. Luckily, it so happened that many of the students lived in the direction (north of Miami) of the second campus, so they could get there easily enough on a Saturday morning. For the most part, the old equipment in the lab worked, although it took several weeks for the instructor to learn to operate the mysterious engineer-designed interface. Because the class was small, we could work around the few defective and mute workstations.

The laboratory equipment available in the old lab has the ability to broadcast cassette tapes and, with a little ingenuity, the audio track of videotapes, to all the booths. We can also record the original and student work on individual dual-track tapes. Students are encouraged to practice at
home with those tapes, and are shown how an ordinary stereo cassette player can be made to reproduce just one or both tracks, either for additional practice (listening to the original, or “left” track) or to evaluate their own performance (listening to their interpreted track, or “right” track). Switching tracks is accomplished by using a simple adapter to feed either the left or right channel to both sides of a stereo headset.

The type of equipment in this audio laboratory presents one major flaw and one minor one. The major flaw is that it is impossible to mute the student microphone from the headphone output. That is, as students try to listen to a tape and interpret, their own voice comes over the headphones at least as loud as the original tape, thus seriously impeding the process or even drowning out the source tape. This “audio-active” feature is one that is common to language laboratories intended to teach second languages. It allows students to hear their own voices in order to compare themselves with the model on the practice tape.

While making use of the old laboratory, we solved this problem with a very low-tech solution. Students took alternate seats and when it came time to practice interpretation, they would use the headphone from the neighboring empty booth (putting its microphone back out of the way) and speak into the boom microphone attached to the headphone of their own booth. Naturally, the neighboring booth’s headphone did not reproduce the voice of the student, so the setup came closer to reproducing an actual interpretation experience (where the headphone does NOT carry the interpreter’s voice).

The minor problem of the old laboratory has to do with the headphones themselves. They are designed to withstand the battering of generations of students, but not to provide the best listening conditions. Besides being uncomfortable after only a few minutes of use, they fail to seal tightly around the ears, so once again, students tend to be bothered by their own voice, or worse, the voice of a student sitting near them.

As we prepared to offer the course to larger numbers of students (Spanish speakers) who would find it difficult to travel off the main campus, we discontinued use of the old laboratory. Unfortunately, there is just one other similar facility on our campus, but it is owned and controlled by the semi-autonomous English Language Institute. While the ELI has been cooperative in terms of making their facilities available to our students individually for practice, it cannot handle dedicated use by a whole class on a regular basis. It also presents the same fatal shortcoming of the older lab, namely the inability to mute a student’s voice on the headphone.

**The Basic Set-up**

With no significant funds on the horizon, or space for that matter, to install a full language laboratory adapted to our needs, we would not be able to offer conference interpreting courses without some innovation. In our case, we decided to assemble a portable laboratory that could be set up in a regular classroom whenever and wherever needed. We found that packages are available from commercial sources. One vendor, for example, offers a system for up to 25 students for about $16,000, but it does not include the ability for students to tape their own performances. The systems we considered turned out to be too expensive for the type of functionality we wanted. Therefore, we went after the needed features by using specialized consumer equipment.

The heart of our set-up is a four-track cassette recorder, known generically as a “portable studio,” designed for the “garage musician” who wants to be able to lay down tracks individually (the drums, the guitar, the voice, etc.) and then assemble them into a final two-track stereo version. At least two brands of such machines are marketed by music stores. The more expensive models offer digital recording, storing material on a non-removable memory chip, while the entry-level models still use a common cassette tape. Obviously, we require the use of removable cassettes.

We tried various models and settled on one that costs around $100. This machine offers the ability to record on any one of its four tracks, while playing back any one or all of the other three, with controls for volume and “pan” (which ear the track goes to). With this machine, it is possible to hand students a tape with the original program recorded on track 1 (equivalent to the left channel on a standard machine), and have them listen to that while simultaneously recording their own voice, either while shadowing or interpreting, on track 2 (equivalent to the right channel), or even on track 3 or 4, for subsequent practice without erasing the first attempt. In other words, the portable studio works just like a regular language laboratory machine, but with more options, and without the annoyance of having the student’s voice come through at a high volume over the headphones.

It must be noted, however, that the machine we use does not completely mute the student’s voice. We attempted to modify the circuit to do just that, but found that even when the recording circuit is electronically blocked from the listening circuit, there is still a fair amount of “cross-talk” or leakage.
between channels at the tape head, so that there is always some intrusion of the microphone signal on the channel being listened to. This effect can be minimized, however, by keeping the recording level relatively low, and making sure that the source tapes have been recorded at a high level. In that way, the interpreter’s voice through the headphones reaches a point where it helps more than hinders by providing a small amount of feedback to the interpreter, thus doing automatically what many interpreters do in the booth: pull the headphone aside a little bit on one ear to allow self-monitoring. This may improve voice quality significantly.

Another essential piece of the puzzle is the headphone. We found a model with an attached “dynamic” boom microphone that will work with ordinary tape recorders. Note that most “computer” headphones require a small voltage to be applied to the “condenser” microphone, which is provided by all computers, but very few tape recorders or other devices. It is a tight-fitting but comfortable set, with good listening quality and fair microphone quality that costs around $40.

**FM Transmitter and Receivers**

One more bit of equipment that is essential for a classroom simultaneous interpreting laboratory is a system to transmit an audio signal from the front of the classroom to each student. We already have equipment in our department for providing simultaneous interpreting at conferences, so it has been easy for us to set up a small FM transmitter and provide each student with a wireless receiver at no additional cost.

With this transmitting system, audio or videotapes can be played simultaneously to all students, who simply plug their headphones into the FM receiver instead of the recorder. Students may record while listening by just running the tape in the “record” mode. Another important advantage of being able to broadcast to the students is that you can do “live” interpreting with the instructor or a student reading, or else give speeches that are listened to and interpreted by all. You can also set up a demo conference site, complete with a simulated or real booth, with the students listening to a peer interpret.

Professional quality FM equipment is relatively inexpensive and is available from several suppliers. A simple transmitter costs less than $500 and single-channel receivers are less than $80 each, purchased over the Internet.

**Practicalities**

We use cheap fabric bags to hold individual student kits. Each bag contains: one multi-channel recorder, including its power cord transformer; one headphone with boom mike; one FM receiver, without its own headphone; and two 1/4” to 1/8” adapters for attaching the small earphone connectors to the larger tape recorder jacks (one stereo for the headphones, the other mono for the microphone). The instructor kit is the same, but holds the transmitter, in addition to cables to connect the transmitter to a source (tape recorder, microphone, or in-classroom VCR). The bags are kept in a large plastic trunk with wheels, which can hold 15 student kits, the instructor’s kit, and an additional bag holding extension cords and power strips to provide AC power to each student’s desk. On the morning of class, the instructor, often aided by a student or two, simply rolls the trunk to the classroom. Once in class, it takes about five minutes to set up. Each student takes a bag while an early-arriving volunteer plugs in the power strips and extension cords. Once the students have done it a few times, setup gets to be routine.

More difficult than setting up is teaching all the students to use their equipment successfully. The biggest problem results when students fail to record properly, either because the machine is not run in the record mode or the appropriate channel record button is not depressed. Another occasional failure is due to the microphone adapter. At first, it is common for students to try to record with the headphone and microphone connections reversed (“¡Profe! I can’t hear anything!”). The recording level works best with the setting about at its midpoint, so that the recording level indicator lamps just begin to flash. Remember that recording on too high a level produces too much feedback of the student’s voice into the headphones.

**The Shoestring**

How much does all of this cost? Table 1 on page 30 shows an estimate of the cost of equipping a class of 10 students (with an extra kit for the instructor). Increases in quantity would be directly proportional to these figures, except that the FM transmitter would not have to be duplicated.

**Financing**

Three thousand dollars, or even $1,700, may sound like a lot of money to you or me, but in terms of institutional educational budgets, it is barely a pittance. Most academic departments have some discretionary money around that can be made available for a good purpose. In our case, we were able to use funds generated by our provision of simultaneous interpretation for on-campus events. Other depart-
ments may have money generated by study-abroad programs, special enhancement grants, testing services, etc. A commercial institution, such as a private or vocational school, should see this as a very modest and productive investment to get a simultaneous interpreting program started. If an administrator objects to the high cost, you can always suggest ordering a full language laboratory, costing between $50,000 and $100,000, in addition to the cost of supplying dedicated space!

Another possibility for a really cash-strapped situation is to have students buy their own equipment. The instructor could collect $150 from each student at the beginning of the term, or at registration, and buy the kits for them. This solution would have the considerable advantage of allowing students to have the recorders and headphones available for at-home practice and after-course use. I encourage students to do that anyway, and provide ordering information.

### Materials

The fourth challenge is the paucity of available materials. So far as I am aware, no one is marketing materials specifically designed for teaching conference interpreting, although Acebo and others sell tapes designed primarily for consecutive interpreting, but these include portions intended for simultaneous interpreting practice (Ref. 5). Court reporter training tapes (e.g., from the National Court Reporters Association, NCRA), paced at various speeds, may also be used, at least at first. Fortunately, it is not difficult to obtain good quality materials for conference interpreting. The following describes the main sources we have used.

#### Tapes of Actual Conferences

Over the years that I have been interpreting professionally, I have occasionally asked for and received permission to record the speeches made at conferences. This is especially easy at academic and religious conferences, where the presenters may actually be seeking dissemination of their work, so long as proper acknowledgement is made. Obtaining recordings is made even easier when we are providing the technical facilities for the conference. The client may even pay us to record the conference, secondarily allowing us to keep a copy. At business or commercial conferences, one need not even ask. These are the types of events at which interpreters are required to sign nondisclosure agreements, because they may be made privy to the latest strategic information about a product, company, or industry. Likewise, military and diplomatic conferences are off-limits.

So what does our collection look like? We have a few hundred tapes from conferences on accounting, government management, public administration, journalism, African culture, medicine, history, art, religion, literature, politics, the Cuban presence, and Negritude, among other topics.

The easy way to make these recordings is to use a VHS video cassette recorder with a six-hour cassette using just the hi-fi audio tracks, and to let it run continuously. Later on, one must extract the individual speeches and transfer them to regular cassettes with the speaker’s name, title of presentation, length, language, etc. With a regular cassette machine, someone, usually the technician, must flip or change a tape every half hour, leading to unfortunate gaps and errors.

#### Guest Lecturers

Every school encourages guest lecturers, even from among the faculty members. These guests are surprisingly willing to be recorded. We routinely make a videotape of most department lecturers. For important occasions, the university will even provide professional recording services from its in-house recording production unit. These tapes have often just sat unused on a shelf, but interpreting instructors can find a bonanza of practice material here. The fact that the speaker originally consented to be recorded, we believe, implies consent for the university to use the recordings for any

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**Table 1: Estimate of the Cost of Equipping a Class of 10 Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 multi-channel recorders at $100 each</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 headphones at $40 each</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapters, AC cables, and power strips</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying bags (purchased at a dollar store)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll-away trunk (purchased at a discount store)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total without FM capability:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,676</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adding FM to enable broadcasting tapes to all students at the same time:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 single-channel receivers at $80 each</td>
<td>$880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM transmitter</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total with FM:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,056</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reasonable academic purpose.

But there is one important caveat. In order for a recording to be of sufficiently high quality for use in interpreting, it must be recorded with a microphone placed close to the speaker. Unfortunately, video recordings are typically made by using the camcorder’s built-in mike, which is almost never satisfactory for our purpose. Either the one making the recording must provide a dedicated recording mike placed close to the speaker (such as on his lapel), or must hook into the public address system. I have obtained tapes from people who thought they would be wonderfully useful to us, but tapes containing an echoing voice broken by audience coughs picked up by a camera-mounted mike are impossible to use. The sound quality may sound “good” to a casual, untrained listener, but in an interpreting booth, the sound has to be nearly pristine.

**Commercially Available Consumer Cassettes**

Almost any tape containing speech may be utilized. For instance, I found an extraordinary collection of presidential speeches with presentations by both Roosevelts, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, and many others: “Greatest Presidential Speeches of the 20th Century” from Topics Entertainment/CounterTop Video Audio Software. Of course, material of this nature is of increased interest to the student because the speeches are of historical significance, given at a crucial moment of wartime, at an inauguration, or at some other crisis. Generally speaking, political speeches make good practice material for interpreting. The speakers are usually trained in their art, or else are self-taught by long experience, and have a strong desire to be understood. Thus, they speak clearly at a good pace and avoid arcane vocabulary and forms of expression. Political speeches often typify the best of real-life interpreting, and are a great beginning for students.

I have also obtained a number of instructional tapes on such topics as health and medicine, self-help, motivation, and other subjects that may make good practice material. Sometimes these tapes are a little out of the ordinary, but are always useful.

Talking books (the direct recording of the text of fiction or nonfiction books) are not recommended for interpretation due to the density and style of the literary language. Most books make use of creative and unusual vocabulary and turns of phrase and expression that make them great reading, but terrible subjects for interpretation. Interpretation must really be based on an original ORAL text, something possibly written down, but intended for oral delivery.

**Media Recordings**

The broadcast media, particularly cable television, offer an endless source of material for interpretation, but not everything is suitable. Formal lectures, which most closely approximate the conference experience, are best, and are widely available outside of the commercial network channels. However, before using broadcast material in class, the question of copyright must be considered, especially if one contemplates archiving, reproducing, and distributing such material to students. It is best to consult with your institution’s legal department to determine what constitutes “fair use,” and to see if there is an institutional policy, system of licensing, or other ways of obtaining formal permission for using broadcast material.

**Online Materials**

Many websites provide audio downloads, such as the one maintained by the White House (www.whitehouse.gov), which offers a wide collection of the president’s addresses in audio or video format. They can be downloaded and recorded onto cassette tapes using the computer’s audio output jack, or, if the site allows, may be saved to the hard drive to be transferred later onto a tape or burnt to a CD. This can be an excellent source for non-English materials. Again, it is important to check to see whether there are copyright issues.

**Written Materials**

Speeches are often published, either in hard copy or on the Web, or texts may be distributed at conferences, which the instructor can collect and then read in class over the FM system or else record for later use. Students may want to read the material in order to offer a variety of voices and accents for practice. Once again, the suitability of written materials must be carefully evaluated, and only texts that are meant to be read aloud should be considered.

**Conclusion**

The initiation of a sequence of courses in conference interpreting has been very satisfying to me, and has been well received by the students. Progress is slow, of course, but I can note that the students who improved the most did so in terms of voice projection and quality, and the confidence has been noticeable in their voices. Students who could barely be heard on their tapes at the beginning of the semester were speaking up confidently at the end. Those students who were most experienced in other modes of interpretation also
found the transition more feasible. Students who experienced the greatest difficulty, as in any interpreting instruction, were those with the weakest language skills. Unfortunately, a 14-week course cannot do much to improve that, although we did set students on the proper course to develop improved vocabularies through the building of glossaries.

References

References

**The Instrumental Method Applied to the Learning of Portuguese for Translation**

Continued from page 25

Français: *pratiques de lecture*. Belo Horizonte, Imprensa Universitária.

References

**Profiles in Continuing Education**

Continued from page 9

October—just 11 months after last year’s—and the same airline flies there as well. Thanks to that voucher, my California-Canada airfare expense was minimal. The more you travel, the greater your chance to earn a voucher from any given airline!

Comments: I’m keenly aware that I need to acquire some additional skills now considered basic in the new century, namely: learning how to work with TRADOS or another equivalent translation memory tool. A colleague has suggested Wordfast. Either way, ATA’s continuing education requirement gives me the perfect excuse to take a beginner’s workshop, which I plan to do next time one is given in my area or close to somewhere I’ve traveled for my interpreting or voiceover work.
The eagerness to be ‘stylistically’ faithful to the author’s failures foils something more important: the function of communication...”

anglicisms, resulting in a gradual erosion of the rich Spanish vocabulary; 2) ignorance of the systemic differences between English and Spanish concerning repetition and redundancy, frequently leading to translations that are literally correct, but nonetheless below the standards of Spanish-speaking readers; 3) difficulties generated by intertextuality (the unstated or tacit reference to other texts); and 4) the colossal problem of the use of regionalisms from the Spanish dialects used in different countries, an issue for which there may not always be a solution. The first two problems will be addressed in this article. Problems 3 and 4 will be discussed in the second article, to be published in the January issue.

Anglicisms

The discussion of anglicisms, a topic addressed by many authors, is one that still gives rise to opposing views and arguments. There is a wide range of degrees of strictness or flexibility for introducing English terms into Spanish. There are those who do not care because, they say, when two languages are in contact and one of them clearly prevails over the other, it is “natural” for the less dominant language to welcome whatever comes from the first. At the other extreme, there are the purists with a static concept of the language who perhaps cling to an ideal linguistic standard fixed in the distant past. Evidently, there are all kinds of intermediate gradations between these two viewpoints.

The following are some notes on a number of terms that, inevitably, bring forth the old controversy: the adoption of an increasingly used English term versus the defense of the valid Spanish term it is replacing. As will become clear in what follows, the proposed solution is not always the same. In all the examples below, the original text with the term or terms that gave rise to the difficulty will be included.


The term “editor”: The present evolution of this word in Spanish is, by itself, tangible proof of the contemporary history of the two languages and cultures and their reciprocal influence. It is astonishing to see that even in the 18th edition (1956) of the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (DRAE), only one meaning was given for the Spanish verb editar: “To publish by means of a printing house.” At the time the dictionary was published, the Spanish term editor referred only to the owner of a publishing house. Also for María Moliner, in the first edition of her celebrated Diccionario de uso del español (1966), the...
A 10-year Retrospective on a Distance Revision Course: Most Frequent Translation Problems (Part I) Continued

only synonym for editor was publicar (to publish).

The Supplement included at the end—that is, at the very last minute—of the 19th edition of the DRAE (1970) added this second meaning for the Spanish term editor: “Person who takes care of the preparation of a text that is not his/her own, following philological criteria.” Until the 21st edition (1992) of this dictionary, there were no other additional meanings for the term.

However, because of the influence of the English “editor,” a very polysemic term, in recent decades, the Spanish editor began to be used for all manner of tasks or positions which, traditionally, were otherwise denominated in that language. Manuel Seco already complained in his Diccionario de dudas (1966) that this term was used to replace the Spanish director of a newspaper or magazine, a complaint he reiterated in the ninth revision of his dictionary (1986). Much deeper and devastating is the criticism of Torrents del Prats (Diccionario de dificultades del inglés, second edition, 1989), who, in the section devoted to the Spanish editor, lists all of the Spanish terms displaced by this single English word: director de una publicación; redactor jefe or jefe de redacción; redactor; la redacción (equivalent to the signature The Editor at the end of an article); encargado or jefe de una sección within the staff of a magazine or publication; crítico; revisor; corrector; and adaptador. And we could still add compilador, recopilador; and montajista, which are all tasks that can be undertaken by the English “editor.”

It would be interesting to take any issue of Life or some similar magazine, review the staff list, and verify how many different responsibilities are undertaken in a corporation of that size by different types of “editors.”

The story doesn’t end here. The arrival of the Information Age gave us “desktop publishers” (editores de textos)—no longer persons, but computer programs. Today, a Spanish computer editor performs many of the tasks, plus many more formerly unimaginable types of editorial duties, which in the past were undertaken by the “editors” (the English word).

In short, thanks to the overwhelming power of its underlying culture, one single English word swept away a wide range of Spanish options that were not only a rich resource available to us, but were also habitually used. It is up to Spanish speakers to decide whether to save the “old” terms or submit to the new one imposed upon them.

Original text: an excerpt from Chapter 1, “Marketing is not selling;” from the book Marketing for Appraisers Book (www.appraisaltoday.com/mfa1.htm)

The term “effective”: The text began with these words:

Marketing is not a “hard sell.” In fact, hard sells are not often effective with professional services such as appraising.

Translating the English “effective” into the Spanish efectivo, when what is actually meant is eficaz or eficiente (efficient), is a clear example of how we are losing common Spanish words due to the onslaught of the Anglo-American language. This has contributed to the loss of the true meaning of the Spanish word efectivo: “Real or true, as opposed to what is unreal, doubtful, or nominal” (DRAE). María Moliner (Diccionario de uso del español, 1966) adds some other meanings: the Spanish hacer efectivo un plan means to put a plan into practice; hacer efectivo un pago means to actually make a payment, that is, to pay. Martínez de Sousa (Diccionario de usos y dudas del español actual, 1996, p. 205) also highlights how improper it is to use efectividad (a calque of “effectiveness”) instead of eficacia or eficiencia. Sometimes the Spanish efectivo/a appears in translations even when “effective” is not used in the original English. For example, in the final lines of this same text, it reads:

You communicate your message to your target market by using such methods as advertising...

One of the workshop participants translated this as follows:

La manera efectiva de comunicar el mensaje al mercado-objetivo es mediante anuncios...

In this case, the words apropiada, adecuada, or, as we have already mentioned, eficaz, could have been used instead of efectiva. In Spanish, una medida económica efectiva is an economic measure that has been sanctioned and is already enforced. On the other hand, una medida económica eficaz is one that is “profitable,” “advantageous,” or “useful” from a certain viewpoint or for some defined purpose. In general, the Spanish term efectivo does not correspond to the English “effective,” but rather to “actual.”


The term “leaders”: The DRAE incorporated the word líder (leader) in its 19th edition (1970) and later added liderato and liderazgo (leadership), accepting even the verb liderar (to
lead), in 1992. All these additions were the result of the bulldozer influence of English.

However, it is worth reflecting on the definition given for líder in the DRAE: “Director, head, or chief of a political party, a social group, or other community of people.” It is clear that the term refers to one person, the one occupying the highest position. It is different from English, where we speak, for example, of “political leaders” or “labor leaders,” when referring to all important political or labor personalities, regardless of their rank. Therefore, the Spanish word líder, accepted and acceptable, does not have the same semantic scope as the English word “leader,” and is not equivalent to the latter, except when it refers to the highest official in authority.

Incidentally, those who have some knowledge of contemporary Argentine history will readily recognize that “el Líder” (the Leader, with initial capital) is the designation given, in life as well as in death, to President Juan D. Perón. For that reason, in our country, where this historic denomination still echoes (whether one is a Peronist or not), people do not spontaneously use the word líderes to refer to those in authority, and the translations that do so sound strange.


*The term “definitely”:* In order to definitively (that is, “for good”) finish this section about anglicisms, I must say that it is definitely (that is, “quite” or “certainly”) surprising to see the large proportion of colleagues who, in a sentence like this one, would incorrectly translate the word “definitely” as definitivamente instead of definitamente or ciertamente.

**Repetition and Redundancy**

English is a language in which consonants are predominant, whereas in Spanish, vowels prevail. To prove this, you only need to make a list of 100 English and Spanish words chosen at random. Besides, English is shorter and Spanish is longer. The number of monosyllables is overwhelmingly larger in English; in Spanish, it is not uncommon to use very long words, such as abrumadoramente (overwhelmingly). A word like principalmente keeps ringing in the ear much longer than its English rendering “largely.”

Additionally, the difference in discourse habits in both cultures (English- and Spanish-speaking) makes it impossible for repetition to be considered systemically equivalent in both languages. Whether it is for this reason, or because the subject matter demands it, or because the author may not be sufficiently proficient as a writer, we often come across English texts plagued with redundancies or repetitions that put us in a difficult situation. We wonder: Should my translation be as poor as the original, or should I try to correct the problem by avoiding so much repetition? Below are some examples that illustrate this problem.

**Original text: Michael D. Lemonick, “Can Animals Think?,” Time, March 22, 1993**

After making some comments regarding the behavior of cats and dogs (among them, Newton, his own pet), the author begins a paragraph by saying:

*These behaviors are certainly clever, but what do they mean? Was Newton really devious? Can a cat really crave privacy on the potty? In short, do household pets really have a mental and emotional life?"

I am convinced that if the reader has not been warned in advance about the problem, he will not even notice the repetition (three times) of the word “really.”

The text chosen for this translation exercise was not a classic example of the world’s great literary works, nor was it intended to be. It had some composition problems, of which the most evident was, precisely, the number of repetitions.

Perhaps some may think that, to be faithful, they must include in their translation the Spanish realmente every time the original says “really”....


In this exercise, the problem was obviously the translation of the words related to the main subject of the article: “photography” (repeated 5 times in the 600-word text); “photographer” (10 times); “photograph” (5 times) and “photographic” (2 times). All these terms have Spanish renderings similar to the English terms—fotografía (the activity); fotógrafo; fotografía or foto (the product); and fotográfico/a. To make matters worse, two other English terms may be translated as fotografía: “picture-taking” (appears 3 times in the text) and “picture” (1 time). A third term, “camera” (appearing 6 times), may be translated as máquina fotográfica/de fotos.

If the first four terms are translated as fotografía, fotografía, fotógrafo, fotográfico/a, and fotográfico/a, respectively, and if, additionally, “picture-taking” is translated as fotografía and “camera” as máquina fotográfica, our translation would be much more redundant than the original, even to the point of making it unbearable to the reader. As a consequence, it would not be a...
good translation, as it would not be a text with an equivalent effect. Perhaps our current reader is thinking that we have been somewhat repetitious and redundant through all this. Yes, we have, by way of example.


As stated in the title, this text is about the most effective (eficaz, not efectiva in Spanish) way to begin any speech, address, or lecture.

To give only two examples, the word “audience” was used nine times and “listeners” about the same. There were colleagues who invariably translated the first as la audiencia or el público (without alternating between one or the other), and the second as los oyentes or los escuchas (also, without alternating between one or the other).

Any lecturer who, when addressing a Spanish-speaking audience, uses the words audiencia and oyentes nine times in such a short span would need to be a master of oratory in order not to produce, at the very least, some degree of discomfort... even suspicion that he or she is not so proficient, as he or she says, in the art of public speaking.


The author analyzes the relationship between the quantity and quality of crimes committed in the U.S. by blacks and whites, and in particular, the frequency of crimes committed by blacks against other blacks. He begins by mentioning some recent events in Oakland.

Just in the first paragraph, we notice that the word “murder” appears four times and Oakland three, not to mention such terms as “blacks,” “black men,” or “black women.” The text is plagued with such repetitions.

Instinctively, a good Spanish translator would reject this kind of repetition, as he or she knows it will bother the reader. If Oakland is already mentioned, the second or third time the translator will say esa ciudad (that city), la ciudad antes mencionada (the previously mentioned city), or something of the sort. The translator might also eliminate the term as long as such an omission does not confuse the reader. Asesinato (murder) can be homicidio (homicide) or muerte deliberada (premeditated murder), or even, in a general sense, crimen, delito (crime), etc. And there are different ways to say that the subjects being discussed are los negros (blacks), los hombres negros (black men), or las mujeres negras (black women), or to omit these terms altogether.

To summarize, even if there is no single solution in all cases, there is one basic consideration that could be helpful. Those who read our translation do not know, as we know, whether the one responsible for so much repetition is the author or the (awkward) translator. If they cannot glean from the context that such repetition is deliberate, they will most probably blame the translator for it, without even thinking that there was so much of it in the original text. The eagerness to be “stylistically” faithful to the author’s failures foils something more important: the function of communication. The readers will simply stop reading if the style bores them, or they will become suspicious of the quality of the translation. Considering this, it might be useful for translators to evaluate their eagerness to be faithful exclusively to the author, and to expand the concept to include faithfulness to the reader. With a good sense of balance, they must find an equitable solution, avoiding any degree of repetition or redundancy that may be intolerable in our language.

Leonardo da Vinci said that painting acts per via di porre, accumulating elements on the canvas, while sculpture acts per via di levare, hewing pieces of stone to make a statue. A number of the translations I have reviewed in this workshop did not take into account the intolerance of our language towards repetition. To remedy this, the hands of a sculptor would be needed to patiently eliminate, one after the other, those unnecessary pieces of stone.

Notes

The Société Française des Traducteurs Holds Second Summer Seminar for Financial Translators

By Alan Dages

The Société Française des Traducteurs (SFT) held its second biennial summer seminar on July 5-7 at La Baule, a chic Atlantic seaside venue near Brittany, France. This small town has quiet little streets with charming Victorian summer homes shaded by tall pine trees, all just a short walk from one of the country’s widest beaches.

The SFT is a professional translators’ association with a membership of over 900 translators and interpreters working in all aspects of the field. Program coordinators Chris Durban and Jackie Reuss, both ATA members, did a very fine job organizing the event. The format was much the same as for the popular one-day financial translation seminars, first hosted by the Paris Bourse and then Euronext, but more in-depth. There were over 80 participants, including the speakers, from around 10 countries. Many were freelance translators while others represented translation companies, banks, accounting firms, and multilateral institutions. In addition to the aforementioned coordinators, ATA was well represented, with current President-elect Marian Greenfield, former ATA President Tom West, and about five other members attending.

The seminar’s 15 presentations involved 20 speakers categorized under several headings. Some sessions covered up-and-coming trends in financial translation, including sustainable development and the editing of texts written in nonnative languages. Others reviewed basic subject areas that many of us studied in business school, such as discounting, indices, banking solvency, and accounting consolidation. A few presentations were extremely focused on providing specific translation solutions to particular problems, while a couple of speakers seemed to avoid doing this at any cost. Presentations were held in French or English, and nearly all of them were accompanied by handouts, which were conveniently photocopied and provided beforehand to keep note-taking to a minimum.

Former ATA President Tom West was the first presenter, speaking on “Corporate Law in France and the U.S.” His talk was extremely well received by both the French and English speakers in attendance. Tom prepared his handouts in French and English, and spoke in both languages in order to describe how the countries’ two legal systems differed in various areas of corporate law. There were ample definitions of common terms and numerous solutions to real headaches, such as what to do with the Latin phrases appearing in legal texts. The problem is that these phrases frequently differ in French- and English-language texts, thus making it necessary to translate rather than transcribe them. As a translation company owner and attorney, Tom has spent years editing the work of other legal translators, so he knows what to look out for. Legal translation is replete with false cognates such as droit de préemption, which means “right of first refusal” rather than “preemptive right” (which, in turn, is better translated as droit préférentiel de souscription).

Another valuable discussion, led by Dr. Stephen Gates of the Conference Board and Isabelle Lhoste of KPMG, centered on “Trends in Sustainability Reporting.” Sustainability reporting is a concept that has been lost on many Americans since the U.S. backed out of the Kyoto Protocol a few years ago. Although the term is rooted in the environmental context, it has expanded to encompass a company’s economic and social impact on its investors, customers, employees, prospective employees, and local communities. The problem lies in trying to address one’s sustainability report to varied audiences while complying with a host of related regulations coming from the European Union, national legislatures, and local governments. Moreover, about 20 organizations have published sustainability guidelines. One emerging standard, the Global Reporting Initiative (www.globalreporting.org), can be a useful resource. However, the translator should approach such “soft” nontechnical texts with great caution, as this is one of those situations that call for very close contact between the translator and the author of the text.

A very interesting, if somewhat disturbing, presentation was given by Agnès Berthet on “Corporate Mission Statements and Values: An Example.” Berthet is a corporation communications specialist charged with issues concerning corporate culture and sustainable development at Danone, a major multinational agribusiness group with headquarters in France. Berthet discussed the difficult challenges involved with translating the company’s corporate values, mission statements, and sustainability reports in the absence of compromise between Danone’s top management and
the translator. In this case, Danone was especially concerned with capturing the precise nuance of its corporate documents from French into English, because the translations would appear on the company’s website for the world to see. Berthet also explained that the translations are meant to serve as the source text for subsequent translations into a long list of other languages that will be used to disseminate the company’s values to a wider audience. Berthet drove home the point that Danone has tens of thousands more employees working in China than it does in France, but that given its corporate history, its values still tend to reflect its French roots.

Below is Danone’s corporate mission statement, cut and pasted directly from its website in late July, followed by its English translation (also taken from the website):

**Partout dans le monde, faire grandir, mieux vivre et s’épanouir les hommes en leur apportant chaque jour une alimentation meilleure, des goûts plus variés, des plaisirs plus sains.**

“Throughout the world, to ensure that people can grow, live better and thrive to be full by providing them daily with better food, a greater variety of tastes and healthier pleasure.”

Even those readers who don’t understand any French at all can see that something has gone terribly wrong here. Berthet then showed attendees a revised version of the offending phrase (not yet up on the website), telling us that she was unable to judge whether an English translation was entirely appropriate or not. The revised version reads:

“Danone helps people around the world grow, live better and get more out of life through tastier, more varied and healthier food products—every day.”

Danone had traditionally relied mainly on translation companies to handle such material, but more recently Berthet’s team has been insisting that suppliers attend meetings at Danone headquarters to discuss options with her and other top managers who actually author the French source texts.

Berthet then showed us slides of some “before” and “after” translations of Danone’s corporate values. One translation that particularly struck me was the word *complicité*, a cognate of “complicity,” defined in my English dictionary as: 1) the state of being an accomplice, as in a wrongdoing; 2) complexity. The term went through several iterations based on the aforesaid discussions between management and translators to finally emerge as “empathy.” My Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary provides a second meaning for *complicité*: to create a bond (as in a “smile of complicity”) that supports the “empathy” solution.

Another example offered by Berthet was *Double projet économique et social*, which has long been translated literally as “Dual economic and social project”—a meaningless phrase. The final version is the much-improved “Dual commitment to business success and social responsibility.” I’ll be the first to admit that I would have been hard pressed to come up with that without posing questions to Danone’s managers.

The implication is that the all too common process of giving translation suppliers the text and simply waiting for them to shoot it back, no questions asked, does not work here. Berthet explained that Danone has seen the light and is taking appropriate action. But, as one seminar participant pointed out, how does that explain another English translation, “Luring the best professionals,” that also appeared on Berthet’s slides? Obviously, this was meant to say “Attracting the best people,” and, like several other questionable English phrases in her slides, shows signs of being produced without letting a native speaker proofread it beforehand. Clearly, best practices have been only partially taken on board at Danone. The same observation probably prompted another participant, an in-house translator with Corporate Language Services (CLS), to ask, “Well, why doesn’t Danone just hire some in-house native-English translators to thoroughly learn the true meaning of its corporate values and then convey them in English?”

Berthet’s response was immediate, “But the volume is much too great. We would need to hire 10 to 15 people. And besides, translation is not one of the company’s core businesses, so it must be outsourced.” My response to this would be to ask whether accounting, human resources, and the treasury functions are also core businesses at Danone.

The issues cited above almost always arise at Euronext/SFT seminars, where the translation company model is sometimes cast in a disparaging light. Nonetheless, translation companies continue to send representatives to these seminars. When asked to comment on this, Philippe Elmalek of CLS wrote, “We, as in-house translators at CLS, usually contact the client by e-mail or on the phone when we have terminology questions or doubts which need to be clarified. This situation is not always satisfactory. And, of
course, a freelancer or in-house translator who works within the company itself, rather than through a translation agency, has direct contact with the client and direct access to the information. This is far more rewarding, I think. But such is the market. What can you do?"

Although space does not permit me to elaborate on every presentation, the complete proceedings will be available for free download from the SFT website (www.sft.fr) and elsewhere by November. Suffice it to say that this seminar provided a good mix of technical material along with current topics and trends in financial translation. The level of expertise of the speakers was high, and the relatively small attendance allowed for easy access to speakers and other participants. Many of the speakers are regular contributors to the Financial Translators listserv at www.financialtranslators@yahoogroups.com, a rich source of financial translation terminology in several European language pairs.

The physical setting of La Baule’s Atlantia Conference Centre left little to be desired. The modern conference center was spacious and airy and the lunches were carefully prepared four-course sit-down dinners featuring local specialties and fine wines. In addition to the sessions, participants could also sign up for a two-hour bus tour of the area. The weather was superb for the trip, and there were three stops for exploring a rocky shore, a sea salt-making operation, and Guerande, a 14th-century walled town.

The coordinators also came up with something original that I have never encountered at a translators conference before. A week before arriving at La Baule, native English speakers were invited to go to a La Baule bakery’s website that was advertising its fondant baulois, a sort of chocolate dessert resembling a rich brownie in flavor and texture. The site had a valiant, but obviously amateur, translation of its four French marketing phrases into English. Seminar participants were asked to make it right, and their entries were posted for all to see. Although we were invited to cast ballots, the final decision was reserved for two judges. The winner received a fondant baulois at an afternoon reception hosted by La Baule’s mayor.

So is it worth the price for a U.S.-based freelance translator to attend an SFT summer seminar? It cost me $2,500 to travel to France for 10 days, including $890 in airfare from Philadelphia, trains and taxis, four nights in a hotel at La Baule, and incidental expenses. This amount also included the seminar fee, which came to $830. I got the cheapest possible early-bird rate for SFT or listserv members. Non-members paid up to $1,100. This should be compared with an ATA Annual Conference fee of $250 to $300 for the same three-day period.

My answer is a qualified “yes.” If you are already an established financial translator with clients in Europe, attending the seminar provides an in-depth review of subjects and issues you should be familiar with. In addition, the seminar provides an opportunity to meet with clients and colleagues. The same applies if you are targeting clients in Europe: the participant list is widely circulated in the financial translation community there, and business usually results. If you are not well established, you should at least be sufficiently familiar with basic financial concepts to be able to understand the gist of the presentations. If not, you would do better to attend an ATA professional development seminar or the association’s annual conference closer to home.
¡Gringo!

By Tony Beckwith

The following was originally published in the AATIA Letter, the newsletter of the Austin Area Translators Association.

At the elementary school where I spent my childhood there was nothing worse than being called a nab. The school was in Uruguay, and the word was a hybrid, Spanglish version of nabo, which means “turnip.” Hardly as cruel as the slings and barbs we learned later in life, but at that tender stage it was a devastating insult. In the asphalt jungle of the playground you (and everyone else) would hear the shout, “don’t be such a nab!” Or worse, the whispered, “he’s such a nab!” The word itself was insipid, but the energy behind it was venomous, and the target of this abuse was frequently reduced to tears. As I remember well.

It’s been years since I’ve heard anyone called a nab. Like most people, my peers and I progressed through a rich heritage of insults based largely on the various taboos in effect in our culture at the time. There were the fairly standard religious blasphemies, embarrassingly crude references to body parts and functions, gleeful allusions to the reputed sexual habits of family members, politically incorrect (to say the least!) characterizations of ethnic origin, and, on special occasions, a no-holds-barred mayhem of all of the above. In the playground we learned that the only possible protection against any or all of them was a steadfast conviction that they simply weren’t true. One might feel scorched by the emotion behind the words, but all withering accusations and slithering innuendo bounced off one’s armor of self-knowledge. Otherwise, one was doomed.

So what is it about the word gringo?

Why is it that people who can remain perfectly calm while their pedigree is being impugned can totally lose their grip when called a gringo? What is the power of this word, and why can it ruffle so many feathers?

In the first place, there is considerable misunderstanding about the origin and exact meaning of the word. For years, people have referred to a song that was allegedly sung by British soldiers during their various campaigns in Latin America early in the 19th century. The song was “Green Grow the Rushes, Oh,” and many have suggested that the word gringo derives from there. There are other urban legends that attempt to answer this question, such as the explanation that it has something to do with the American greenback.

The Diccionario de la Real Academia Española begs to differ, and defines gringo (“of disputed etymology”) as follows: “Foreigner, especially English-speaking, and in general one who speaks a language other than Spanish.” It then goes on to say that the term refers to people from the U.S., England, or Russia (depending on where the word is being used in Latin America). In some countries, gringo is defined as a “fair-haired person with white skin.” The entry ends with this definition: “An unintelligible language.” No insults there so far.

A search on the Internet and through other resources reveals that the word gringo originates from Andalucía in southern Spain, and was a corruption of the Spanish word for “Greek” (griego). Just as in English we say “it’s all Greek to me,” in the Spanish of the 15th century griego referred to something unintelligible, something foreign. Over time griego eroded to gringo, and was introduced into the vocabulary of Latin America by the Spaniards who came with the Conquest. They used it in Argentina, for example, to refer to the other main group of European migrants (who were foreigners to them), the Italians. So in Argentina, gringo means an Italian, and since the Italian migrants moved out to the country to work the land (while the Spaniards stayed in the city to work in the restaurants and cafés), gringo came to mean “Italian farm worker.”

Meanwhile, in northern Latin America, the “foreign” meaning of the word, coupled with its other connotations of “white-skinned” and “English-speaking,” was tagged to the main group of foreigners in those parts, and gringo became just another word for norteamericano. Like other Latinos, Mexicans took exception when people in the U.S. appropriated to themselves the name of their common continental homeland by calling themselves Americans. So, the Mexicans took to calling Americans gringo instead, and it stuck.

In the heat of battle we hurl whatever we have at hand, but the fact is there is nothing inherently evil or malicious about the word itself. It’s how you say it that counts. I’d rather be called a gringo than a nab any day.
Not Every Contract is Necessarily a Contratto

By Marica Pariante Angelides

There are great differences between the common law system used in the U.S., based on tradition and judicial decisions, and the civil law system used in Italy, based on laws passed by the legislature. As such, translators of legal texts from English into Italian must often overcome the difficulties arising from translating words with the same etymology. I advise first considering these words in the context of the document that needs to be translated, and then researching their use in each legal system before deciding upon the best translation.

The word that I need to translate into Italian is contract. In the U.S., a contract is an agreement with specific terms between two or more persons or entities, in which there is a promise to do something in return for a valuable benefit, known as consideration. In my case, the word contract is in a document where a beneficiary (un proprietario beneficiario) of a monetary sum (somma monetaria) makes a statement where he promises to relieve the trustee (il proprietario fiduciario) from obligations to the beneficiary once he has received the above-mentioned sum.

When translating contract into Italian, the first word that comes to mind is contratto. According to ART 1322 of the Italian Civil Code, a contratto is the agreement made between two parties in order to create, rule, or terminate a legal relationship between them (l’accordo tra due o più parti per costituire, regolare o estinguere fra loro un rapporto giuridico patrimoniale).

Reading the original document thoroughly is very helpful in deciding what Italian legal term would most accurately convey the sense of the word. Approximating only the similarity of the English word to the Italian word may lead to the use of an adequate term, but ultimately not to the best choice.

At the bottom of the document that I am translating, there is only the beneficiary’s signature. Therefore, it is not an agreement between two parties (un accordo bilaterale), but a promise that one party makes to another (una promessa unilaterale).

According to Italian law, le promesse unilaterali (promises that one party makes to another) are promises that create the obligation on behalf of the person who makes them, without the need to be accepted (sono promesse che danno luogo all’obbligazione del promittente, senza bisogno di accettazione).

Traditional contract law in the U.S. classifies contracts into bilateral contracts and unilateral contracts. Bilateral contracts involve promises made by all parties, whereas in the unilateral contracts the promises are made only by one of the parties. The Italian system makes a similar distinction, although there is no equivalence to the common law. Atti unilaterali are when only one party makes a promise (dichiarazioni di volontà di una sola parte), whereas contratti are the agreements between two or more parties (sono l’accordo tra due o più parti). The latter are also known as bilateral agreements (accordi bilaterali). Atti unilaterali are not considered contratti.

In this case, the beneficiary is making a promise, but nowhere in the contract does it appear that this promise needs to be accepted. Therefore, in my case, promessa unilaterale seems a good choice to translate contract into Italian.

Bilateral agreements can be written or verbal. According to the general rule that regulates i contratti in Italy (il principio della libertà delle forme), in order for a contratto to be valid and, therefore, enforceable (valido e dunque eseguibile), the parties can make their promises in writing or verbally. However, there are some contracts that must be written in order to be valid. In such cases (including contracts regarding insurance, all real estate property transactions, and marital contracts), there are two kinds of documents that the parties can make: l’atto pubblico or la scrittura privata. The first document is drafted (redatto) by a sollicitore or by another authorized public officer (da un altro pubblico ufficiale autorizzato). The second document is drafted by the parties alone.

The Italian solicitor who drafts un atto pubblico is called a notaio. A notaio is a lawyer, similar to the British solicitor, who has passed a special state exam. This exam is different from the Italian equivalent of the bar exam, but of similar importance, focusing, among many aspects, on real estate and probate matters. According to ART 2699 of the Rules of the Italian Civil Code: in un atto pubblico, the notaio acts as a testimonial (attesta), according to the formalities requested by the notary law (con le formalità richieste dalla legge notarile), regarding the promises that the parties make in his presence (le volontà dichiarate alla sua presenza)

Continued on p.42
In July and August of 2001, articles in this forum described our efforts to "come out of the dark ages" and allow ATA members to use computers for our examination. The complete articles are available on ATA’s website (www.atanet.org) under certification (just click on Certification Program Changes—Related Articles). The obstacles we faced then remain relevant today. We want to retain the translation-based nature of our current exam (rather than substitute a computer-scored multiple-choice test, for example). Preparing exam passages takes an enormous amount of work; we cannot offer new passages at every sitting unless we dramatically reduce the number of sittings per year. This creates security challenges that grow more complicated when computers enter the picture. Proctored computer testing sites involve overhead costs and present other restrictions. Companies we have contacted to explore options fade from the scene when they hear that we need keyboarding capacity not just for English, French, and Spanish, but also for Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Hungarian, Finnish—and the list goes on. We have made little progress since 2001. We have seen more than our share of dead ends. But we have not given up; rather, we have decided to call for help. In Toronto the Certification Committee established a taskforce whose mission is to find—or create—a way for candidates to demonstrate their translation skills on the exam as they do at their own desks. Gabe Bokor will chair the taskforce. Tony Roder, Alan Melby, Jost Zetzsche, and others will bring their expertise to the work. Together, they will make it happen.

Can you help? We need you. Are you computer-savvy? Read the 2001 articles to learn more about the problems we face. Are you creative? Send us the ideas that spring to mind—from far-fetched suggestions to full-fledged solutions. Do you have particular expertise that will move the taskforce toward its goal? Please contact Gabe at gbokor@accurapid.com or Terry Hanlen at terry@atanet.org.

Now for the Easy Part

In October, we mailed each certified ATA member a new Certificate of Certification (dated January 1, 2004) to replace each of the certificates earned when the credential was called accreditation. The packet also contained a Guide to ATA Continuing Education Points (CEPs) and a new form, the Continuing Education Record. The latter document should make it easier for certified members to keep track of the 20 points required in each three-year reporting cycle.

Keep in mind that if you will be 60 years old (or older) at the end of your first reporting period, you are not required to earn CEPs. The first reporting period ends on January 1, 2007, or three years after your certification date, whichever is later. Headquarters will contact each eligible certified member six months in advance of that date. At that point, you will simply send proof of age to verify your exemption. No further reporting will be required. Please do not send proof of age or the Continuing Education Record before we contact you.

If you are a certified ATA member and have not received this packet, please contact Pinky Devkota, the Certification Program Specialist, at pinky@atanet.org or call (703) 683-6100, extension 3013.

Certification Forum: Computers (A Tough Nut to Crack) and Certificates (A Piece of Cake)

By Celia Bohannon, deputy chair, ATA Certification Committee and Terry Hanlen, manager, ATA Certification Program

Not Every Contract is Necessarily a Contratto Continued from page 41

dalle parti). In the scrittura privata, the parties certify the promises that they make. Because there is no equivalent of a notaio in the U.S., scrittura privata could be a good choice to translate contract into Italian, when in the presence of written agreements.

References


Motorists barreling down steep hills on French roads are often advised to use their *frein moteur*, nearly always translated on bilingual signs as “Use your engine brakes,” complains one reader. For U.S. drivers, “Trucks use low gear” is more common, while “Stay in low gear” is the standard phrase in Britain.

Such slips (and far worse) are legion in technical translation, the result of translation suppliers taking on work in areas they do not fully master, then falling back on dictionary lookups of individual words as deadlines loom.

Not so literary translation, where publishers take care to assign books only to linguists steeped in the subject. Literary translators render nuance and style with accuracy and creative flair—or do they?

An intriguing example of a literary translation done in by a translator lacking both foreign-language skills and specialist knowledge is highlighted in a spate of recent books and articles. The victim is Simone de Beauvoir’s classic *The Second Sex*, first published in French in 1949, the perpetrator a retired professor of zoology named Howard Madison Parshley.

The project got off to a bad start due to a basic misunderstanding of the book’s theme, says Deirdre Blair, author of a 1990 biography of Beauvoir.

Blanche Knopf, wife of U.S. publisher Alfred A. Knopf and an editor herself, purchased the exclusive rights to the English new translation, only to discover that the original French says just the opposite, explaining women’s paralysis by the lack of daycare: *faute de crèches, de jardins d’enfants convenablement organisés*.

Parshley also deleted nearly 15% of the original French text. He claimed that these cuts were made with the author’s permission, but according to Blair, Beauvoir called for the Knopf edition to carry a statement dissociating herself from them. The publisher failed to oblige, even as Beauvoir herself failed to respond to the publisher and translator’s repeated requests for consultation on the text in progress.

Did Beauvoir know or care how poor the final result was? Yes, insists her adopted daughter and literary heir, Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir, but only once the full extent of the mistakes was brought to her attention in 1982. In May 2000, Le Bon de Beauvoir wrote to Beauvoir’s French publisher, Gallimard, calling for a new translation, only to discover that exclusive rights to the English-language translation were owned by Knopf and its paperback division, Vintage. To date, the U.S. publishers have shown no interest in producing a new edition.

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Elsevier’s Dictionary of General Zoology and Biology (Russian<->English)

Author: N.N. Smirnov
Publisher: Elsevier
Publication date: 2004
ISBN: 0-444-51700-6
Price: $175; €175; £116.50
Available from: U.S. and Canada Elsevier Customer Service Department 11830 Westline Drive St. Louis, MO 63146

Europe, the Middle East, and Africa Elsevier Customer Service Department Linnacre House Jordan Hill, Oxford, OX2 8DP, UK

Pages: 800 (Russian-to-English section, 442)
Reviewed by: Lydia Razran Stone

From the cover and the one-page write-up included with this dictionary, a reasonable person would expect it to have equal coverage in both directions and to cover all aspects of general biology and zoology. However, the author’s preface frankly states: “The English-Russian part is an alphabetical listing of English key entries. This part may serve as an index to the Russian-English part: having found an English key entry in the English-Russian part, one can find its combinations in the Russian-English part.” Actually, this is not quite true. The English-to-Russian section contains more than just the traditional index: some, but not all, of the subentries with their Russian equivalents are listed in it. I could not identify the principle for selecting subentries for inclusion in the English-to-Russian section, but it would be fair to say that it represents a compromise between a traditional index to listings in the other direction and a full-fledged English-to-Russian dictionary. This review will concentrate on the Russian-to-English section, since this is the direction the author says is basic, as well as the direction in which the reviewer works.

Because of the availability of other Elsevier dictionaries covering botany, the preface states that plant names (“but not (terms) relating to plant anatomy and physiology, nor generic names of plants necessary for understanding environments and landscapes”), as well as terms relating to aquatic biology and the names of fishes, are not included here. So caveat emptor; especially those of you who specialize in fish and flowers.

The physical aspects of this dictionary are impeccable. It is hard bound with a nice, bright red cover, which is a welcome change from all the dull green on our shelves. The paper is somewhat shiny, seemingly tough, and remarkably thin, so that a book with the same number of pages as Callaham is half the thickness, though the same weight. Indeed, one is surprised each time one lifts it at how heavy it is; perhaps, a disadvantage only for little old ladies with bad shoulders. The print is a good size, with entries and subentries in bold face. The format is the more reader-friendly list, rather than run-together paragraph type. Repeated head words are designated by ~. In the Russian-to-English section, parts of speech and noun gender are identified. Accented syllables are marked with ’ after the stressed vowel (отъяди, до́га; ре́ки). Some fraction of terms (perhaps about 5%) are followed by specification of the scientific field where the term is used. Occasionally, other useful disambiguating information is provided in English in parentheses; for example, пастель, н. ф. pastel (coloration of mink). Latin names are given for all species for which there are entries. The only appendix is a one-page list of non-Russian surnames with Cyrillic equivalents. The English-to-Russian section is formatted analogously, with the exception of stress indication. Parenthetical explanations are in English in this section as well. The same list of surnames is included as an appendix.

In the preface, this dictionary claims to cover (with the exceptions noted above) all fields of biology, from cytology and molecular biology to behavior and ecology, with special emphasis on zoology, as well as applied fields such as pathology, veterinary science, biological aspects of medicine, phytopathology, agriculture, forestry, biotechnology, and nature conservation. To assess coverage, I generated a list of 31 words of 2-3-word terms (28 in Russian, and 3 in English) with equivalents that are, to the best of my knowledge, generally used in biological literature (although alternatives may be used as well). I attempted to cover as many of the fields as I could without venturing into unknown territory. Because the practical utility of a dictionary to a translator is relative to that of the ones already owned or available, I compared Smirnov’s coverage to that of several other works in my possession (see the table on page 46).

Smirnov turns out to provide quite good coverage and thorough definitions of the selected terms, all of which are problematic for one
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian word and source field</th>
<th>Suggested best English translation in specific biological context</th>
<th>Smirnov 2004</th>
<th>Chibisova 1993</th>
<th>Callaham IV 1996</th>
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<td>1. агаризованная среда—</td>
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<td>biotechnology, microbiology</td>
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<td>2. анализатор —</td>
<td>afferent portion of sensory system</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>physiology, psychophysiology</td>
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<td>outbred</td>
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<td>experiments on lab animals</td>
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<td>REM sleep</td>
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<td>autonomic (involuntary nervous system)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. максимальное артериальное давление—</td>
<td>systolic blood pressure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medicine, physiology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. медицинская радиология—</td>
<td>nuclear medicine</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medicine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. микробное обесчение—</td>
<td>microbial (bacterial) contamination</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>microbiology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. мощность растений—</td>
<td>plant vigor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>botany</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. опустынивание—</td>
<td>desertification</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ecology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. пластический обмен—</td>
<td>anabolic metabolism, anabolism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physiology, zoology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. покрышение —</td>
<td>reinforcement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animal behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. препарат— virtually all of biology</td>
<td>drug, compound, specimen, mount, rarely preparation</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. природный очаг—</td>
<td>(disease) hot spot, natural focus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epidemiology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reason or another. Indeed, the number of “correct” definitions is virtually equal to that of everyone’s technical Russian bible, Callaham IV. Because of the difference in formats and particularly because C IV typically covers only individual words and not phrases, look-up in Smirnov is easier. That is the good news! The bad news is that Callaham IV actually provides slightly more “hits” than Smirnov, covers a great many additional areas, and, the clincher, many of us already own it.

Unfortunately, there is more bad news. A brief and casual browse through the dictionary revealed errors that one would think any literate Anglonate editor should have been able to catch and eliminate. These range from spelling errors (cell envelope, poor yielding cow) to the use of unnecessarily obscure English words (longevous for долголетний), and culminate in the hilarious dogess as a translation of сука. There may also be a tendency to use British rather than American terms, which is perfectly understandable in a book from a European publisher. I did notice that oatmeal failed to appear alongside porridge as a translation of овсяная каша. Inclusion of New World birds is also deficient (see rows 28 and 29 on the table). I noted no errors in Russian, but that may be because I am not a native speaker. I should also make clear that I found no actual erroneous definitions. A “0” on the chart indicates lack of an entry, and “...” simply means that translations of senses different from the one I was looking for were given. The scores of “1/4” and “1/2” indicate that the dictionary provides some, but not all, of the target definitions. Further browsing revealed

### Table 1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian word and source field</th>
<th>Suggested best English translation in specific biological context</th>
<th>Smirnov 2004</th>
<th>Chibisova 1993</th>
<th>Callaham IV 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. самосевные растения—botany, ecology</td>
<td>volunteer plants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. смыр—medicine, biotechnology, lab work</td>
<td>swab, lavage, flushing, washing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. стайные (of animals)—animal behavior</td>
<td>gregarious</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. тромбоцит—medicine, physiology</td>
<td>platelet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. трунцил—ornithology</td>
<td>(New World) orioles (Icterus)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Russian-to English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>16.75</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English-to-Russian: Term</th>
<th>Suggested best Russian definition</th>
<th>Smirnov</th>
<th>Chibisova</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. blue bird</td>
<td>синий дрозд</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. freeze-dried</td>
<td>лиофилизированный</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. old growth forest</td>
<td>действенный лес</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL English-Russian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1 1/2</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
only a single possible erroneous definition, which may be correct for all I know: *два варианта вида*, which I would want to define as *binary choice*, is rendered here as *two-decision problem*.

**Recommendations:** Knowing what I know now, I would not choose to spend nearly $200 on this dictionary, given that I have *Callaham IV* and a number of more specific dictionaries in various biological disciplines. This is what I would recommend to those in similar situations working mainly from Russian-to-English. Those with this kind of money to spend who do not have *Callaham IV* would be advised to obtain it, even though it now apparently costs $199, with second-hand versions being very difficult to obtain. The only possible exception might be those working exclusively in the biological sciences, in which case, it is a toss-up. I did not thoroughly review the utility of *Smirnov* in the into-Russian direction, but given the author’s preface, I assume that it performs no better, and probably worse, in this direction. Chibisova’s *English Russian Biological Dictionary* (Moscow: Russkiy Yazyk, 1993), which performed on my test (via its Russian-to-English index) nearly as well as *Smirnov*, could be obtained from argosysrus@yahoo.com as late as last year for $25, plus $10 shipping, though I have seen it listed elsewhere for as much as $70. Note that N.N. Smirnov is the second author of this dictionary as well.

**Lydia Razran Stone**, the editor of ATA’s Slavic Languages Division newsletter, *SlavFile*, is a literary and technical translator from Alexandria, Virginia. Her favorite type of translation involves rhymed, children’s and/or humorous poetry. She has a Ph.D. in experimental psychology and worked as a staff translator for NASA specializing in biomedical subjects. She is a Russian-to-English grader, a member of the Certification Committee, and a past member of the Dictionary Review Committee. Contact: lydiastone@verizon.com.

**Harrap’s Business Dictionary, French↔English (new edition)**

**Publisher:** Chamber’s Harrap Publishers Limited 7 Hopetoun Crescent Edinburgh EH74AY

**Publication date:** 2002

**ISBN:** 0245 50506 7 (France) 0245 60714 5 (U.K.)

**Price:** €14.99

**Available from:** Bookshops and online retailers Discounted 25% at www.harrap.co.uk

**Reviewed by:** Sharlee Merner Bradley

Published in March 2003, this hardback business dictionary boasts over 40,000 “references” (terms in both languages?) and claims to cover “the more technical language” of finance, insurance, computing, marketing, and the stock exchange. Some features that may be useful to translators include: quotations from the English and French press; examples of terms in use; information on nations of the world, including the administrative divisions of some; and explanations of French and English financial statements.

First, let us look at the intriguing section advertised as “Tips for Business People Working with Translators”—the other side of the coin of usefulness for translators. How encouraging to find information that will help educate our clients. Alas, it is misinformation that is propagated by the section title, for it turns out that the two pages are actually labeled “Working with an Interpreter” (italics added) in the table of contents, thus disappointing my initial expectations of finding tips for corporate writers of texts that will be translated into another language. That said, the advice for working with interpreters that is given, though brief, is sound. It seems reasonable to suppose that the marketing people used the word “translators” in the section title because they were not knowledgeable about the difference. Or were they simply using popular or lay language to appeal to the typical user of interpreting services, who is usually unaware of the distinction that professionals make between translators and interpreters?

Among the many computer terms, no doubt included because they are considered part of business, we find: *Bluetooth*, although this term hardly needs to be included since it is a registered trademark (especially since the translation given is identical in both languages); “trash,” nicely labeled as American and translated as *poubelle*; “DOS prompt” (*indicatif DOS*); *partagicielle* (“shareware”); and *survoler* (“browse”).

A brief look at the financial component of this dictionary reveals that
For each language, there is also a potentially useful list of abbreviations used in e-mail communications, with indications of the language level (for example, French K7 [familiar] “cassette” and English HTH [“Hope this helps!”]). There are longer lists of abbreviations used in general correspondence, such as BST (British Summer Time), but not EDT (Eastern Daylight Time), and r.p. (réponse payée).

Although this is clearly a dictionary oriented towards European and British business practices, there are many indications of American usage. There are even separate examples of French, British, and American financial statements. Nevertheless, it behooves the American translator to be aware of whether the term this dictionary gives in English is actually what we use in the U.S., even though a British equivalent will often be understood. For example, the translation of patrimoine social (banking) as “social assets” is clearly not American; we would say “assets,” “company assets,” “corporate assets,” or “bank assets.”

One translation problem that is not addressed by Harrap’s concerns the false cognates “execute a contract” and exécuter un contrat; the English means “to sign” it, the French “to perform” it. Routledge goes only part way, translating exécuter (contract) as “to implement” and exécuter (travaux) as “to perform” (work).

As with many specialized dictionaries, the editors seem unable to exclude vocabulary that can be found in general dictionaries or glossaries of other specialties. For example, should a business dictionary include ferraille (scrap metal) and “lorry driver” (chauffeur de poids lourd)? There are relatively few such unrelated terms in Harrap’s, however.

Among unexpected inclusions we find “DVD” and the German term pfennig (but no “cent”).

Here are some comments on other French-to-English business dictionaries.


Authors: Bernard Gillmann & Martin Verrel
Publisher: Barron’s Educational Series, Inc.
250 Wireless Boulevard
Hauppauge, NY 11788
Publication date: 1996
ISBN: 0-8120-9514-6
Price: $13.95 from Continental Book Company, Inc. (303) 289-1761

I have seen few dictionaries that are really good for translation into English (American). This one was originally published in Germany by Ernst Klett Verlag in Stuttgart (1994) as **Thematischer Wirtschaftswortschatz Franzöisch**, translated from the German by Elizabeth D. Crawford. Now it is available in Barron’s Educational Series, another success, like their Business Series (English only, on business, insurance, law, etc.).

Among the 25 subject areas into which it is divided are: labor; the company; corporate structure; financial structure; production; marketing; international trade; telephone communications; shipping; bank instruments; and the national economy.

With 3,000+ basic vocabulary and 2,300 more advanced terms, most
are illustrated with informative model sentences in French and English. It is especially good for phrases, giving collocations: *mettre en gage* “pledge, raise money on, give as a pledge.”

This is one of my favorite dictionaries.

### French Dictionary of Business, Commerce, and Finance

**French ↔ English**

**Publisher:** Routledge

29 West 35th Street  
New York, NY 10001

**Publication date:** 1996

**ISBN:** 0-415-09394-5

Also on CD at www.routledge.com

There are some curiosities in this Routledge edition. One-third of a page is devoted to various types of boilers, their translations, and English abbreviations. The inclusion of these terms in a business dictionary is questionable. *Mogadiscio* (Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia) is translated as “Mogadischu,” which is German, and called a *nom propre*, but Moldavie (Moldova, formerly Moldavia), also a *nom proper*, is merely feminine. This dictionary is also British-oriented, although some Americanisms are so marked.

### NTC’s French and English Business Dictionary

**Authors:** Michel Marcheteau et al.

**Publisher:** National Textbook Company  
4255 West Touhy Avenue  
Lincolnwood (Chicago), IL 60646-1975

**Publication date:** 1992

**ISBN:** 0844214825 ($19 and up, used at amazon.com)

**Price:** $39.95 (out of print)

I was surprised to see the entry “sweepstake” in the supplement at the back. Perhaps that is British usage, for American usage is plural only. Like many other dictionaries, there are too many terms that can be found in a general dictionary (*photographe*, *physique*, *pharmacie*, and *philatélie*). Occasionally, terms are found here that are not in other dictionaries (except in *Harrap’s Unabridged*). For instance, *papillon* is translated at “leaflet,” “slip.” Routledge translated it as “attachment” in an insurance context.

### Delmas Dictionnaire des Affaires/Harrap Business Dictionary

**French ↔ English**

**Authors:** Georges Anderla & Georgette Schmidt-Anderla

**Publisher:** J. Delmas et Cie/George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.

**Publication date:** 1972

**ISBN:** 2-7034-0001-2

Mostly out-of-date, as to be expected. I’ve rarely, if ever, found a term I needed.

### Grand Harrap Dictionnaire français-anglais (two volumes)

**Publisher:** Harrap  
19-23 Ludgate Hill  
London EC4M 7PD

**Publication date:** 1982

**ISBN:** 0 245-53773-2

No French translator should be without it, like the second edition of Webster’s.

### Oxford Hachette French Dictionary

**Publisher:** Oxford University Press  
200 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

**Publication date:** 1994

**ISBN:** 0-19-864519-8

**Price:** $35

This is a really modern reference. Among many acceptions for *papillon*, it gives “self-stick note” (Americans would like to see “Post-it®” and “sticky note” as well).

### Termium® 2001

**Available from:**  
On CD-ROM from the Translation Bureau of Public Works and Government Services Canada. Also online.

This is an essential reference.

### Key to examples:

- H = Harrap’s
- B = Barron’s
- R = Routledge
- N = NTC
- D = Delmas
- HU = Harrap’s Unabridged (1981)
- O = Oxford
- T = Termium

### Examples found:

1. The title of part of a 1998 French
financial statement:

**Filiales étrangères: Cumul des résultats sociaux 1996-2000**

(In spite of the title, the later years do not indicate résultats, but plans, according to the column headings on the page, lest the reader question the dates.)

A. Cumul des résultats was not found as a phrase in any of the dictionaries. The following were found under *cumul*:

- **H:** (r. de fonctions, de mandats, de pouvoirs) “concurrent holding,” etc.
- (de salaires) “concurrent drawing” [not appropriate]
- **B:** Not found
- **R:** Not found
- **N:** “cumulation” (de fonctions) “plurality of offices” [neither term is appropriate]
- **D:** “plurality,” “lumping”
- **HU:** “cumulative total” [redundant with “results”]
- **O:** *cumul de risques*, etc., including “aggregate” (de responsabilité)

B. Résultats sociaux as a phrase was not found in any.

- **H:** Several equivalents, but not *r. sociaux*
- **B:** None
- **R:** Several, including résultats de la société, “company results,” but not *r. sociaux*
- **N:** Several, including résultats d’une société, “corporate profits,” “corporate performance,” but not *r. sociaux*
- **D:** Several, but not *r. sociaux*
- **HU:** Several, but not *r. sociaux*
- **O:** Two, including *r. de l’année*, but not *r. sociaux*

Consolidated statements are now an EU requirement, but it’s a relatively recent one. In the Anglo-Saxon world, companies must publish consolidated statements, so you never even see their *comptes sociaux*. I would say ‘combined results 1996-2000 (unconsolidated).”

C. Summary for *cumul de résultats sociaux*

- **cumul:***
  - **H:** ?
  - **B:** n
  - **R:** n
  - **N:** n
  - **D:** ?
  - **HU:** ?
  - **O:** ?

- **résultats sociaux:***
  - **H:** ?
  - **B:** n
  - **R:** ?
  - **N:** ?
  - **D:** ?
  - **HU:** ?
  - **O:** ?

Since none of the dictionaries gave a satisfactory translation for the title, I consulted a colleague. According to financial translator Bob Killingsworth (specializing in French-to-English):

> “*cumul des résultats sociaux*” probably means that the published financial statements of the foreign subsidiaries have simply been added together (presumably after having been expressed in the same currency) *arithmetically*—that is, without eliminating intercompany transactions. Ideally, all the companies would have been ‘consolidated’ to avoid that distortion. ‘Compte sociaux,’ usually translated as individual company accounts/financial statements, are by definition unconsolidated. French companies are taxed on their ‘résultats sociaux’ and are therefore required to publish their unconsolidated statements.

2. Variations PPNA:

planification, programmation nonactualisées

- **H:** n
- **B:** n
- **R:** n
- **N:** n
- **D:** n
- **HU:** n
- **O:** n
- **T:** n

Ménard: n

3. Found as a unit:

*maré technique (nette)*

- **H:** n
- **B:** n
- **R:** n
- **N:** n
- **D:** n
- **HU:** n
- **O:** n
- **T:** n

*maré financière*

*“financial spread”*

- **H:** n
- **B:** n
- **R:** n
- **N:** n
- **D:** n
- **HU:** n
- **O:** n
- **T:** y

Continued on p.60
It was the strangest thing. I was talking in September to a well-read man, fluent in several important European languages. He is a freelance writer and has several books to his credit, all in a language of limited diffusion. While I was in his home, he picked up a recently printed rough draft of the first major excerpt of his work that had been translated into English. “I have a grand feeling about this,” he said. “Why?” I asked. “Because,” he explained, “Now that it has reached English, it has a power and dignity that it never had.” “How on earth could you feel that way?” I said, totally bewildered. “It’s just the same power,” he replied, “but that other language is English, a world language, and I’ve never been translated in that powerhouse language.”

I decided to continue the line of logic to see how far it went with him. “Does it follow, then, that you wish to have your native language translated into English?” I asked. “Oh no, not at all,” he replied, “but that other language is English, a world language, and I’ve never been translated in that powerhouse language.”

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

**New Queries**

(E-I 11-04/1) It’s the labyrinthine world of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and in that world, one of its agents has gotten too involved in a case. Her boss puts her on probation as a disciplinary measure. What is this probation? Is it merely closer scrutiny by the higher-ups? Or, going to the other extreme, is she suspended from active service? Is she off the case, or at least not the main detective for it? Oh, yes, and as an afterthought, what about the Italian for this?

(E-R 11-04/2) The concept of pellets (cell pellets, pellet culture, chondrogenic pellet) was a bit too much for this translator working on a stem cell article into Russian. Mention was made of cartilage derived from human MSCs grown from a cell pellet, calculation of the total number of pellet cultures, and the number of hMSCs required to form each chondrogenic pellet. Be in the forefront of medical technology and tackle this one, if you can.

(E-Sw 11-04/3) Regretting that no further context was available, a ProZ user wanted to know what the dental device or material bristle disk was in Swedish.

(E-Sw 11-04/4) In a document that clearly seems to point to a process to remove moiré effects from a scanner, a ProZer found the English verb to descreen. This was under the heading of advanced settings. How to provide good Swedish for this?

(F-E 11-04/5) In connection with the tunnel project between Lyon and Turin, along with jobs relating to it, a Lantran found “métiers mobilisateurs” in a list of bullets. It sounds something like motivating, but this translator hesitated to use that because perhaps the client was thinking of something special in the context of the tunnel project. A request to the client evoked a reply of “oui, ça veut bien dire ‘qui attirent du monde.’” That didn’t help. What’s this all about?

(F-E 11-04/6) The device which this Lantra member was asking about is a protective device on a paint line. It is defined as a fusible “d’accompagnement moteur.” What is it?

(G-E 11-04/7) Let’s get culinary. A user of Lantra-l wants American English for “Ausbackfett.” She guesses shortening, but keeps wondering if the word is synonymous with “Backfett.”

(G-E 11-04/8) A ProZ member was really puzzled by “für Protest und Vorlegung” in a legal text. Here’s the context sentence: “Schecks und Wechsel werden nur erfüllungshalber und ohne Gewähr für Protest und Vorlegung sowie nur nach Vereinbarung und unter Voraussetzung der Diskontierbarkeit angenommen.” And do the puzzling four words logically belong with “nur erfüllungshalber?”

(Po-E 11-04/9) “Frez” was the problem word in the context of binding and printing for this ProZ translator. The sentence reads: “Kolumny przygotowane dla broszur klejonych powinny miez spad 3 mm na frez od strony grzbietowej.” What about the frez?

(Sp-E 11-04/10) In the context of mattresses, what does “sulfilado” mean, wonders a ProZ member. It appeared in this context: “mesa de sulfilado en colchones.”

(Sp-E 11-04/11) The Translation Inquirer suspects this is not a Spanish query at all, but may be a matter that originated in that broad swath of territory that was labeled as French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa when he was a boy. A Lantra-l user was working on the translation of a novel in which the main character was Mma Precious Ramotswe. The abbreviation is puzzling. What does it stand for?

**Replies to Old Queries**

(E-E 11-04/1) (“herwerkt”): This past participle of “herwerken” is used mostly in the Flemish part of Belgium, says Dr. R. Haeseryn, in place of “herzien.” In English, the verb means to revise. “Een herwerkte uitgave” is a revised edition.
(D-E 8-04/1) (“recht tot sturen”): Dr. R. Haerseryn points out that this is a term from Belgian traffic regulations and corresponds to the French “droit de conduire.” Both mean the right to drive a vehicle. David McKay concurs. Sijbout Colenbrander explains that “recht” is right, qualification, validity, and “een stuur” is a steering wheel or handle bars on a bike. Referring to the full context of the initial query on page 52 of the August Chronicle, she renders it as periods in which the right to drive and exams already taken are no longer valid or are declared void.

Commenting on the full context, Hugo Strubbe states that “vervallen-verklaring” is the suspension of the right to drive; to get it back, you need to retake some exams (“afgeledge examens”). Being much larger than an American license, the Belgian driver’s license has room on it to record as many as eight suspensions and dates. Surprisingly, Belgium only began to introduce the driver’s license around 1965.

(E-R 8-04/4) (World council... Greenhouse gas...reporting and accounting standard): Vadim Khazin suggests Всемирный Совет по устойчивому развитию, март 2004 г., Протокол по парниковым газам—стандарт для отчетов о работе и бюджетах корпораций. Inna Persits-Gimelberg prefers Всемирный Совет по Постоянному (Долгосрочному) Развитию, март 2004 года. Протокол Эффекта Тепличного Пара: стандарт коллективной отчетности и подотчетности (пересмотренное и исправленное издание). For the full text of the English, see page 52 of the August Chronicle.

(F-E 7-04/3) (“L’assise boutonnée”): Gunter Strumpf used Google to find out that it is a button seat with old-fashioned, tufted (club) leather upholstery, diamond-shaped leather panels, with a flat, leather-covered button at the points of the diamonds. The description was easy because Google led him to actual pictures of the thing.

(F-E 8-04/5) (“feu de flash”): Danielle Reitzes has never heard this expression, and prefers to use embrasement éclair,” which captures both the fire and the flash. “Déflagration” implies an idea of explosion that is not contained in flash fire.

(F-E 8-04/6) (“en bon pour execution”): Sharlee Bradley says that the colloquial English for this is good to go. In other words, whatever it refers to is ready for the next step, and the phrase signs off on it before handing it on. Daniel Reitzes says this phrase, in the original context, means approval to go ahead with manufacture of the product.

Muriel Valenta states that this often appears as an abbreviation, BPE, and is used mainly in engineering and in the building industry. Its meaning, from the viewpoint of the project manager or client, is that approval is given either to the project or quote so that it can be started (or implemented, or submitted). An equivalent to BPE in the printing industry is BAT (“bon à tirer”), which is OK to print.

(G-E 7-04/3) (“Suprastruktur”): To differentiate this from infrastructure, Gunter Strumpf suggests buildings and structures.

(G-E 7-04/6) (“glossierende Synonymie”): This, asserts Gunter Strumpf, is nothing more than what the good old Thesaurus has been doing for many years.

(I-E 7-04/7) (“tappeti”): Given the context, Gunter Strumpf suggests conveyor belts. However, Elizabeth Hill calls them trays.

(I-E 7-04/8) (“una docile fibra del-l’universo”): Gunter Strumpf likes a plant (or wieldy) fiber. Coming at it obviously from a totally different direction, Elizabeth Hill suggests whisper.

(Pl-E 5-04/12) (“ombroclima”): Oops, we omitted something important when we gave Alex Schwartz’s response to this on page 53 of the August Chronicle. The section should have read, “...became ‘imber’ in Latin. In contrast to ‘pluvia,’ this means heavy or pelting rain.” So ignore what was written in the August issue; it’s “imber” that has, unfortunately, been so damaging to Florida this summer, not “pluvia.” Floridians would have welcomed more “pluvia” with sighs of relief.

(Sw-E 8-04/11) (“utgirering”): Hakan Stjernfeldt explains that this is all part of a Swedish payment system where a person goes into a bank or post office and requests that the institution transfer funds from his or her account into another person’s account, or presents cash to be credited to that other person’s account. “Ingirering” is the process whereby funds are transferred into the receiving account. A bank or post office may mistakenly transfer too much money, resulting in the need to adjust. “En ingirering av överinbetalning” is a debiting to adjust for an excessive deposit. Hakan suggests a debit to adjust for over deposit or debit for over deposit as a good English rendering.

Another calendar year of The Translation Inquirer is over and it’s time to thank all the contributors. Individually, no; that would require too much space. But if you helped in any way with the column, you know that I mean you, in all your selfless glory.
Franklin Ennik submitted the following sentence, saying it “would give translators fits”:

Do you think that that “that” that that guy used was correct?

And I remember a similar sentence from my childhood:

Jim, where John had had “had,” had had “had had.” “Had had” had the approval of the editor.

There are at least three ways to translate these sentences. The first is to simply translate literally for meaning, losing the joke. The second is to only approximate the meaning and create a sentence with roughly the same effect in the target language. And the third way, probably doomed to fail, is to try to translate it all, both meaning and linguistic effect. Even so, if I were translating a novel in which such a sentence appeared, and both literal meaning and effect were important, I would probably first try to translate everything. When that failed, I would then give two translations, one literal and one for effect, and put one translation in the body of the text and the other in a footnote. If any readers of this column have ever encountered such sentences, or are willing to tackle either of the two above, please let me know your final result.

There are other types of passages that are virtually impossible to translate, such as those that depend on the clash between standard and non-standard usage. Cliff Landers, administrator of ATA’s Literary Division and editor of its newsletter, Source, has often remarked on the difficulty of translating a dialect or other non-standard diction. Readers are invited to try translating into any language the following, recently sent to Ronnie Apter and me by our son Ry:

So, I wuz sendin’ out an e-mail the other day, and someone started bustin’ my grammar skillz, ‘cuz I wuz usin’ the phrase “from whoever is present,” and they were all like, “Dude, you’re usin’ whoever as an indirect object, it should be ‘whomever,’ yo,” and I wuz all like, “Yo, the entire clause ‘whoever is present’ is the object of the preposition ‘from,’” and ‘whoever’ is the subject of that clause, and you wouldn’t use ‘whomever is present’ in a sentence any more than you would ever say ‘her is present’ in any clause, so IN YOUR FACE!” , ‘cuz ain’t nobody messes with the grammar of an Apter child, yo.

Impossible Translations

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IJET-16
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IJET Sets Sail to the Windy City

The Japan Association of Translators (JAT) is pleased to announce the 16th Annual International Japanese/English Translation Conference (IJET-16). Translators and interpreters from across the globe will journey to the Westin Chicago River North in Chicago for the world’s premiere English↔Japanese translation conference. Chicago, also known as the Windy City, features spectacular architecture, excellent restaurants, plentiful shopping, and convenient public transportation. Plan to stay a few days longer to take in the city.

Informative Sessions
As at past IJETs, Saturday and Sunday will be packed with sessions. Saturday will begin with an opening ceremony and a speech by ATA President Scott Brennan.Shortly thereafter, Cornelius Iida, interpreter to Presidents Carter and Reagan, will give the keynote address. After lunch, nine presentations on topics relating to translation and interpretation will be given in three breakout rooms. Sunday will feature 15 presentations, again in three breakout rooms.

IJET-16 received a very generous $3,000 grant from ATA’s Japanese Language Division. Some of the grant money has been allocated toward the keynote speaker. The remainder will be used as honoraria for expert speakers who are not necessarily translators. These recognized experts will share their knowledge with IJET-16 attendees.

The organizing committee has received so many excellent proposals for presentations that we decided to have two extra days for field-specific presentations. Tentatively, three presentations will be given on Friday afternoon before the Zenyasai, or pre-conference dinner. A post-conference seminar is slated for Monday morning.

There’s More
IJET conferences are an excellent place to catch up on industry trends and network with colleagues, but it’s hard to do everything in the two days normally allotted for an IJET. That’s why IJET-16 will be a four-day conference. In addition to the Friday and Monday field-specific seminars, there will be meetings of special interest groups (SIGs) on Monday morning. In a roundtable format, each SIG will cover one theme directly or indirectly related to translation (e.g., pharmaceuticals, parenting and translation, finance, tax issues). SIGs will meet in a restaurant, park, coffee shop, bar, or other location instead of a stuffy conference room. Feel free to propose a SIG of your own. In addition, an exhibit hall featuring translation companies and vendors of translation tools and software will be open on Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday.

Visit www.jat.org/ijet/ijet-16 and follow the links for more information. To receive periodic e-mails about the conference, contact Ben Tompkins, organizing committee chair, at ijet@sbcglobal.net.
ATA Chapters, Affiliated Groups, and Other Groups

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Tel: (770) 587-4884
aaitinfo@aait.org • www.aait.org

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Tel: (919) 577-0840
catiweb@pobox.com • www.catiweb.org

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www.fortunecity.de/lindenpark/kuenstler/59/dvta.htm

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Salt Lake City, UT 84110
jcalleman@aol.com
www.stampscapes.com/utia

Other Groups

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www.literarytranslators.org

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president@aatia.org • www.aatia.org

The California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)
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ccia345@earthlink.net • www.ccia.org

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Note: For more information on chapters or to start a chapter, please contact ATA Headquarters. Send updates to Mary David, ATA Chronicle, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Tel: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; Mary@atanet.org.
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(Please note that this is a new address, as the PEN offices have moved.)

All application materials must be received by January 15, 2005. They will not be returned. Submissions will be judged by a jury of prominent translators, writers, and editors on the quality of the original work and the quality of the translation. In cases of equal merit, priority will be given to underrepresented languages and authors and to works previously untranslated.

For further information consult www.pen.org, or e-mail Peter G. Meyer, director of literary awards, at peter@pen.org.

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CALL FOR SPEAKERS

Dictionary Reviews
Continued from page 51

Conclusion
For U.S. translators from French, of the dictionaries listed above, I would recommend the Barron’s and the NTC, as they are more reflective of American English than the others, and Termium above all. Nevertheless, the new Harrap’s has much to recommend it as an additional resource, and it is bound to be helpful for translations into French.

Sharlee Merner Bradley has a doctorate in Romance lexicography, has translated for the United Nations in Geneva, the U.S. federal courts, California government agencies, the Marin County Health Department, and has been a freelance translator of French and Spanish into English for many years, in addition to being the long-time secretary of ATA’s Dictionary Review Committee. Contact: smbradley@compuserve.com.
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