in this issue: Interpreting
Can you find meaning in shades of gray?

BECOME A LANGUAGE ANALYST AT NSA

Mastering a foreign language is more than simple translation. It’s about nuance, context, cultural overtones, and dialect.

And at NSA, it’s about national security.

Our Language Analysts have a global impact in providing the fullest and most accurate intelligence to U.S. policymakers, military commanders, and Intelligence Community members.

You’ll also have the opportunity to learn new languages and expand upon current proficiencies through our Language Enhancement Program.

If you’re ready for the responsibility, join NSA, where intelligence goes to work.

NSA has a critical need for individuals with the following language capabilities:

- Arabic
- Chinese
- Farsi
- Korean

And more …

For a complete list of languages or to apply online, visit our Web site.

U.S. citizenship is required for all applicants. NSA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and abides by applicable employment laws and regulations.
Features

18  Treasury Department Responds to ATA on Freedom to Translate
By Kirk Anderson

19  ATA Medical Seminar: An Attendee’s Perspective
By Deb Kramasz
ATA’s Medical Translation and Interpreting Seminar in Minneapolis not only provided specialized and difficult-to-find information, but also gave participants a welcome networking opportunity.

20  CIATI Conference in Brazil Spotlights ATA Speakers: Focus on Literary Translation
By Alexandra Russell-Bitting
Some 900 linguists descended on the Universidade Iberoamericana to explore the theme of “New Times, an Old Art—Translation, Technology, Talent.”

22  The Proper Care and Feeding of Humans: Human Resources Basics for Translation Companies
By Kim Vitray
Your human resources—your employees—are your most important assets. Here is some basic information about how to manage their employment process—from hiring to performance evaluations and termination.

27  Translating at the U.S. Department of State: Past, Present, and Future
By Joseph P. Mazza
The State Department’s Office of Language Services (LS) has been providing translations to the nation’s diplomats and policy makers for over 200 years. Generations of staff translators, including many colorful figures, have helped LS develop a high level of institutional expertise in the rarefied art of diplomatic translation.
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**
  Hays Affinity Solutions (HAYS)
  (866) 310-4297 • (202) 263-4016
  cjones@hayscompanies.com or Laura McCormick—lmccormick@hayscompanies.com
  www.hayscompanies.com

- **Collection Services/Receivables Management**
  Dun & Bradstreet
  Mike Horoski
  (800) 333-6497 ext. 7226
  (484) 242-7226
  Horoskim@dnb.com

- **Credit Card Acceptance Program/Professional Services Account**
  NOVA Information Systems
  Reference Code: HCDA
  (888) 545-2207 • (770) 649-5700

- **MasterCard**
  MBNA America
  Reference Code: IFKV
  (800) 847-7378 • (302) 457-2165

- **Life and Disability Insurance**
  Mutual of Omaha
  (800) 223-6927 • (402) 342-7600
  www.atanet.org/mutual.htm

- **Overnight Delivery/Express Package Service**
  UPS
  Reference Code: C0000700415
  (800) 325-7000
  www.ups.com

- **Professional Liability Insurance**
  Hays Affinity Solutions (HAYS)
  (866) 310-4297 • (202) 263-4016
  cjones@hayscompanies.com or mdurig@hayscompanies.com
  http://www.haysaffinity.com

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

- **Website Development**
  Two Rad Technologies
  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.

Moving? Find an error with your address?

We’ve done everything possible to ensure that your address is correct. But sometimes errors do occur. If you find that the information on the mailing label is inaccurate or out of date, please let us know. Send updates to:

The ATA Chronicle • 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 390 • Alexandria, VA 22314
Fax (703) 683-6122 • Chronicle@atanet.org
32  The Embassy Translator: A Connecting Link Between Cultures and Countries
   By Cheryl A. Fain
   Through translating and editing embassy documents with a U.S. reader or audience in
   mind, a translator for a foreign embassy in the U.S. plays a vital role in helping the
   embassy to accomplish its mission and achieve its goals.

36  An Exercise in the Organization of Interpreting Services at High-Level
Diplomatic Conferences
   By Georganne Weller
   This article deals with simultaneous interpreting services at a specific high-level
   diplomatic event and stresses the key role played by the chief interpreter.

40  Invisible in the Spotlight: Interpreting for Film and Performing Artists
   By Ellen Sowchek
   The consecutive interpreter working with film and performing artists has the privilege
   of being able to assist them in communicating their works and ideas to the public. It is
   incredibly rewarding, but it requires considerable preparation and, on occasion, is not
   for the faint-of-heart.

44  Lunch with a Legend
   By Tanya Gesse©
   An interview with Peter Less, who served as an interpreter at the Nuremberg War
   Crimes Tribunal.

Display Advertising Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Company/Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Atril</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.atril.com">www.atril.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Language Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.languagemasters.com">www.languagemasters.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.cia.gov">www.cia.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>GMT Italian Language Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.gmt-ils.it">www.gmt-ils.it</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>National Security Agency (NSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.nsa.gov">www.nsa.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>US State Dept., Office of Language Svcs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.state.gov">www.state.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>TRADOS Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.translationzone.com">www.translationzone.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Terminotix, Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.terminotix.com">www.terminotix.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>WordFinder Software International AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.wordfinder.com">www.wordfinder.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medical Translation and Interpreting:
A Resource Guide

This compilation of articles from ATA publications is a comprehensive
resource for translating and interpreting in the medical field.
$20 Members • $25 Nonmembers
Order online—atnet.org—or
call Headquarters at
703.683.6100.
About Our Authors...

Cheryl A. Fain has been the in-house translator and editor for the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington since 1994, and has over 20 years of professional experience. Her translations have been published in *The Washington Post*, *The Kennedy Center Stagebill*, *The Swiss American Review*, *Vision: Science and Innovation Made in Switzerland*, *International Journal of the Georg Fischer Corporation*, and in the proceedings of the 1998 Bavois Latsis Forum. An ATA-certified translator from German and French into English, she holds an M.A. in German-English translation from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and spent a year at the University of Salzburg in Austria as an undergraduate. Contact: cheryl.fain@was.rep.admin.ch or cherylfain@aol.com.

Tanya Gesse is a conference interpreter of English, Russian, German, and Hebrew based in Chicago. Contact: tanya@tanyagesse.com.

Deb Kramasz has been involved in the translation industry since 1987 as a freelance translator, agency owner, and now as a language consultant at Prisma International, a global communications company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is a founding member of the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association, an ATA chapter, and holds a B.A. in technical communications. Contact: debkramasz@aol.com.

Joseph P. Mazza (B.A., international politics, George Washington University, 1984) joined the U.S. State Department’s Office of Language Services (LS) in 1989 as a translator of Spanish, Portuguese, and French into English, having previously spent five years as a translator of Russian and Romance languages at the Department of the Navy. He was promoted to reviewer at LS in 1993, added Italian to his roster, and was named chief of the Romance Branch at LS in 2003. During his 15 years at the State Department, he has helped to build up the electronic and library resources available to staff translators and interpreters, to revise the *LS Handbook* (the LS guide to written English style and usage), and to overhaul translation testing procedures. Contact: mazzajp2@state.gov.

Alexandra Russell-Bitting has been a staff translator-reviser at a Washington-based international organization for 16 years, working from French, Spanish, and Portuguese into English. She has worked freelance for other international organizations such as UNESCO, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Organization of American States, as well as for the U.S. Department of State. She has taught translation at Georgetown University and the Université de Paris VIII. She is vice-president of the National Capital Area Chapter of ATA, an active member of ATA, a regular contributor to the *ATA Chronicle*, and serves on ATA’s Public Relations Committee. Contact: alexandrarb@yahoo.com.

Ellen Sowchek is an ATA-certified French–English translator and interpreter based in New York. She has translated scripts, dialogue treatments, legal documents, press materials, and film credits for many films. As an interpreter, she has worked with a number of major French choreographers, dancers, film directors, and actors, individually and in venues such as Lincoln Center, the Walter Reade Theater, the Joyce Theater, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Florence Gould Hall, and at a number of film festivals, including the New York Film Festival, Rendez-Vous with New French Cinema (Film Society of Lincoln Center), the Jewish Film Festival, the Sephardic Film Festival, and Dance on Film. Contact: esowchek@pipeline.com.

Kim Vitray has been operations manager at McElroy Translation in Austin, Texas, since February 1999. She is also currently the assistant administrator of ATA’s Translation Company Division. Prior to joining McElroy, she was the production manager for a niche medical and scientific publishing company, also in Austin, for 12 years. She has 15 years of experience in small business operations and human resources management, and holds a Professional in Human Resources certification from the Society for Human Resources Management. Contact: vitray@mcelroytranslation.com.

Georganne Weller obtained her Ph.D. in applied linguistics from the University of Delaware and her M.S. in sociolinguistics from Georgetown University. She has been a professor of interpretation and translation for many years, as well as an academic director at the Instituto de Intérpretes de Chile, the University of Delaware, the Center for Interpretation and Translation at the University of Hawaii, and the Instituto de Intérpretes y Traductores in Mexico City. She is currently the co-director of Centro de Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada in Mexico City, a freelance interpreter for the Free Trade Area of the Americas trade negotiations in Puebla, Mexico, and is active in the design of T&I programs for the Indian languages of Mexico. She holds federal certification in court interpreting and a contract with the U.S. Department of State and the Canadian government for conference and seminar interpreting. She was recently awarded the Premio Malintzin by the Colegio Mexicano de Intérpretes de Conferencia for outstanding contributions to the profession of conference interpretation in Mexico. Contact: georgann@avantel.net or gemavaniki@yahoo.com.
Understanding world languages is key to fulfilling the mission of the CIA. That’s why the Agency offers in-depth training to provide students with the foreign language communication skills and cross-cultural awareness they need to live and work abroad.

As a Foreign Language Instructor, your native-level fluency and knowledge of a foreign region’s history, culture, politics and economy can provide the critical tools our professionals depend on around the world. In return, you’ll earn a competitive salary and receive a hiring bonus — while supporting the efforts of American foreign policy.

Applicants must be US citizens. All competitive candidates must successfully complete a medical evaluation, polygraph interview and an extensive background investigation. As part of the screening process, selected applicants will be required to take proficiency tests in their native language.

For complete information, job postings and to apply, visit: www.cia.gov

An equal opportunity employer and a drug-free work force.
Call for Candidates:  
Putting a Human Face on Linguists

“The American public doesn't understand the relationship between interpreters and translators and their own prosperity, well-being, and security,” said former White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers in November 1999, acknowledging an image vacuum that plagues language service providers.

One way to raise awareness, she told her ATA audience, is to “put a human face on the translators and interpreters who are out there doing the hard work.” To connect translation to the lives of the American public by telling the story of translators on the job, “whether it’s at the Olympics or at a trade summit, or as part of some private business deal.”

ATA’s PR Committee agrees. And in our ongoing effort to raise awareness of the profession, we will be profiling a selection of translators and interpreters drawn from the association’s membership this year.

If you have a story to tell—an interesting assignment, a notable success, an unusual language combination, or simply a passion for your work—please contact us. If you can recommend a colleague with a story, we’re interested, too. You provide the background, we’ll do the write-up. Send a brief description of what makes your practice special to ata@atanet.org (mark your mail “translator profile candidate”), and help us promote the profession!

Kevin Hendzel  
Co-chair, ATA Public Relations Committee  
khendzel@asetquality.com

Chris Durban  
Co-chair, ATA Public Relations Committee  
chrisdurban@compuserve.com
From the President

Talk to Me

This year I celebrate my tenth anniversary with the American Translators Association. When I first discovered ATA in 1994, I had only been translating a few years. Before then, I scarcely knew other translators and interpreters like me existed!

At my first annual conference, fellow Italian translators welcomed me warmly into their circle, and I still consider them among my closest friends in the association. Volunteering has steadily broadened that initial circle. For me, ATA’s lifeblood has always been the rewarding relationships and exchange of ideas with other translators and interpreters.

I and the other ATA officers and directors are committed to listening and responding on the basis of input we receive from you. I make a point of phoning other ATA members for their opinions, and I encourage you to communicate your views to me and other colleagues through any of the many channels available.

For example, ATA maintains a forum for members to discuss association issues. It is located in the Members Only section of ATA’s website at www.atanet.org (click on ATA Forum). ATA’s divisions host listservs devoted to the technical and practical aspects of our working lives.

At the annual conference this year in Toronto, you are cordially invited to Breakfast with the Board every day. We are there to listen. (Okay, maybe to get some coffee, too.) There is also a special session on Thursday morning following the elections for you to share your views with ATA Board members in a less structured format than the annual business meeting allows. In addition, ATA Board meetings are always open to members.

Please ask questions. We are a complex organization with over a hundred volunteers working on a range of initiatives at all times. I am one of just a few with a bird’s-eye view. We have a long history of working through complex issues within the association. Sometimes a missing piece of information is all it takes to clear up a misconception or misunderstanding.

I encourage you to contact me directly at (703) 997-0063, president@atanet.org, or 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314. I had an interesting conversation recently with a colleague, who mused that some members might have quibbles, rooted in their home culture, about initiating a conversation with the president of an organization. Please don’t feel that way. Talking with colleagues is one of the most personally enriching aspects of my work with the association.

Since all ATA officers and directors are translators or interpreters who serve the association as volunteers, on complex issues it may take the Board a little time to determine the association’s position and provide a response. But our commitment to ATA members is absolute. We welcome any suggestions or comments that you wish to provide. We take them seriously, and we consider the totality of the input we receive in determining what actions ATA should take.

I’m listening. So talk to me.

TIP-Lab 11th Annual Distance Spanish Translation/Revision Workshop

TIP-Lab is pleased to announce its 11th Annual Distance Spanish Translation/Revision Workshop, scheduled from February to July 2005. Participants will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Excellent command of both Spanish and English is a requirement. In the course of the workshop, four texts will be translated by the participants, reviewed by Leandro Wolfson, a professional translator from Argentina, and returned to each translator with revisions, annotated comments, and a model translation selected each month from the group. As in previous years, application for continuing education credit will be submitted to the Judicial Council of California, the Washington State Courts, and ATA.

Registration is open. Space is limited and has filled very quickly in the past. For further information and to request a brochure with the registration form, call, fax or e-mail: TIP-Lab, c/o Alicia Marshall (847) 869-4889 (phone/fax), e-mail: aliciamarshall@comcast.net.
From the Executive Director
Board Meeting Highlights

The American Translators Association Board of Directors met July 24-25 in San Francisco, California, as an opportunity to scout hotels for the 2008 Annual Conference. The Board also got a chance to meet and talk with 50 local ATA members who attended a special reception. As always, the Board meeting was open to all members.

Here are some other highlights.

**Candidates for ATA Board of Directors.** The 2004 Nominating Committee presented the Board with the slate of candidates for the 2004 elections. Elections will be held for four directors at the ATA Annual Conference in Toronto. Running for the three open three-year terms on the Board are Robert Croese, Nicholas Hartmann, Dorothée Racette, Tony Roder, and Robert Sette. Beatriz Bonnet will run to serve the one year remaining in the term of Laura Wolfson, who resigned earlier this year. For the candidates’ statements and election procedures, see page 12.

**New Chapter.** The Board welcomed the Delaware Valley Translators Association as ATA’s newest local chapter. DVTA, which encompasses Southeastern Pennsylvania, Central and Southern New Jersey, and Delaware, brings the number of ATA chapters to 14.

**Continuing Education Requirements Committee.** Former ATA Director and Past Japanese Language Division Administrator Izumi Suzuki was appointed chair of the Continuing Education Requirements Committee. This committee oversees the continuing education requirements for the certification program.

**Chronicle Editorial Policy.** The Board established an ad hoc committee to draft a formal Chronicle editorial policy. Leading this initiative will be former Chronicle Assistant Editor R. Michael Conner, who currently edits the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association newsletter. He has assembled a team of experienced ATA division and chapter newsletter volunteers, and will be requesting your direct input on the draft policy before it becomes official.

**Membership Directory.** The Board agreed in principle that discontinuing publication of the printed ATA Membership Directory would be beneficial to the association. However, the final decision will be made only after direct input is solicited and received from the membership. You will receive a formal request for your input by e-mail, and member views are always welcome at president@atanet.org.

**2005: Year of Languages.** The Board endorsed the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages initiative to nationally promote language in the coming year as “2005: Year of Languages.” The cost for ATA supporting this initiative will be minimal while the benefits could be substantial through broader public awareness of the need for language competency in the U.S.

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 October 16-17 in conjunction with the Annual Conference in Toronto. As always, the meeting is open to all members of the ATA.

---

**SPREAD THE WORD**

Does your local library carry the *Chronicle*? Help spread the word about professional translation and interpreting. Next time you go to your local library, take a copy of the *Chronicle* and recommend that they subscribe. You’ll be reaching out to future colleagues and clients.
From the President-Elect

A Couple of Weeks to Go….

...then it’s Toronto, here we come!

F or obvious reasons, I’ve been thinking a lot about Toronto.

Even though I was there as a kid when my dad was attending a convention, I didn’t really see the sights (and, therefore, was bored silly, since it was a bunch of sales meetings and had nothing to do with languages or translation). I don’t intend to make that mistake twice!

Since I’ve never been to Niagara Falls, a couple of friends and I are contemplating driving up a few days early, perhaps taking the ferry from Rochester, hopefully taking one of the boat rides under the Falls, seeing some of the other sites, and just generally enjoying a little getaway.

Some additional possibilities include the casinos, winery tours, biking, and outlet shopping. There’s also great theater and dining available for a lot less than you would pay in my beloved New York City.

Remember, unless you’re already in Canada, you’ll be crossing the border and will need proper identification (in these times of heightened security, a passport is highly recommended even for U.S. citizens). For identification requirements, visit www.cic.gc.ca. The preliminary program you received with the July Chronicle lists several other useful websites on page 5 that you can use to help plan your trip.

And then there’s a little matter of conference activities, some of which I mentioned in my June column (page 11).

One that I want to remind all ATA-certified members about is the “Workshop on the ATA Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices” that Courtney Searls-Ridge will present. As I mentioned in June, this session (which will be presented twice in Toronto, on Thursday and Saturday) satisfies the Certification Ethics Requirement to be fulfilled during the first three-year period after certification (or for those of us who have been accredited/certified since before the requirements, during the present three-year period).

In addition to the more intimate “Breakfast with the Board,” we have added a session immediately following Thursday’s election for members to “Chat with the Board—WE ARE LISTENING.” The entire ATA Board will be on hand to discuss whatever issues are on your mind in a slightly more structured setting.

If you would like an even more formal look at the inner workings of the Board, listen in on the Board meeting Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. The public is invited to speak briefly to the Board at the end of each session.

In keeping with our focus on interpreting and as a follow-up to the article by Tanya Gesse that appears in this issue (see page 44), the Interpreters Division has invited Mr. Peter Less, who will present “Speaking with a History Maker: An Interpreter at the Nuremberg Trials.” Don’t miss this opportunity to hear the emotional story of one of the earliest simultaneous interpreters. That ties in well with the video we are planning to show in the Sheraton’s movie theater, “The Interpreters: A Historical Perspective.”

To give you a quick idea of the range of sessions, offerings include Arabic, Canadian English, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish sessions. Of course, the topics are also quite diverse, including: “French Contract Law for Translators”; “Journals from Acronymland”; “Anatomy of an Autopsy”; “Tax and Financial Legislation”; “Translating Controlled and Non-Controlled Pharmaceutical Documents”; “Sexually Transmitted Diseases”; “Doing Business with the Government”; as well as several sessions for independent contractors and interpreters.

Some annual attractions that will return include the incomparable Ed Berger (this time presenting on “The World of Plastics”), the “Slavic Game Show,” and, as mentioned in June, the “Translation Tools Forum,” along with a great variety of Pre-Conference Seminars.

After hours, there are the usual division dinners and receptions, the Book Splash organized by Director Kirk Anderson, and the tennis tournament organized by Director Rob Croese.

And don’t forget your resumes and business cards for the Job Marketplace and Thursday’s Networking Session, hosted jointly with the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario.

And, of course, you’ll want to finish the weekend at the Closing Banquet, with background music provided by ATA member Silvia Zehn, followed by the Conference Dance, with entertainment arranged by party promoter extraordinaire Alzi Platts.

If you haven’t registered yet, please do so as soon as possible. If you need flight reservations, check out the discounts offered by Air Canada, the official airline of the 45th Annual Conference. To take advantage of these discounts, cite ATA’s convention number, CV042935. Also, be sure to make your reservation at the Sheraton.

Finally, for full details on the conference and to register, visit www.atanet.org/conf2004.

See you in October!!!!!
I am truly honored to have been nominated for a second term as ATA Board director. My three years have gone by quickly after I was elected during those shaky, post 9-11 days at the Los Angeles conference. At that time, we were all nervous about air travel, and although travel seems to have normalized, the world in which we live has changed drastically—probably forever. Our industry has also changed. Some old customers have gone and new ones have come. And as I look at my book shelves, I see that I reach less for the technical and more for the legal/financial and the medical and pharmaceutical dictionaries. Our tools have changed from dial-up modems to 24/7 broadband Internet and e-mail, from receiving lengthy faxes to PDF attachments, and from customers calling us by phone to e-mailing, and expecting an e-mail reply within a short amount of time. Our market is more global and we now compete with colleagues from around the world. We used to get information from dial-up modems to 24/7 broadband Internet and e-mail, from receiving lengthy faxes to PDF attachments, and from customers calling us by phone to e-mailing, and expecting an e-mail reply within a short amount of time. Our market is more global and we now compete with colleagues from around the world. We used to get information from Google and meet colleagues on Listers, but now we get information from Compuserve’s FLEFO, and now we get information from Google and meet colleagues on Listservs, at conferences, and seminars.

I believe the ATA Board is doing well by pursuing a steady course to strengthen the image of our profession through media relations, the certification program, professional development, continuing education, and by supporting local chapters and affiliated groups in all these endeavors. I have seen that our association, with its volunteer leaders, is staying the long-term course, while also answering the call of short-term challenges. The ATA Board is certainly listening to the members, but communication in this age of instant information and feedback could be improved.

During my three years on the Board, I have also had the privilege of chairing the Chapters Committee. Not only have we been able to visit several chapter conferences and meetings, but we also increased the number of chapters from 10 to 14. Nevertheless, the impetus of chapter growth and activities comes primarily from the great volunteers of the chapters themselves, as well as from the tireless help provided by ATA Headquarters and my fellow committee members.

If elected, I will be able to contribute more to Board activities by virtue of having gained a lot of knowledge, insight, and experience during my time on the Board. I would like to carry on as an active participant by continuing to listen to the membership as well as to my capable fellow Board members, and by working hard to make our association responsive to the needs of all.

I am proud to have been involved in the translation world and in ATA for many years, and I have had the pleasure of helping others pursue this rewarding linguistic profession and make it their career. As the demand for cross-cultural communication increases, there is a need for many more good translators and interpreters.

I will be happy to serve another three years on the Board if you should choose to elect me.

Some of ATA’s “good old days” were pretty bad. During my terms as director and secretary of the association from 1988 through 1996, ATA experienced rapid and sometimes awkward growth, organizational and financial uncertainty, and internal personality conflicts that sometimes led to factional strife. Nevertheless, many good things emerged from this turmoil: our Headquarters were moved to Washington, DC; an outstanding executive director and his capable staff put us on a firm administrative footing; and the accreditation system came under increasingly close scrutiny. Since then, ATA’s membership has continued to grow, and our association has established itself as an authoritative source of information about the language professions.

But the mere fact of being a large association with national stature does not mean our problems are behind us: size creates its own challenges, because size means diversity. We as translators and interpreters are especially diverse in terms of our professional histories. We come to our activities along so many different pathways that we seldom share the core formative experiences—bar exams, medical internships, apprenticeships—that help to shape other professions. Because we work in so many languages, specialties, and environments, and because we have not all arrived (or needed to arrive) through the same pipeline of professional education, we cannot all claim to have mastered the same fundamental body of knowledge. This will always set us apart from lawyers, doctors, and even electricians.

The recent institution of a continuing education (CE) requirement and a “points” system could be viewed as an effort to create a professional “glue” within ATA to compensate for the absence of a universal educational background. Some cohesion is certainly
necessary given the potential for fragmentation within the association. Agency owners, literary translators, interpreters, and specialists in many languages all have their own divisions in which they can feel at home, but the danger exists that these varied interests and goals may become antagonistic. In its present state, however, the CE system does not seem capable of creating either a professional experience that ATA members will want to share with one another, or a credible qualification for translators and interpreters vis-à-vis clients and the public. To the contrary, it is already being perceived as simplistic, as an imposition rather than an opportunity, and as something that “they” (ATA) are telling “us” (its members) to do. If that perception persists—if the association’s leadership and its members drift apart—the bad old days will be upon us again.

If I am given the opportunity to serve again on the Board of Directors, I will work to clarify our own understanding of what we do as language professionals, and to ensure that the rest of the world appreciates the value of our talents and expertise. The best way to achieve these goals, I believe, is to take a different approach to professional qualification for ATA members.

My learning curve will be short, and I expect I will need to reinvent very few wheels. Thank you for your support.

Director
(three-year term)
Dorothee Racette
dracette@direcway.com

My involvement with languages began in Germany, where I studied Latin, Ancient Greek, English, and Spanish in school. Even though I pursued other career avenues for a while, my choices kept returning to languages. I have traveled extensively and have lived in places as diverse as Germany, Argentina, Mexico, Thailand, Tanzania, and the U.S., giving me insights into a great variety of cultural perceptions and applications of language. I hold a B.A. in Spanish and an M.A. in German, and have worked as a language teacher, tutor, editor, economic development specialist, and business administrator. I am now self-employed as a freelance translator out of my home in upstate New York, and hold ATA certifications in the language pairs German→English and English→German. I primarily translate in the medical field.

The introduction of the division concept within ATA has had a strong appeal to me since the beginning. I followed the development of ATA’s German Language Division with great interest, and was elected administrator of the GLD in 2000. Serving for two terms as an administrator has helped me get key insights into the structure of the organization. Since divisions experienced great expansion in the association at the time, administrators lacked training and channels of communication. Ever since my appointment as the chairperson of the Divisions Committee during the presidency of Tom West, I have worked to improve cooperation between divisions in order to help us learn from each other. These efforts led to the first-ever meeting of division administrators in Washington last year and to the establishment of a much closer network. As a director, I will continue my work to improve this communication, and will keep the Board updated about the concerns of the individual interest groups within ATA.

In my efforts to respond to inquiries by telephone and e-mail, I have the privilege to be in close touch with many actual and prospective members of ATA. If elected, the strengths I can contribute to the Board include my familiarity with the association structure, coalition building abilities, and the conviction that member concerns deserve to be heard and discussed in the association, even if they are controversial. I believe ATA will be made stronger with its ability to openly discuss issues that are of concern to members.

In reaching out to other organizations abroad and to the chapters and divisions within our association, we find that many best practice examples already exist. Learning from others and advancing our profession through continuing education are the cornerstones of my motivation to serve as a director. If elected, I will work diligently toward improving communication between the different membership groups in the association and making sure all perspectives, and particularly those of freelancers, are taken into account when policy decisions are made.

In a personal profile recently published in the online Translation Journal (www.accurapid.com/journal), I concluded that if I had another life to live I would want to live it as a translator. With this in mind, and reasoning that while I still have this life to live I could do worse than attend to the future of our profession, I accepted the Nominating Committee’s invitation to become a candidate for the Board of Directors of the ATA.

From a small gathering of kindred souls in Manhattan almost 50 years ago, ATA has grown into an

Director
(three-year term)
Tony Roder
tony@well.com
organization of diversified interests, whose membership could now populate a small city. In the process, it has conscientiously tracked the evolution of the profession: it has adapted its bylaws to the demands of its members and its events to the demands of the market. And while the association will certainly continue to track and adapt as the need arises, I believe that it now must anticipate the advances our profession is sure to experience in the years to come. It must now start to develop and establish future-oriented policies and actions.

It is to this long-term planning that I want to bring the broad perspective I have gained from 40 years as a freelance translator, as an ATA member for equally as long, and as a two-term past-president of the Northern California Translators Association. I have participated in—and occasionally contributed to—the redefinition of the translation industry, the inevitable, vital progress that has transformed what was once an artisan-scale craft into today’s mass production.

The task I want to assume on the Board of Directors is to help foresee emerging trends in the industry by assessing the impact of technology on the nature of our work, the influence of online translators’ communities on professional support resources, the diversification of our professional skills, and the pressures of competition on the market. I have had good occasion to consider these issues both as an independent translator and as an officer of a 500-member translators’ association. I now look forward to merging into the collective wisdom of Board debates what I have learned from experience about these and related concerns.

ATA currently represents the professionals of a multifaceted industry generating billions of dollars in revenues, and with ramifications in practically every aspect of world affairs. I want to lend a hand as it directs its activities toward a strategic position of power and authority in tomorrow’s translation marketplace.

**Director**

**Robert Sette**

`robert.sette@verizon.net`

I am honored to accept the Nominating Committee’s offer to seek re-election.

As I complete my first term on the ATA Board of Directors, I am proud of the association’s progress during the past several years and grateful to have played an active role in the changes we have made. Since 2001, we have augmented the Certification Program with the implementation of eligibility and continuing education requirements, and emphasized the value of the translation and interpreting professions to the public at large through a widespread public relations initiative. In addition, we continue to offer a varied array of networking and social opportunities allowing translators and interpreters, from beginners through veterans, to hone their skills and expand professional contacts.

During the past three years, I have served twice on the ATA Nominating Committee, including one period as chair, and have supported the Certification Program as a grader in the Spanish-to-English grading group. Currently, I work on the Professional Development Committee, where I contribute my 17 years of experience as a foreign language professional. In addition to my diverse experience within the association, I have worn many hats in the professional world: freelance translator, (occasional) interpreter, project manager, and instructor of translation at the University of Pittsburgh and Kent State University. This varied experience has exposed me to the diverse perspectives present in the association and our profession as a whole, and has enabled me to lend sound professional and business judgment to decisions made by your Board.

If elected to another three-year term, I would advocate a direct role for the association in reaching out to decision-makers in the business world, and promoting the services offered by our members. As the Certification Program grows and becomes increasingly professionalized, I would strive for increased recognition for our credential and expansion of the Certification Program, where feasible and prudent, to include new language combinations.

What does the future hold for the ATA? I don’t know, but I’m certain of where our aspirations should lead us. Seventeen years ago when I first began accepting freelance translation work, I marveled at how I could, through the wonders of a then-innovative fax machine, easily work for clients half a continent away, or even in other countries. Now, as deadlines shorten and clients grow increasingly impatient, I remain a staunch supporter of professionalism and quality in our industry. I have a passion for languages and translation, and I will work for us to have the professional recognition we deserve as we work to assure the continued quality of the services we deliver.
experienced translator and interpreter and hold ATA certification in English↔Spanish. I am a certified federal court interpreter and am approved for conference interpreting by the State Department. Since 1988, I have also run a small translation company that employs in-house translators and interpreters, and fights hard to spread the word about quality and professionalism in translation and interpreting.

I have the experience, skills, and willingness to contribute to the continued growth of the ATA and the betterment of our profession. In addition to being a director, I was a member of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Eligibility Requirements, and I serve on the Finance Committee. I am the ATA representative to the American Society for Testing and Materials Technical Committee on Translation Standards and, in that capacity, I have been part of the editorial committee drafting the soon-to-be-finalized standard. I am also the ATA representative in an observer capacity to the European Standards Committee’s Technical Committee on Translation Standards. The establishment of standards for translation services is a key component in improving our profession and educating all buyers and providers of translation and localization services. I also have experience from other boards; experience that can be put to good use for the benefit of our association. Currently, I am the president of the Denver chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), and serve on the board and executive committee of the Mile High Chapter of the American Red Cross. I am a firm believer in learning and education—especially for a discipline such as ours, where one must continuously learn about new topics, industries, tools, etc. I have given numerous presentations and workshops at ATA conferences and professional development seminars, as well as for other industry and business associations.

These are challenging times for our association, but also times full of opportunities. The times call for commitment to our profession and its continued evolution and betterment; they call for excellent communication skills—within our association and with the outside world; they call for consensus building and for depth of experience; they call for common sense and the ability to make sound decisions for today and for the future; they call for leadership. I believe I have those skills and humbly ask for your permission to continue serving the best association for professional translators and interpreters in the world. Thank you.

Attention Korean Language Translators and Interpreters!

A special interest group has been formed to explore the possibility of establishing a Korean Language Division within the American Translators Association. Possible topics for discussion on this list include:

- ATA requirements for establishing a new division.
- Nominating and appointing division administrators.
- The character and scope of the division.
- Setting up a newsletter for the division.
- Proposing sessions for the ATA Annual Conference.

If you are interested, please subscribe to the discussion listserv by sending an e-mail to ATA_KLD-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Please note: You must be an ATA member in order to belong to any of its divisions.


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

$25. Members
$40. Nonmembers

Order online atanet.org or call 703.683.6100.
Senior Technical Translator sought by software development company in Denver, CO to work in Denver & other unanticipated job sites in the US. At a senior level, translate technical software products from English to Finnish. Use software translation tools and translation manager software products. Create styles, formats and standards, and make sure that translations comply with customary linguistic and cultural norms. Requires Bachelor’s or foreign equivalent in translation and interpretation or related field; 2 years of experience translating technical software documentation; fluency in Finnish and English. Must be able to pass standard technical translator test administered by company. 8am-5pm, M-F; $56,000/year. Respond with resume to: Employment Programs, PO Box 46547, Denver, CO 80202 and refer to CO5084910.

---

Albanian<>English
Magna Cum Laude, Univ. of Tirana, Albania. Twelve years exp. Translating & Interpreting. Voice: (805) 907-9127 service@i-translate.com www.i-translate.com

Czech, Slovak <> English
Highly experienced, reliable, fast translator / conference interpreter. Any work volume. Quality control. (303) 530-9781; Fax: (303) 530-5600, ireznick@aol.com.

Thai<>English
Exceptional translation/DTP services. Ph. 253-735-1711; Fax: 253-735-1730; Email:wilas@thailingo.com

---

Contact Drew MacFadyen today for rates and information.
215-321-9662 ext. 37
dmacfadyen@mcneill-group.com
Who: Arlene Kelly is a full-time staff interpreter with the Office of Court Interpreter Services (OCIS) of the Massachusetts Trial Court. She worked as a freelance court interpreter with both the Massachusetts courts and the U.S. Federal Courts for over 10 years before being hired. She began interpreting professionally at international conferences (English-French-Portuguese) while living in Brazil. Arlene lived in the Brazilian Amazon for 12 years, conducting research on demographic history and teaching at the Federal University of Para and the Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi in Belém, Pará, Brazil. The research served as the basis for her doctoral dissertation. She received her Ph.D. in history from the University of Florida in 1984.

Where: In Massachusetts, there are some very active organizations for interpreters and translators. The Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (MMIA) and the New England Translators Association (NETA) provide forums for professionals in the field and both offer regional meetings annually. MMIA’s annual meeting in the autumn attracts around 2,400 participants; NETA’s spring meeting (a more regional event) gathers around 200-250 people. The Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst held its own regional meeting recently, and offers a master’s degree in translation.

Training opportunities for translators and interpreters are increasing. Besides the course for translators at Amherst, there are training courses (for credit) at Cambridge College, UMass-Boston, and Bristol Community College (where Arlene teaches in the Community Interpreter Program for Portuguese-English). Non-credit courses are also offered at Boston University, Cross Cultural Communication Systems (Winchester, Massachusetts), Cape Cod Community College, Culture Smart (Milton, Massachusetts), among others.

How: Arlene has been called a “conference junkie” by her understanding boss, OCIS Manager Gaye Gentes. She attends several conferences annually beyond the local ones. Besides the ATA annual meeting, as assistant administrator of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division, Arlene participates in organizing the PLD’s annual meeting. Arlene goes beyond simply attending meetings by offering workshops and presentations on a variety of themes. Some concern training in interpreting skills; other presentations cover diverse topics of interest to Portuguese-English translators and interpreters. Some of her presentations become articles and papers that are presented for publication in the U.S. and abroad. Arlene also belongs to the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT), Critical Link, and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers.

In addition to teaching at Bristol Community College, Arlene also assists with preparing court interpreter candidates, especially those for Portuguese, and has organized certification preparation workshops for both the written and oral examinations. As part of the court interpreter certification program, each candidate must undergo mentoring by a more experienced interpreter. Arlene mentors several candidates each year, again, mainly for Portuguese, but occasionally for other languages.

Attending and participating in conferences brings unexpected rewards in Arlene’s opinion.

Continued on p.26
In March 2004, the ATA wrote to the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), calling for a review of OFAC regulations and interpretative rulings that could be construed as barring or restricting the translation or publication of written works originating in countries under U.S. trade embargo (See May 2004 Chronicle). In doing so, ATA stood beside such organizations as the PEN America Center, the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA), and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) in expressing concern about restrictions on the freedom to translate and publish.

OFAC Director R. Richard Newcomb responded to ATA on May 13, stating that “transactions relating to informational materials that are reproduced, translated (including both literal and idiomatic translation) or dubbed by U.S. persons for dissemination within the United States are exempt transactions.” He also cited a new interpretative ruling which further clarifies that translation, style, and copy editing, subtitling, and other language work are exempt from OFAC control.

This statement has important implications, since prior rulings regarding the IEEE’s right to publish articles by Iranian nationals in their peer-reviewed journal sent shock waves through the publishing industry. It was initially thought that prior OFAC licensing would be required to translate and publish any text from a country under U.S. trade embargo, namely Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Sudan. ATA is aware of at least one instance in which a publisher withdrew its commitment to publish a translated work as a consequence of information received about these regulations. ATA continues to work to ensure for all translators the freedom to translate and publish.

Treasury Department Responds to ATA on Freedom to Translate

By Kirk Anderson

In Memoriam
Louis Korda

With the recent death of Louis Korda, the highly respected and affectionately regarded ATA Hungarian→English Language Chair, Hungarian and other translators have lost an exceptional colleague, as well as a wise and loyal friend.

Lou was famous for his gentlemanly—virtually courtly—ways, which manifested themselves in his ability to listen and interact with everybody as an ever-helpful colleague. Long before "mentoring" became formalized and institutionalized, his unique approach to helping others became legendary. He never missed an opportunity to encourage, compliment, and cheer on his colleagues when they turned to him for advice. His selflessness and concern for his fellow translators was never more evident than when he could take obvious delight in the successes of those he took under his wing.

His friends fondly recall Lou’s resourcefulness and ability to be quick on his feet. I personally witnessed such an occasion when we were both on an assignment on a case in a federal court. I was there to interpret for the defendant about the proceedings. Lou was sent there to assist the prosecutors as the FBI’s long-time Hungarian language expert. The prosecution also put him on the witness stand to elicit his testimony about the translation of a critical letter. In a cross-examination, the defense lawyer was determined to trap him. Lou was asked if he considered translation an art or a science. It was obvious where the defense attorney was going with this; no matter which answer Lou chose, he could be discredited. I never forgot his reply: "I like to call it a craft." The supposedly poker-faced judge and jury members broke into appreciative laughter when they heard this, and the defense attorney had to conclude the cross-examination with the famous words: "I have no further questions."

By now, it is a platitude to say that someone will be sorely missed and long-remembered. However, in reference to Lou Korda, it can be truly said: he was such a wonderful person and it is unlikely that we will ever meet someone like him again.

Lou, good friend, may you be rewarded by the Lord for all your good deeds and the gifts which you so generously bestowed on everybody!

Peter A. Gergay
It was appropriate for ATA’s Medical Translation and Interpreting Seminar to be held in Minnesota, the longtime seat of medical innovation. Nearly 80 language professionals from around the U.S. made the trek to the Minneapolis Crowne Plaza Hotel on Saturday, July 10, to learn more about translation and interpreting in healthcare and medical settings. As always, the event was well planned and professionally organized thanks to Marian Greenfield, Professional Development Committee chair, and Teresa Kelly, administrative coordinator and meeting planner at ATA Headquarters.

The well balanced mix of topics appealed to interpreters as well as to translators, and catered to varying experience levels with each presentation covering a different area of the medical and healthcare fields. To make a trip to the seminar even more valuable, an exam sitting followed the next day, having been arranged by the local chapter, the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA).

A very knowledgeable speaker, Maria Cornelio, started off the medical seminar with her workshop, “How to Translate for the Healthcare Consumer: A Hands-on Workshop.” Maria emphasized the importance of appropriate register when translating patient information, and provided valuable insight into the criteria that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) uses to approve or disqualify translations for the U.S. healthcare consumer.

What resonated for me at Maria’s presentation was the relation between translation and technical communication concepts. The points to keep in mind when translating for the healthcare consumer were all technical communication principles: purpose, audience, content, style, and format. Maria’s seminar elicited a lively discussion among attendees.

Following the healthcare consumer translation workshop, Zarita Araújo-Lane and Vonessa Phillips conducted the very first ATA ethics seminar, which satisfies the ethics requirement for ATA certification holders. Zarita, with her personable style, and, Vonessa, with her polished presentation voice, focused on information sharing and the ethical situations that interpreters face in healthcare settings and provided guidelines to effectively deal with them. They showed video vignettes that provided specific examples of interpreting boundaries and best practices. The interactive format created an engaging dialogue with participants.

Michael Blumenthal facilitated the final seminar that truly got into the real meat of medical translation: terminology. Michael’s presentation, “Diagnostic Imaging Studies of the Spine,” shared a gold mine of medical terminology and protocol using actual medical diagnosis documents related to spine maladies. His enthusiasm for the anatomy of the spine was contagious, and his work on Spanish-to-English translations of spinal diagnoses was clearly a labor of love and passion. Michael’s extensive research and collection of Spanish-to-English translations related to the spine is a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge in the medical translation field.

The seminar ended with the popular networking session that freelancers relish as an opportunity to get to know their colleagues and compare notes. This ATA professional development seminar also was an opportunity for national organizers to connect with their local counterparts to catch up on happenings and exchange information. The local ATA chapter, UMTIA, was represented by Membership Director Nadia Smith.

These ATA professional development seminars not only provide specialized and difficult-to-find information, but also give participants a welcome chance to connect in person with colleagues who specialize in the same field.

\[\text{\textit{ATA Medical Seminar: An Attendee’s Perspective}}\]

\[\text{By Deb Kramasz}\]

\[\text{\textit{…The seminar gave participants a welcome chance to connect in person with colleagues who specialize in the same field…}}\]
The following appeared in the June 2004 issue of the PLData, the newsletter of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division.

São Paulo, a sprawling megacity of 18 million inhabitants and the financial and cultural capital of Brazil, recently hosted the Third Ibero-American Conference on Translation and Interpretation (CIATI). Some 900 linguists descended on the Universidade Iberoamericana (Ibero-American University), or UNIBERO, to explore the theme of “New Times, an Old Art—Translation, Technology, Talent.”

Organized by UNIBERO, a school that offers translator training, the conference featured several ATA members as guest speakers: Scott Brennan; Regina Alfarano (who also helped organize it); Catarina Feldmann; Paulo Lopes; and Enéas Theodoro Jr. At the opening session, Conference Coordinator Cleide Bocardo Cerdeira pointed out that “translation is crucial in a globalized world.” She also noted the focus on literary translation.

Brazilian Book Splash

Brazil has a huge entertainment and media industry, and with many books, television programs, and movies arriving in English, opportunities abound in the translation market. Among the literary translators in attendance at the conference was Lia Wyler, whose name graces the title page of all the Portuguese renditions of the Harry Potter books. She gave a series of talks about them, and launched a new book of her own, *Línguas, Poetas e Bacharéis*, which chronicles the history of translation in Brazil (see information at the end of this article).

“…Clearly, demand for professional development in Brazil is just as intense as it is stateside…”

Lia is also one of the Brazilian translators interviewed in a compilation entitled *Conversas com Tradutores*. She joined organizers Ivone Benedetti and Adail Sobral and fellow interviewee Regina Alfarano for a book signing at the conference. Regina had another book to launch as well (when she wasn’t giving presentations), the latest issue of the translation journal *Tradução e Comunicação*.

ATA member Regina Alfarano has a lively delivery as she discusses the need for revision. (credit: Alexandra Russell-Bitting)

Working with Living Writers

A special treat for literary translators was the joint presentation by Brazilian journalist and writer Ruy Castro and his English translator, John Gledson, on the relationship between author and translator. Castro and Gledson seem to have an ideal one, no doubt because Castro is a translator himself, having published a Portuguese version of short stories by renowned filmmaker Woody Allen, among other books. He described our profession as “the cruelest…and worst paid.”

Gledson reported that when Bloomsbury Publishing approached him about translating Ruy Castro’s *Carnaval no fogo (Rio de Janeiro: A City on Fire)*, he liked the light style and all the information on Rio de Janeiro. With a translation of 19th-century Brazilian writer Machado de Assis under his belt and a year’s experience living in Rio, his main challenge was to reflect the tone of Castro’s book, he said. Here, he
depended on feedback from the author, who demonstrated three crucial qualities: patience, respect, and frankness. There’s a reason, Gledson noted tongue in cheek, that some translators prefer to translate dead writers.

Translator Rights

The conference also delved into a hot legal issue in the literary translator community in Brazil right now: When a translation becomes a bestseller, what rights does the translator have to the financial windfall? A Brazilian translator of The Lord of the Rings recently took the Brazilian publisher to court because there was no room to squeeze them into the classrooms. In fact, the CIATI conference may actually be outgrowing the UNIBERO campus. Clearly, demand for professional development in Brazil is just as intense as it is stateside. Organizers are already working on the next conference, scheduled for 2007. For more information, including photos of the event, see the UNIBERO website at www.unibero.edu.br/default.asp.

He explained to an overflow crowd that under Brazilian law, translators have the same intellectual property rights as writers, whose work is recognized as “original creations” linked to their names. Translation contracts with publishing companies, he noted, in no way alter these rights. Furthermore, Brazilian law demands fairness, and in the case of O Senhor dos anéis, there was a glaring disparity between what the publisher got and what the translator got for the book.

Rendez-Vous in Three Years

The turnout for the conference was so high that some attendees had to be turned away from many talks because there was no room to squeeze them into the classrooms. In fact, the CIATI conference may actually be outgrowing the UNIBERO campus. Clearly, demand for professional development in Brazil is just as intense as it is stateside. Organizers are already working on the next conference, scheduled for 2007. For more information, including photos of the event, see the UNIBERO website at www.unibero.edu.br/default.asp.

Where to get the books:
Let’s begin by examining the first step in the life of an employee—recruitment. The three recruitment tools that have proven most effective in my environment (a 45-employee company in a large metropolitan area) are: 1) filling a position from within, via an in-house posting; 2) asking current employees about potential candidates they may know; and 3) advertising in the Sunday edition of the local newspaper (which often includes an online posting for seven days). Other recruitment tools may be more effective in your environment, depending on the position to be filled. An in-house posting is best when the position you are filling requires someone who is already familiar with your company’s or department’s processes and workflow. Because qualified employees within a company will know when a position is vacated by another employee who takes on a new job within the organization, that vacancy may be easier to fill, even from the outside. Your current employees are also very good sources—because they know both the potential candidates and the company, they will know which individuals are the most qualified. Also, a well-written ad will generate the maximum number of qualified responses.

Job Description

Speaking of that well-written ad, its basis is a well-written job description. A written job description accomplishes many purposes. It clarifies what kind of person should be hired, communicates the job responsibilities and requirements to that person, and provides a tool to evaluate performance. A good job description has five parts: 1) job summary; 2) essential duties; 3) qualifications; 4) education and experience requirements; and 5) general working conditions and physical requirements. The job summary should give the position’s primary responsibilities in one or two sentences. The essential duties should be in bullet format and identify in specific detail all the job duties entailed in meeting the primary responsibilities. Include a final bullet that says “performs other tasks and cross-trains with other positions as assigned,” so that there can be some flexibility within the position. Qualifications, also in bullet format, include such things as organizational ability, computer skills, written and oral communication skills, or the ability to multitask, exercise judgment, or work with interruptions.

Be thoughtful about identifying the education and experience requirements necessary for the position. Is a degree necessary? What kind? Will work experience substitute? What kinds of work experience? How many years? General working conditions and physical requirements should list, for example, ambulatory or lifting requirements, the hand-eye coordination, dexterity, and visual acuity required for computing, the stress related to responsibility and authority, or the potential for extended or irregular hours. Finally, have a pay range in mind. Software packages are available to help you draft job descriptions, and another very good resource is the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM, www.shrm.org).

Newspaper Ad

Now that a good job description is written, preparing a newspaper ad is easy. Be sure to have an attention-getter opening line, one that will cause the reader to be interested in your business and the position. Then describe the primary duties and qualifications as succinctly as possible. List the hours, pay range, and benefits—if you don’t list the pay range, you will screen many more resumes than necessary from candidates whose expectations you cannot meet. Finish by telling candidates exactly how to apply (e.g., cover letter with salary requirement and resume via e-mail).

Hiring Process

Define your hiring process based on the position. For instance, when we recently hired a proofreader, we used the following process: 1) Human Resources screened 200 incoming resumes; 2) the editing manager reviewed approximately 60 resumes that passed HR screening; 3) the editing manager distributed a proofreading test to the 10 best candidates; 4) based on the test responses and results, the editing manager interviewed the top five candidates; 5) HR called the references of the two candidates remaining after the interviews; 6) the editing manager made a decision and offer, which was accepted; and 7) HR sent thank-you letters to all the interviewees. The screening criteria for the initial 200 resumes were: 1) appropriate education, skills, and experience; 2) good English language skills (and no typos!) in the cover letter; 3) a pay range, you will screen many more resumes than necessary from candidates whose expectations you cannot meet. Finish by telling candidates exactly how to apply (e.g., cover letter with salary requirement and resume via e-mail).
expectation close to the range given in the newspaper ad; and 4) adherence to the instructions for applying. Although the person who dropped off a paper resume in person meant well, her inability to follow instructions and the inconvenience caused by providing paper instead of an electronic file, given the volume of resumes and the time involved in screening, caused her to be screened out rather than in.

Behavioral Interviewing

If you haven’t heard of behavioral interviewing or don’t know much about it, take the time to find out. No matter how experienced you become at interviewing, you’ll still make mistakes, but behavioral interviewing techniques will minimize them. Behavioral interviewing is based on the assumption that past performance is a good indicator of future performance. Instead of asking a candidate what their skills are or how they would handle a particular situation, ask for specific examples of how they have used their skills or how they have handled that situation. Behavioral questions begin with such phrases as: “Tell me about a time when...” “Give me an example of...” “Describe for me...” “How did you handle a situation where...” “What did you do when...” The other key point with behavioral interviewing is to tolerate silence. When the candidate says they cannot think of an example, insist (in a friendly manner and tone) that you are sure they can think of one and that you don’t mind if they take a few minutes to think about it. Asking the best kind of question will only work if you wait for the best kind of answer!

What You May Not Ask

There are certain issues you cannot ask about in an interview, and the basic rule is if it’s not job-related, you can’t ask it. Topics that you cannot ask about include: race; religion; citizenship (you can ask if they are legal to work in the U.S.); sexual orientation; marital status; age; birthplace; disability or handicap (you can ask if they can meet the physical requirements in the job description); criminal history (you can ask if they have ever been convicted of a felony); or native language (unless it is job-related, which may certainly be the case for those of us in the translation industry).

Other Interviewing Tips

Plan your questions in advance, and put them in writing. Ask every candidate all of the questions; however, try to do this within the context of how the discussion unfolds naturally, rather than starting at the top and going down the list in order. Always allow the candidate ample time to ask questions, but only after you have finished asking yours (otherwise, the candidate may tailor his answers to what he believes you want to hear). A question I often end with is, “What are the last three books you’ve read?” because it brings the interview to a friendly, light-hearted moment that makes a good transition to the candidate’s questions. Do take notes during the interview, but be sure that everything you write is job-related and professional. Most states require that all solicited resumes and application materials be kept for one year, but you should check your state’s requirements.

Calling References

Use only professional (not personal) references, preferably supervisors rather than HR staff, and contact at least three of them by telephone. You will learn a lot from their responsiveness (or lack thereof) and their tone and word choice. At the very least, confirm dates of employment, position held, ending wage or salary, and reason for leaving. If the reference is willing, also ask about the candidate’s quality of work, work habits, dependability, initiative, problem-solving and decision-making ability, interpersonal skills, and computer skills.

Orientation

Your great new employee is finally on board, so an orientation session on their first day is your next step. Some of the issues to be covered in this session are the W-4 and I-9 forms, your employee handbook and company policies, a confidentiality agreement, benefit information, and COBRA and HIPAA notices (more on these later).

Employee Handbook

In today’s litigious society, having an employee handbook is more important than ever. It will also save you time and trouble, in terms of answering questions, making decisions, and taking actions fairly and consistently. Typical employee handbook topics include: policies (customer service, workplace harassment, computer and e-mail use, problem resolution); employment (definition of full- and part-time, introductory period, performance evaluations); compensation (recordkeeping, pay periods and procedures, overtime); benefits (medical, dental, COBRA, HIPAA, 401[k], time off, holidays); conduct (attendance, smoking, termination, personal business); and rules (security and safety, substance abuse, workplace violence, concealed weapons). You may also wish to include a welcome letter containing your company’s mission statement, if there is one, and company...
history. Your state workforce commission and SHRM are great resources for template handbooks, and you should have your handbook reviewed by an HR professional and an employment attorney. Give new employees 24 to 48 hours to review the employee handbook, and then obtain a signed acknowledgment that they have received, read, and understand and will abide by it. This acknowledgment statement is also a good place to reiterate that your handbook does not constitute a contract of employment; an employment attorney can help you with this language. Finally, try to review and update your employee handbook yearly.

Performance Evaluations

The next step in the employment process will be to evaluate the performance of your newly hired and oriented employee. This should be done at the conclusion of a 90-day introductory period, at six months, at one year, and then at least annually thereafter (although semiannually would be better!). Why? How else will they know how they’re doing, what’s going well, what needs improvement, what you expect, where they can grow, what opportunities are available, and how they can succeed? Every employee deserves at least an annual investment of your time, effort, and personal attention in an honest and formal evaluation of their performance. Preparing the evaluation properly will take considerable time and energy to be specific, accurate, and complete. These evaluations should be in writing and include a self-evaluation by the employee. If the employee being evaluated is a manager, consider soliciting anonymous feedback from his or her reports (I use a software/web package called AllPoints Feedback for this [www.allpointsfeedback.com], and others are available). This process works best if the written evaluation and self-evaluation are exchanged the day before a scheduled meeting, so that both parties have time to reflect on the feedback and to prepare to discuss it. Set aside plenty of time for this meeting, and do not allow it to be interrupted.

The following are some key points to keep in mind regarding performance evaluations:

- When documenting a behavior, whether positive or negative, give at least three specific examples of that behavior. When the behavior is negative, the point is not to humiliate the employee with a litany of mistakes, but to make the point that her performance has been tracked and that you have a basis for the statements you’re making about her performance. Then place more emphasis on the future than the past.

- Avoid “always” and “never.” Don’t say “Employee X is always late for his shift” unless that is absolutely true. It’s probably more accurate and better to say, “Employee X was late for his shift at least two times per week during the last three months.”

- Nothing should be a surprise. If something in the evaluation, particularly constructive feedback, is being heard by the employee for the first time, you’ve not done your job during the year.

- Be timely. Not being timely sends a message to the employee that the evaluation isn’t important and you don’t care about them.

- Try to list as many accomplishments as possible—it’s a strong moment when you can come up with more of these than the employee can.

- Ask outright for what you want to be different.

- Ask what you can do differently, better, or more of.

- Be as polite, respectful, and positive as possible. Be very aware of your body language and tone, in addition to your words.

I keep a file folder (not their official personnel file) for each employee, and every time there’s a problem, question, comment, accomplishment, or communication regarding that employee, I put a copy of it or note about it in the file. Then at the end of the year, I don’t have to rely on my memory and have a lot of good information to refer to in preparing the evaluation. If you do this, however, consider that everything in this file, as well as the employee’s official personnel file, including their written evaluations, may appear in court one day. This will help keep you absolutely honest, accurate, objective, and professional.

Performance evaluation template forms are commonly available, but should be modified to be specific to your organization or even the particular position being evaluated. Our typical written annual performance evaluation includes the following sections: responsibilities; accomplishments; job knowledge, performance, and productivity; dependability, cooperation, and initiative; work environment and safety; overall performance; and action plan. If the employee being evaluated is a
manager, we usually add these categories: managerial skills; communication skills; problem solving and conflict resolution; administrative skill; and time management.

Performance Problems
When your employee experiences a patterned performance problem or slump, assume there’s a reason and try to find out what it is. Employees don’t intend to perform poorly or have problems, and my experience is that it’s most often the result of a non-work issue. Our approach is to support the employee however we can (flexible hours, reduced hours, time off, referral to counseling, financial assistance), but at the same time focus on a return to the desired performance level within a reasonable timeframe.

Progressive Discipline
I have had quite a bit of success with simply inviting an employee with a performance problem to help me avoid the disciplinary process. But when that doesn’t work, you’ll need to implement progressive discipline. The typical progressive discipline process is: 1) an oral warning for a first offense; 2) a written warning for a second offense or lack of improvement; 3) suspension for a third offense or lack of improvement; and 4) discharge for a fourth offense or lack of improvement. Clear documentation during this process is extremely important.

Personnel Files
An employee personnel file should contain: 1) pay/status change forms; 2) time off forms; 3) performance evaluations and training documentation; 4) the W-4 form; and 5) application information, confidentiality agreement, and handbook acknowledgment. The following information should not be kept in personnel files, and should be kept separately from each other: 1) benefit information; 2) I-9 forms; and 3) payroll records. Although there are many good reasons for the segregation of this information, the primary reasons are to protect personal health information and other personal data, and to limit the information available to strictly what is required should you be subject to a compliance audit or investigation. These files should all be kept in a locked cabinet and retained as required by federal, state, and local laws.

Termination (Voluntary)
Every employee will eventually resign, if their termination is not caused by some other event. You should always obtain a dated and signed resignation letter that includes the date of the last day of employment. If possible, hold an exit interview, conducted by someone in HR (even if you have to contract with a consultant) who did not directly work with or supervise the employee. During the exit interview, ask about general employment matters (hours, responsibilities, workload, advancement), training, pay, supervision, and reason(s) for leaving. You will also need to provide COBRA information and forms.

HIPAA
The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) contains a rule designed to ensure the privacy of protected health information (PHI). This Act primarily impacts healthcare providers and insurers, but also affects employers that sponsor group health plans. The deadline for compliance was April 14, 2003 (or 2004, depending on the size of the health plan), so if you have never heard of or don’t know much about HIPAA, contact your insurance broker or representative for information, forms, and assistance. At the very least, you may have to provide a Notice of Health Information Privacy Practices at new-employee orientation and include it in your employee handbook, sign HIPAA Privacy Business Associate Agreements with the various insurance or benefit entities you contract with, and have Individual Authorization for Use and/or Disclosure of PHI forms available if an employee requests your assistance with a matter that involves PHI. Depending on your particular situation, you may also be subject to other compliance requirements.

COBRA
The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) provides for the continuation of group health coverage (at the employee’s election and expense) after certain “qualifying events” that would otherwise result in the loss of coverage, such as termination, reduction of hours, death, divorce, or Medicare eligibility. The continuance in the case of termination is usually up to 18 months, although there are varying lengths of continuance according to the different qualifying events and other circumstances. Your state may also have a program for continuing coverage beyond the federal requirement. Again, your insurance broker or representative may be able to help. You can also contract with a company that provides COBRA administration. Revised regulations regarding when and how you must give notice and the formats of model notice forms will take effect November 26, 2004, so be sure you are ready for these changes.
Conclusion

Don’t despair—it is possible to fulfill the HR function in your company even if you are small or growing. Independent consultants are available who can be contracted with on a per-hour, per-project, or retainer-type basis, and you can find these consultants through the local chapter affiliate of SHRM. Look for a consultant with a PHR (Professional in Human Resources) or SPHR (Senior Professional in Human Resources) certification, which indicates that they have a certain amount of education, testing, and experience in the field. You can also obtain HR (and other) services through a Professional Employer Organization (PEO). Then, when you are ready, add a qualified part-time or full-time HR representative to your staff. Handling the HR function well will protect your most important asset, and save you time, trouble, and money in the long term.

This article is intended to provide accurate and authoritative information regarding the subject matter covered. Neither McElroy Translation nor the author are engaged in rendering professional HR or legal services. If legal or expert HR assistance is required, the services of a competent, licensed professional should be sought.

Notes


2. Ibid, pp. 44-45.
Translating at the U.S. Department of State: Past, Present, and Future

By Joseph P. Mazza

Fishing regulations from a Latin American country; patent and copyright laws from a newly independent state in Eastern Europe; a plan to decrease radio spectrum congestion along the U.S. border; a letter of greeting from a Middle Eastern president; the biographical sketch of a U.S. official to be posted on the Internet; tax provisions from the Far East; free trade proposals from all corners of the world—all are likely to come through the Translating Division at the Department of State’s Office of Language Services (LS). During a typical day, the LS staff translator may start the morning as a “lawyer,” tracing the intricate reasoning of a foreign supreme court decision; spend mid-day as an “environmental scientist,” wading through the mire of technical and bureaucratic jargon in an environmental impact statement; and then end the work day as a “doctor,” translating the medical shorthand (hopefully not handwritten!) in a forensic report from overseas. For the language professional in the U.S., LS offers a bracing environment in which to ply the translator’s craft.

The Translating Division of the Office of Language Services employs a permanent staff of about 20 carefully selected in-house translators, supplemented by hundreds of tested contractors. Simply stated, the mission of LS as a whole is to facilitate communication with non-English-speaking governments and people through the provision of high-level interpreting and translation support to the Executive Office of the President and the Department of State. LS also provides translation and interpretation for other federal agencies on a reimbursed basis. The 20 staff translators are divided into two branches. The General Branch handles translations involving Slavic and Germanic languages, Arabic, Chinese, and Korean, both into and out of English. Even in the post-Cold War era, Russian accounts for the highest volume in the General Branch’s work. Unlike its Romance Branch counterpart, which deals with a small number of closely related languages, all of which have been used in international diplomacy for centuries, the General Branch deals with a much wider variety of languages. Some of the languages it covers, such as Ukrainian, are actually relative newcomers to the diplomatic arena. These factors, coupled with the need for special computer hardware and software, pose unique challenges for the General Branch. The larger of the two branches of LS’s Translating Division, the Romance-language Branch, handles translation work involving French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, again both into and out of English. The proximity of 18 Spanish-speaking countries to the U.S. assures the primacy of Spanish in the Romance Branch’s work. Recent U.S. diplomatic initiatives, among them the various programs under the African Growth and Opportunity Act and negotiations for a free trade agreement with Morocco, have lent renewed vigor and urgency to LS’s French translation work. Portuguese translation work is on the rise, particularly texts into Portuguese. Italian translation remains at a quiet trickle.

Foremost among the duties of an LS staff translator is the translation of diplomatic correspondence between the U.S. president and the secretary of state and their counterparts from foreign countries. The highly nuanced and formulaic prose that characterizes these letters is a great challenge even for those who have wrestled with it for years—whether the correspondence concerns a simple expression of sympathy over a national tragedy, such as the attacks of 9/11, or the articulation of a new diplomatic overture, such as a free trade agreement. While these VIP letters often discuss the broad outlines of diplomacy, diplomatic notes (written in the third person, typically from a foreign ministry to an embassy) flesh out the details and supply another steady stream of work for the LS translator. Diplomatic correspondence is but the tip of the iceberg—diplomacy is also played out in reams of reports, papers and non-papers, aides-mémoire, notes verbales, agreements, treaties, memoranda of understanding, speeches, ambassadorial letters of credence and recall, conference agendas, delegate handbooks, and, of course, the inevitable slide briefing! All require translation. The stuff of diplomacy reflects every byway of human endeavor: classic themes of conflict resolution are interspersed with intellectual property, tariff schedules, telecommunications, fisheries, international adoption and child custody issues, maritime transport, drug control, anti-terrorism, biodiversity, and international finance. The LS translator is, by necessity, a generalist, although the arrival at LS in recent years of three linguists with law degrees has greatly enhanced its abilities in the exacting genre of legal translation that cuts across so much of its work.
Most LS translators eventually go on to become reviewers, and, as such, are responsible for checking not only the work of their in-house colleagues, but also, particularly in recent years, the work of LS's outside contractors. The Translating Division's English-language "house style" has been codified in the *LS Handbook*, revised regularly since the 1950s. The latest edition, released for internal use in 1990, is currently undergoing a thorough reworking. To the LS reviewer falls the particularly gratifying job of mentoring junior staffers, and passing on to them the art of diplomatic translation. Staff reviewers also grade the tests of candidates for LS translation contracts and in-house positions.

Perhaps the most demanding aspect of the LS reviewer's job is the certification of the English and foreign-language texts of international agreements and treaties. The Department of State's *Foreign Affairs Manual* requires that the English and foreign-language texts of treaties and agreements signed by the U.S. be compared by an LS officer to ascertain whether they say the same thing, substantively, in both languages. After comparing the two treaty texts, line-by-line, word-by-word, the LS comparing officer prepares a memorandum of comparison, citing any discrepancies, so that the negotiators can remedy them before the treaty is signed. Treaty comparison is a genre unto itself and demands years of experience in the translation of treaty texts. It is also among the most rewarding and exciting work done by LS linguists, as it brings them directly into contact with the architects of foreign policy, both at home and abroad.

The LS Translating Division is responsible for sorting, screening, and summarizing all foreign-language mail sent by private citizens to the president, first lady, vice president, and secretary of state, and many LS translators enjoy the change of pace this task provides. This correspondence offers an interesting counterpoint to the staid world of diplomatic discourse. Illegible handwriting, faulty grammar, and obscure or even incoherent references frequently make the task of summarizing this material an exercise in detective work.

Though its in-house staff is small, the LS Translating Division takes pride in delivering the first-rate translations that the American diplomat, policy maker, and public demand and deserve. The concern for quality begins at the assignment stage of a translation, and continues through terminology research, painstaking review, and final proofreading. Deadlines can be harsh—staff translators often yearn for more time to track down a troublesome term, look for previously translated phrases, consult a colleague for help in a technical field, or simply give their text one final read without the stopwatch ticking. Yet week after week, despite mounting pressure, LS translators turn out hundreds of pages of translated text without shirking the imperative need for quality control.

The most important resource an LS translator can call on is the corps of professional translators who are located literally right outside the cubicle door. The spirit of camaraderie among LS translators ensures that there is always a support system at hand to help with the tough linguistic puzzles that perplex even the most seasoned language professional. LS interpreter colleagues are another valuable source of expertise—they are the ones who work at the front lines of diplomacy. Not only are they present when international terminology is coined, they often are the ones who help coin it! Several LS translators are "double-hatted" as LS interpreters—all attest to the intricate interplay between the two crafts and to the importance of cooperation between the Translating and Interpreting Divisions. In addition to having access to fellow linguists, the LS translator has the cachet that makes policy experts in the State Department and throughout the federal government eager to offer terminology advice.

Supplementing this repository of human expertise is LS's 8,000-volume library of dictionaries and other books useful to the translator. The advent of the Internet has enabled the LS staff to be more selective in its library acquisitions. The fact that most international organizations and government ministries now maintain websites means that much of the terminology research and fact checking that was previously done with books can now be done more easily online. This frees LS to concentrate less on the purchase of standard reference works and more on the acquisition of dictionaries and glossaries, particularly in languages that have not, until recently, enjoyed as strong an in-house presence as they now do, such as Arabic and Chinese. Terminology management has long been a concern of LS, which traditionally maintained a card file of lexical "finds" and preferences. Gradually, the focus has shifted to computerized glossaries, and now, for the first time, LS's terminology resources are concentrated in a multi-language database. Text leveraging is still done the old-fashioned way, with 5-10 years of translation work kept on file and with the entire corpus of U.S. treaties in print form under the Department of State's *Treaties and International Agreements Series* (TIAS), which lines the LS Library's shelves.
At L.S., human and material resources have combined over the decades to forge a powerful institutional legacy that informs the day-to-day work of its diplomatic translators. Diplomatic translation is a rarefied genre in the translating community, yet it is one of the oldest forms of translation practiced in this country. In fact, since the 18th century, from the earliest days of the U.S., the predecessors of today’s L.S. translators had been at work perfecting this art.

**A Historical Perspective**

As long as political states have existed, diplomacy has coexisted, mediating conflicts and fostering mutual cooperation. Prior to the 18th century, Latin provided a uniform written language for European diplomacy. Continental conflagrations, such as the Thirty Years War (1618-48), were settled by formal agreements composed in Latin and signed by nations speaking a variety of tongues. In 1714, however, a treaty signed in the southwest German town of Rastatt between the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France (one of a series of accords that ended the War of the Spanish Succession) changed forever the conduct of European diplomacy. For the first time in modern European history, a major international treaty was drafted and signed not in Latin, but in French. A taboo had been broken—a “vernacular” language was considered worthy of use at the highest levels of diplomatic prose. The modern age of diplomatic translation had begun.

It was against this backdrop that the 13 British colonies along the Atlantic seaboard began their own military and diplomatic campaign for independence. In the early 1780s, with success on the battlefield assured, these colonies, by then the United States of America, loosely united under the Articles of Confederation, set up the first permanent executive departments, including a department of foreign affairs. To assist the young nation in the conduct of its diplomacy, the two Secretaries of Foreign Affairs, Robert Livingston and John Jay, relied on the services of three renowned American translators: John Tetard (1727-87); John Pintard (1759-1844); and Isaac Pinto (1720-91).

All three men were recruited from New York City, home to the fledgling U.S. government for much of the 1780s. While celebrated for their work as translators, all three also achieved success in other walks of life: Tetard as a clergyman and educator, and Pintard and Pinto as merchants and civic leaders. Tetard came to America in the 1760s from his native Switzerland, where he had earned a degree in divinity. Settling in colonial New York City, he eventually became pastor of the Huguenot (French Protestant) Church there, and, as such, served as the spiritual guide to a community of wealthy Huguenot-Americans, many of whom were active patriots during the American Revolution. Tetard also established New York’s first French-language school, and ended his career as the first professor of French at Columbia University. John Pintard, from an influential Huguenot merchant family, had distinguished himself as the agent for American prisoners of war kept aboard British warships in New York Harbor during the American Revolution. As a translator, he was noted for his French version of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Isaac Pinto, scion of a celebrated Sephardic Jewish family, emigrated to the U.S. from Portugal. He won fame as the compiler of the English-language version of Hebrew prayer books. The 1766 Prayers for Shabbath, Rosh-Hashanah and Kippur was the first to bear his name as translator; two earlier English translations of Jewish religious rites, published anonymously, are also believed to be his work. While the work of Tetard and Pintard seems to have been confined to French translation, Pinto, versed in Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese, enabled the Department of Foreign Affairs to handle languages beyond Europe. Pinto’s arrival at the Department neatly coincided with the negotiation of a treaty of friendship and commerce, in Arabic and English, with the Sultan of Morocco.

The new federal government, ushered in with the inauguration of George Washington at New York City’s Federal Hall in 1789, brought about changes in the country’s foreign relations apparatus. Shortly before the capital moved to Philadelphia in 1790, a new executive agency, the Department of State, was created to manage American diplomacy. When it became apparent that staff translator John Pintard would not make the move to Philadelphia, the first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, a skilled translator in his own right, wasted no time in recruiting a talented translator who was willing to move. The man he hired was Philip Morin Freneau (1752-1832), a writer and seafarer of Monmouth County, New Jersey, known to posterity as the “Poet of the American Revolution.” Also from a prominent Huguenot-American family, Freneau was an avowed patriot who actually had spent time as a prisoner in the hold of one of those British warships in New York Harbor. Unfortunately, his time as a State Department translator...
was marred by the political conflict between his boss, Jefferson, and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. In an era before federal guidelines limited political activities among civil servants in the workplace, Freneau spent much of his time running a newspaper, the *National Gazette*, attacking the ideas of the Federalist party. The ire of President Washington put an end to Freneau’s State Department career: Freneau resigned in 1793 and returned to New Jersey, somewhat bitter and disillusioned.

We know little of the translators who served the State Department in the early 19th century. In the age before instant messaging and the country’s global role, American diplomacy was conducted at a far more leisurely pace. Several of the Department’s translators during these years of nation building also served concurrently as heads of the Department’s library—the oldest U.S. federal government library in existence. Others, such as Aaron Vail (1796-1878), moved on to diplomatic posts abroad or to higher-level positions at the Department. The name of Louis Tasistro, the Department’s translator from 1850 to 1855, stands out during these years. It is tempting to identify him with the American literary figure Louis Fitzgerald Tasistro (1808-68), a contemporary and professional acquaintance of Edgar Allan Poe, although historical evidence is still lacking. The latter Tasistro also translated a multivolume history of the U.S. Civil War, written in French by a prince of the House of Orléans, the Comte de Paris, who had come to America to campaign against the Confederacy.

The hiring of Polish-born Count Adam Gurowski (1805-66) in 1861 brought another literary figure of national renown to the Department. Versed in several European languages, Gurowski had been imprisoned in Russia for his role in the Polish Revolution of 1830. After immigrating to America, he gained fame as a literary wit and journalist; Walt Whitman was among his associates. A man of imposing physical presence, he was lionized by Washington society, but his erratic personality alienated President Lincoln.

Gurowski’s State Department career ended when his diaries, highly critical of the Lincoln administration, were published in 1862.

One of the key events in the State Department’s efforts to professionalize its workforce was the wave of civil service reform in the 1880s. The Pendleton Act of 1883 laid down rules for the recruiting, promotion, and remuneration of federal government employees. Henceforth, the Department’s translators would be career public servants. While perhaps less colorful than their writer and journalist predecessors, this new breed of diplomatic translator steered clear of political controversy, and tended to spend an entire career at the Department—an enormous boost to the development of in-house translating expertise. Henry Livingston Thomas (1835-1903) of New York, who came to the Department in the 1860s, was the first translator under the new civil service system and a noted bibliophile, whose personal library was donated to Columbia University. As America’s role in world affairs increased, particularly with its victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898, the need for a second translator became acute. John S. Martin, Jr. of Pennsylvania was hired in 1900 to serve as a junior translator, training for three years under Thomas. Following Thomas’s death, Wilfred Stevens (1874-1939) of Minnesota became the Department’s junior translator. Stevens, who stayed on until 1934, was a linguistic prodigy who worked in over two dozen languages. A 1930 profile of Stevens in Washington, DC’s *The Evening Star* described an artificial language he had invented, based on Chinese and French! A self-effacing man, Stevens cautioned that although he translated documents from some 30 languages, he felt uncomfortable saying he truly “knew” them all.

A reorganization of the Department in 1928 brought about a new entity: the Bureau of Language Services. The Bureau’s first head, Emerson Brewer Christie (1878-1967), supervised a staff of half a dozen linguists. Christie, an American born in Turkey to a family of New England Congregationalist missionaries, had served in the Philippines, where he authored a booklet on the languages of that country. The U.S. Good Neighbor policy towards Latin America prompted the establishment, in 1940, of a second State Department translation unit: the Central Translating Office (CTO), mandated to translate public diplomacy tracts into Spanish and Portuguese for distribution throughout the Hemisphere. The Department’s two translating units were merged in 1944, under CTO Director Guillermo Suro (1907-61), a Spanish translator from Puerto Rico.

The merger doubled LS’s size, meaning that it was well staffed to handle the enormous translation workload that resulted from the Allied victory in World War II.

The postwar years brought new languages to LS: Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and, the work of Isaac Pinto aside, Arabic. The successful use of simultaneous interpreting at the Nuremberg War Trials in the late 1940s, along with the advent of air
travel, prompted the hiring of the Department’s first professional staff interpreters. By the early 1950s, the office’s present structure, divided into a translating unit and an interpreting unit, had taken shape. These were heady days at LS, where legendary interpreters held sway, such as Donald Barnes (1930-2003) in Spanish, William Krimer (1915-2001) in Russian, Alexandre José de Seabra (1917-c. 92), a “wonder of nature” who worked with equal ease in Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Italian), and Edmund Glenn (1915-87) in French. On the translation side, Minnesota-born Emil Fossan (1906-2000), who worked from over a dozen languages, influenced a generation of diplomatic translators. Well into his retirement years, Fossan was named “Linguist of the Century” by Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger at the gala 1990 bicentennial of the State Department’s Office of Language Services. Under the tutelage of Translating Division Chief Anthony Sierra (1927-86), the LS Library was first consolidated and efforts were made to codify the lore of previous translators to facilitate the work of their modern-day colleagues.

The information age and the breakup of the Soviet Union ushered in a new era for LS. Word processing, computerized slide presentations, e-mail, the Internet, and terminology databases revolutionized its work. Languages such as Ukrainian and Korean were represented on its staff, which now hovers at around 60, evenly split among translators, interpreters, and administrative personnel. Today’s LS translating staff struggles with the modern-day demands familiar to the entire translating industry: “due yesterday” assignments, terminology management, text leveraging, and quality control. With a proud history behind it, stretching back to the earliest days of the American Republic, LS eagerly explores the traditions and lore of its past to gain inspiration in its eternal quest for le mot juste.

(Note: Joseph Mazza will present a three-hour Pre-Conference Seminar, entitled “A Day in the Life of a State Department Translator: A Workshop for Romance Linguists,” at ATA’s 45th Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada, October 13, 2004.)

Call for Submissions

TWO LINES: a journal of translation

We are looking for works that explore all aspects of the 2005 theme: Bodies.
Deadline: December 15, 2004 (Complete submission guidelines below)

Submission Guidelines
Theme for 2005: Bodies (heavenly, skin, lust, matter, corpse, murder, creatures, councils, armor, labor, meat, fitness, corporations, the dead, vessels, curves, skeletons in the closet, prowess, flesh)

What to Submit
Original translations into English of writing from any genre and language. In order to be considered, submissions must include a brief introduction with information about the original author, the background of the piece, special problems the translation presented, and the way you see the piece in relation to the theme of the issue. Please enclose a copy of the original text with your submission. We expect translators to acquire copyright permission for their translation and for reprinting the original text (in full, if poetry; in part, if prose). Permission can generally be requested from the publisher of the original work.

When to Submit
Submissions will be accepted now through December 15, 2004, only. Translators will be notified of our decisions in February 2005, and the journal will come out in May 2005, during PEN American Center’s World-in-Translation month.

How to Submit
Electronic submissions are greatly appreciated, but hard copy submissions are also welcome. If you would like your hard copy materials returned, please send an appropriately sized self-addressed stamped envelope. Please send electronic submissions to editors@twolines.com, and save documents as RTF (Rich Text Format). Hard copy submissions can be mailed to:
TWO LINES: a journal of translation
35 Stillman Street, Suite 201
San Francisco, CA 94107
Tel: 415.512.8812 / Fax: 415.512.8824

For more information on TWO LINES, visit www.CATranslation.org, and click on Literary Translation.
The Embassy Translator: A Connecting Link Between Cultures and Countries

By Cheryl A. Fain

The following article is based on the author’s presentation at the National Capital Area Chapter of ATA’s (www.ncata.org) seminar, Translating for Foreign Governments, held at the Hamilton Crowne Plaza in Washington, DC, April 4, 2004.

What do embassy translators do and how do they facilitate communication between cultures and countries?

As the in-house translator of the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, I work from German and French into English and edit documents written in English by nonnative speakers; that is, by speakers of German, French, and Italian, three of the four official languages of Switzerland. The fourth official federal language, Romansch, also called Rumantsch Grischun, is rarely used at the embassy; however, just in case, I am prepared with my Romansch-English/English-Romansch Dictionary and Phrasebook.

In addition to translating and editing for the Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States, Christian Blickenstorfer, and his administrative staff, I translate and edit for the embassy’s Political Section, the Legal Affairs Office, the Financial, Economic and Trade Section, the Cultural Section, the Office of Science and Technology, the Communications Section, the Office of the Defense Attaché, the armasuisse Washington Office (formerly called the Defense Procurement Office), the Police Liaison Office, and the Administrative and Consular Services Section.

Drawing upon my 10 years of experience at the Embassy of Switzerland, I will describe what an embassy translator does and how he or she contributes toward carrying out the mission of a foreign embassy in the U.S.

What is the mission of a foreign embassy in the U.S.?

In a nutshell, it is to represent the home country and to defend its interests in the U.S.

How does an embassy translator help to carry out the embassy’s mission?

One way is through what I call Americanizing—translating and editing embassy documents with a U.S. reader or audience in mind in order to achieve the desired results or objective. Americanizing documents can also help to improve the image of the country the embassy represents in the U.S.

In my case, as the in-house translator of the Swiss Embassy, I do translations into American English of documents written in German and French by Swiss native speakers of those languages. In so doing, I work with three different cultures every day: Swiss German, Swiss French, and U.S. American culture. The following are some examples of “Americanizing” that I’ve encountered in my work at the embassy.

Using American English instead of British English spelling and expressions. Since the Swiss are taught British English in school, they write in British English and are not always familiar with the differences between British English and American English. My Swiss colleagues appreciate having their British and uniquely “Swiss” English, or so-called “Swinglish,” transformed into idiomatic American English, since it helps them to get their point across and to make a favorable impression on their American readers, conversation partners, or audiences.

When my Swiss colleagues have specific questions, I have found that a dictionary of American-English usage can be very helpful in pointing out and confirming the differences between British English and American English spelling and punctuation.


“Americanizing” correspondence through the use of correct titles and forms of address for American officials. For example, it is important to know that a U.S. senator or representative should be addressed as “The Honorable.” In that regard, you will be able to find everything you need in the 25th Anniversary Edition of Protocol: The Complete Handbook of Diplomatic, Official, and Social Usage by Mary Jane McCaffree, Pauline Innis, and Richard M. Sand, Esquire (Durban House Publishing Company, Inc., 2002). This handbook was particularly useful, for instance, when I edited a letter from Ambassador Blickenstorfer to an...
associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and again when editing a letter from a federal councillor who was the head of a Swiss federal department to a cabinet member who headed a U.S. federal department. The publication is also a handy resource for formal and informal invitations, which are such an integral part of diplomatic life.

“Americanizing” also involves editing for content or meaning. In my job, that entails providing feedback to my Swiss colleagues when they would like to know my “American” reactions to their documents. They are especially interested in knowing if something that they have written could be misunderstood or viewed as offensive by an American reader.

In translating Swiss government documents, “Americanizing” frequently entails finding appropriate U.S. equivalents for titles and institutions specific to Switzerland. Finding U.S. equivalents for Swiss officials and agencies on the federal level is not particularly difficult because there are very good resources available, for example, Swiss government publications in English and multilingual databases such as Eurodicautom.

Even so, there are some tricky terms to watch out for. For instance, it is important to be aware that the Attorney General of Switzerland does not have the same rank as the U.S. Attorney General. In Switzerland, the Justice Minister, who heads the Federal Department of Justice and Police, is the counterpart of the U.S. Attorney General. However, the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland is headed by the Attorney General of Switzerland—sometimes called the Federal Prosecutor or Federal Attorney (Bundesanwalt in German and Procurer général de la Confédération in French)—who ranks below the Justice Minister.

Another tricky title encountered when translating Swiss federal government documents is Staatssekretär in German and secrétaire d’État in French. The correct English translation is “State Secretary,” and a Swiss “State Secretary” ranks right below the head of a federal department in three departments: the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, and the Federal Department of Home Affairs. In all, there are seven federal departments in the Swiss government, and each is headed by a “Federal Councillor” who also belongs to the seven-member Federal Council, the executive branch or administration of the Swiss government.

Sometimes the title Staatssekretär is mistakenly translated into English as “Secretary of State.” Please note, however, that the Swiss counterpart of the U.S. Secretary of State is the foreign minister or head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Since the current foreign minister of Switzerland is Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey, her titles are Aussenministerin und Vorsteherin des Eidgenössischen Departements für auswärtige Angelegenheiten (das EDA) in German and la ministre des Affaires étrangères et la Cheffe du Département fédéral des affaires étrangères (le DFAE) in French.

In translating Swiss military documents, it is important to know that the English equivalent of the German term die schweizerische Armee and the French term L’armée suisse is Swiss Armed Forces. The Swiss Armed Forces are comprised of the Land Forces and the Air Force. Army, as defined in the U.S., or Land Forces, would be translated into German as Heer and as Forces terrestres in French.

It can also be quite challenging to find U.S. equivalents for Swiss local officials and local government bodies on the cantonal level. A Swiss canton is equivalent to a U.S. state, and there are 26 cantons in the country. For example, one problematic Swiss German term related to a cantonal government is Staatschreiber. Since there is no exact equivalent for a Staatschreiber in the U.S., I had to find a definition of the term in the Dudenverlag publication Wie sagt man in der Schweiz? Wörterbuch der schweizerischen Besonderheiten by Kurt Meyer, and then had to come up with an approximate translation. With helpful hints from some of my Swiss colleagues, I finally came up with “the head of the cantonal chancery.” A cantonal chancery is the central authority of the cantonal government and cantonal parliament. Depending on the Swiss canton, a Staatschreiber might also be called a Kanzleidirektor, Landschreiber, Ratschreiber, Ratschreiber, Staatskanzler, or Kanzler, and, in a French-speaking canton, a Chancelier or Chancelier d’Etat.

A recommended resource for finding the titles of Swiss federal officials and the names of Swiss government bodies in English is The Swiss Confederation: A Brief Guide 2004, which contains an English description of the organization of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Swiss federal government. It is available online at www.admin.ch/ch/index.en.html. There are also online versions of this publication in the four Swiss official languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansch. By snail mail, a printed copy can be obtained free of charge by sending a self-addressed mailing label to: SFBL, Distribution of...
The Embassy Translator: A Connecting Link Between Cultures and Countries Continued

Publications, CH-3003 Bern, Switzerland. An excellent source of additional information on the Swiss government is the official website of the Swiss Confederation at www.admin.ch.

Eurodicautom, the European Union database, at http://europa.eu.int/eurodicautom/controller, contains terminology of the Swiss federal government, including acronyms and expansions for names of Swiss parliamentary committees and Swiss federal departments. For your information, though, Switzerland is not a member of the European Union.

Another good source of general information on the Swiss federal government is the booklet Get to Grips with Political Rights, published by the Terminology Section of the Swiss Federal Chancellery. It provides English terms and definitions connected with the Swiss electoral system and voting in Switzerland. The booklet, which contains a glossary in German, French, Italian, and Romansch, is also available online at www.admin.ch/ch/index.en.html.

In searching for appropriate German translations for titles and institutions specific to the U.S., I have found that the third edition of the Politisches Wörterbuch zum Regierungssystem der USA: Englisch-Deutsch, Deutsch-Englisch, an English-German, German-English political dictionary on the U.S. government by Ulrike Ehnes, Patrick Labriola, and Jürgen Schiffer (R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001), can be useful.

“Americanizing” also constitutes finding appropriate translations for Swiss concepts that do not exist in the U.S. For example, there is no exact English equivalent for the Swiss term Heimatort because the concept simply does not exist in the U.S. Although the term is usually translated into English as “place of origin,” hardly anyone in the U.S. knows what a Swiss “place of origin” actually is. In Switzerland, the German term Heimatort, or lieu d’origine in French, is extremely important since every Swiss citizen must have one. In addition to being a citizen of a canton of origin and the Swiss Confederation, everyone is a citizen of his or her “place of origin” and is entered in the family register of that place of origin. The “place of origin” is defined as the place where the family (usually the father) comes from, and should not be confused with the “place of birth.” Although the “place of origin” could conceivably be the same as the “place of birth,” that is not necessarily the case. To complicate matters further, a Swiss citizen could even have more than one “place of origin.”

In translating legal documents into English, “Americanizing” means taking into consideration that Switzerland and the U.S. have entirely different legal systems. From time to time, the Swiss Embassy receives questions about legal matters involving American and Swiss citizens residing in the U.S. or in Switzerland. Translating the responses to such questions requires an understanding of how certain issues pertaining to citizens of Switzerland and/or the U.S. are handled under Swiss and U.S. laws. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the differences between the Swiss civil law and U.S. common law systems. Sometimes there are concepts that exist under U.S. law that have no exact equivalent under Swiss law and vice versa.

I encountered this problem recently when I did a German-to-English translation of a Swiss government tax expert’s opinion on how U.S. trusts are handled under Swiss law. The U.S. concept of a “trust” does not exist in Switzerland. In doing a different German-to-English translation of that Swiss government tax expert’s opinion on a U.S. estate income tax issue involving heirs residing in Switzerland, I had to translate a Swiss German explanation of legal concepts related to the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. In that case, my experience as a U.S. taxpayer definitely helped!

Much of the legal translation work I do for the Police Liaison Office involves translating letters of request, also called letters rogatory. These are sensitive and confidential documents usually issued by a Swiss court to a U.S. court requesting judicial assistance in criminal investigations where there is cooperation between Switzerland and the U.S. The Federal Act on International Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (IMAC), which provides the legal basis for such cooperation between Switzerland and the U.S., is available online at www.imolin.org/swissmaa.htm.

Since many of the investigations have to do with international financial crime, a resource I have found to be useful is the publication Financial Investigation Terminology: A Multilingual Glossary. The glossary, which is part of the FinCEN Reference Series published by the U.S. Department of the Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, contains terms in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

In my experience, comparing the German, French, and English versions of bilateral agreements between the U.S. and Switzerland is an excellent way of finding correct legal equivalents in the three languages.

There are several highly recommended resources for translating Swiss
legal documents into English. Various agreements between the U.S. and Switzerland, such as the Double Taxation Convention between Switzerland and the USA, are available online at www.eda.admin.ch/washington_emb/e/home/legaff/agree.html.

Since English is not an official language of Switzerland, there are no official English versions of Swiss laws. However, an unofficial English translation of the Ordinance of the Swiss Federal Banking Commission Concerning the Prevention of Money Laundering (SFBC Money Laundering Ordinance, MLO SFBC) can be found at the Swiss Federal Banking Commission’s website at www.EBK.admin.ch under the heading “Regulations.” That website also contains links, such as www.kpmg.ch, to unofficial English translations of some basic Swiss legislative texts on banking, investment funds, stock exchange and security trading, cartels, and money laundering.

The Swiss Federal Office of Justice website (www.ofj.admin.ch) provides information in German, French, Italian, and English. If, for instance, you are interested in learning about extradition proceedings in Switzerland, extradition fact sheets can be accessed in three of the four official Swiss languages as well as in English. The German fact sheet is at www.ofj.admin.ch/themen/auslieferung/intro-d.htm and the English one is at www.ofj.admin.ch/themen/auslieferung/intro-e.htm.

Another valuable resource is the Swiss Parliament website at www.parliament.ch. The site, which is in German, French, Italian, and English, is very helpful if you are searching for the names and acronyms of the various committees of the Swiss Parliament or Federal Assembly, called die Bundesversammlung or das Schweizer Parlament in German and L’Assemblée fédérale or Le Parlement suisse in French.


Although my strategy of “Americanizing” at the Embassy of Switzerland is usually applied to serious Swiss government texts, I would also like to touch upon its lighter side.

When editing texts written by nonnative speakers of English, “Americanizing” can involve correcting unintentionally humorous and potentially embarrassing errors that might be misunderstood and misinterpreted by an American reader or audience. During my years of editing Swiss documents, I have encountered some wonderful examples of unintended humor which would give American readers a hearty chuckle. For instance, in a draft of introductory remarks, I once came across “Mr. X is one of the most wanted men at the National Science Foundation.” Obviously, the author of the draft, who is a native speaker of Swiss German, had no idea that being one of the “most wanted” is not all that desirable in the U.S.

**Conclusion**

An embassy translator must be a renaissance person who is creative and adept at doing research, and must be able to handle a wide variety of documents covering many different fields. Furthermore, an embassy translator must be familiar not only with the culture of the home country and that of the host country, but also with the diverse cultures within the host country. Through facilitating and smoothing the way for communication, an embassy translator serves as a vital link between cultures and countries and makes a valuable contribution toward carrying out a foreign embassy’s mission in the U.S.
An Exercise in the Organization of Interpreting Services at High-Level Diplomatic Conferences

By Georganne Weller

On May 28-29, 2004, the Instituto Cabañas in Guadalajara, Mexico, was the setting for the Third Summit of Heads of State of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union. Leaders and representatives of 58 countries from both continents gathered to debate the core issues of multilateralism and social cohesion, with the aim of fostering greater political and commercial collaboration among the regions. Discussions were led by Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland for the European Union, and President Vicente Fox of Mexico for Latin America and the Caribbean. The summit provided continuity to principles developed at the first summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1999, which were adopted at the second summit in Madrid in 2002.

This summit provided some prime examples of the obstacles organizers of language services at such events continually face as they attempt to adequately and efficiently cover the linguistic needs of meeting participants. It is hoped that a discussion of these obstacles and possible solutions will shed new light on how interpretation services for such events may be better organized. Readers will also gain an understanding of the crucial role played by the chief interpreter at these meetings.

General Facts on Diplomatic Interpreting

What is diplomatic interpreting and what sets it aside from other types of conference interpreting? Hana Kucerova, in her article “Diplomatic Interpreting in Czechoslovakia,” mentions high-level political talks, visits of heads of state and cabinet members, etc., as examples of situations where diplomatic interpreting is needed. As to what makes conference interpreting unique, she adds: “First, the normal requirements of the professional interpreter become more stringent: general qualifications as to language, culture, voice, diction, tact, the awareness of confidentiality. The diplomatic interpreter must inspire confidence and trust, often accepting undeserved blame, and be equally at ease in front of large audiences, millions of television viewers, or in face-to-face meetings between heads of state. Although

interpreters are usually briefed for their assignments, these briefing do not take the place of the interpreter’s own efforts to keep well informed of current events” (Ref. 2).

For many years, most diplomatic interpreting was done in the consecutive mode, which allowed diplomats time to ponder over what had been said before having to speak. It also afforded interpreters for each party time for self-correction or to confer on terminology issues. Nowadays, however, in the interest of time, most diplomatic interpreting at conferences is done in the simultaneous mode.

It should be noted that escort interpreting, if performed for diplomats, can also be considered diplomatic interpreting, but this method will not be discussed here since it is performed on an individual basis and does not require conference organization. Consecutive interpreting with note-taking will also not be discussed. The U.S. Department of State does not allow contract escort interpreters to interpret for foreign diplomats at high-level interviews, and states in its Escort Interpreter Manual that: “It is a matter of policy that Language Services staff interpret at all meetings between visitors who do not speak English and the President of the United States or State Department officers of Assistant Secretary rank and above. This policy also applied to meetings with the Vice President, members of the President’s Cabinet, the Directors of USIA [United States Information Agency] and USAID [United States Agency for International Development], and certain other U.S. government officials” (Ref. 6).

From a personal viewpoint, the major difficulty associated with diplomatic interpreting lies in the enormous responsibility and pressure the interpreter feels about not making a mistake that could lead to a diplomatic incident. Interpreters have often been blamed, rightly or wrongly, precisely for this fault, and to think that this might happen to you is enough to make one tremble! Another consideration in a less public vein is the personal and professional responsibility an interpreter has to the organizers or agency that does the hiring. By selecting you, the agency has placed its trust in your abilities to do a good job, and has faith that you will not bring on any unpleasant incidents.

Despite these pressures, there are several advantages associated with working at diplomatic conferences. You are often provided with copies of the delegate’s speech and associated documents from which to work. In addition, the speakers are normally well-educated, high-level public officials who are used to making addresses at international events. This means that you don’t have to wend your way
through local trade terms, strong regional accents, extremely fast-paced deliveries, uneducated speech, and other stumbling blocks that can inhibit clear and effective communication in the target language. Of course, there are always exceptions.

Having explained the general nature of diplomatic interpreting, we should move on to the essence of this article: how interpretation services may be organized and the crucial role of the chief interpreter at such events.

**Organization of Interpreting Services**

Even the novice conference organizer will undoubtedly think to ask: How many interpreters do I need to cover all language combinations in all rooms at all times? This simple question leads to other considerations, including: How many sessions will be scheduled on the program, and, of these, how many are parallel sessions? Will all languages be used at all the sessions? Which sessions are likely to be the most difficult? Is a second interpreting team needed in any of the rooms due to extremely long meetings? Which interpreters work best together?

When deciding upon language coverage, there is a long-standing formula, proposed by Van Hoof (Ref. 7), which few interpreters are acquainted with: \( N = n \times (n-1) \), where “\( n \)” represents the number of working languages. This formula only applies to full interpreting teams, meaning two interpreters in the same booth working into the same language (normally their A language, from one or more of their B and/or C languages). It does not apply to bidirectional booths, where the interpreters work into a combination of their A and B languages from their A, B, and C languages (for example, into English from Spanish and possibly a third language, and into Spanish from English and possibly a third language). For most high-level diplomatic interpreting, full booths with interpreters working into their A language is the preferred mode. For the purposes of this article, A, B, and C languages are defined as follows:

- A = Native language or the language(s) the interpreter is most proficient in (target language);
- B = Second active language(s) that the interpreter may work into with near-native proficiency (target language); and
- C = Passive language(s) from which the interpreter may work from A and B, but does not work into (source language).

During the Third Summit of Heads of State of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union, there were interpreters with various combinations: those who only worked from their B into their A language; those who worked both from their B as well as their C into their A language; those who had a double A (considered to be native or near-native enough to merit an A) in two working languages, along with a B or a C in a third language; and those who had a double A, but no B or C language. For this particular summit, the traditional four official languages for high-level meetings held in the Americas were used: Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French.

To ensure adequate coverage, a practice known as relay interpreting is often employed at such meetings. Holly Mikkelson has stated that “relay interpreting is necessary when more than two languages are involved in an interpreted event and no single interpreter commands all of the languages, or when no interpreter can be found in a given language combination” (Ref. 4). In the same article, Mikkelson offers an example, provided by Agnes Subiros Matheson (Ref. 3), that illustrates the relay interpreting process during a hypothetical conference of widget makers, in which the working languages are French, English, and Spanish.

Let us say that the French CEO of Widget Makers de France is addressing the audience in French. Booth #1 is interpreting from French into Spanish for all conference attendees and panel members from Spain. Booth #2 does not listen directly to the speaker, but instead, using the relay switch, is listening to the interpreter in Booth #1, who is interpreting into Spanish. Then the interpreter in Booth #2 proceeds to interpret from Spanish into English for conference attendees and panel members who need to listen to the English interpretation.

Of course, relay interpreting is not without its challenges, and it is imperative that those organizing conference interpreting services be aware of the possible issues involved. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), in its publication *Practical Guide for Professional Conference Interpreters*, warns of the pitfalls involved in using relay interpretation, and recommends its use be restricted:

“In relay interpreting the ‘pivot’ (i.e., the interpreter the other booths are listening to and taking relay from) has a very special responsibility. Apart from those delegates who are listening to the original, everybody else at the meeting is relying on the...”
pivot to deliver the speaker’s message. When you are a pivot, all the principles of quality interpreting apply, of course, and a good pivot is, first and foremost, a good interpreter. However, the pivot must also make a special effort to interpret with the needs of colleagues in mind, and to be maximally clear and helpful” (Ref. 1).

Let me provide a concrete example of the problems relay interpreting can create. My combination is A (English), B (Spanish), and C (Portuguese), which means that I will work from my B and C languages into my A language. However, what happens if I am at an event where French is being spoken on the floor? If this situation occurred, I would have to resort to relaying from either the Spanish or Portuguese interpreting booth, or else my boothmate would have to take over (as long as he or she was someone whose B or C language was French). To the wise reader, a red flag immediately appears. Suppose my colleague is out of the booth for whatever reason when the French speaker is on the floor? This is not a problem if I am properly paired with the interpreter in the Spanish booth who interprets from French. However, if the colleague who only interprets from Portuguese is on the microphone at the same time I am, there will be a total breakdown of communication since we will both be trying to relay from each other, thereby leaving the French uncovered!

Thus, the importance of organizing interpreters by languages, paying particular attention to any challenges that relay interpretation might present, and assuring adequate coverage for each language. One technique to accomplish this is to assign strict timeslots when each interpreter is “on” so as to avoid major mishaps. Remember, you cannot leave the booth under any circumstances during these specified time periods, not even to heed the calls of Mother Nature, so be careful with beverage consumption!

The Chief Interpreter

Let us now focus on the role of the all-essential, but often beleagured, chief interpreter, who is a crucial presence before, during, and after the conference. Among many other responsibilities, this individual must foresee and plan for possible contingencies in all rooms where interpretation will take place. It goes without saying that adequate coverage must be ensured (which, at the summit in Mexico, meant having some 20 interpreters working at any given time). Programming changes and the addition of a language at a session can play havoc with the best planning, and assignments have to be juggled according to the chief interpreter’s best judgment.

Assuming that interpreters have been pre-selected based mainly on language combinations, the chief interpreter must then take into account how knowledgeable each interpreter is about the issues being discussed at the meeting, how well they handle regional accents, etc. To give you an example of how the chief interpreter at the summit in Mexico would delegate interpreting responsibilities, let me again use myself as an example. Having learned my Portuguese in Brazil, being married to a Brazilian, and being somewhat immersed in the culture, it is much easier for me to interpret from Brazilian Portuguese than from the Continental Portuguese of Portugal or the other African and Asian varieties. This explains why I would most likely be assigned mainly to interpret for the preliminary Latin American-Caribbean sessions and not at the preliminary European sessions, which would have a larger component of French and Continental Portuguese. I could also interpret at the plenary sessions, where I could serve as a relay from Portuguese into English. A wise chief interpreter will take the individual strengths and weaknesses of each interpreter into account when making assignments.

But how do you decide which interpreters work best together? As interpreters, we admit to being high-strung and somewhat temperamental individuals (we’re often called prima donnas by outsiders, much to our distress) who do not work equally well or, in some cases, refuse to work at all with certain individuals. Thus, the plot thickens for the poor chief interpreter, who, in addition to his or her other duties, must also consider possible personality clashes (you do not want to place arch enemies in close quarters), not to mention possible technical and human physical impairments. One can imagine the overwhelming task the chief interpreter faces when deciding how to designate the teams.

Much of this planning has to be done in advance, but unforeseen illnesses and poor performances, aggravated by the addition of extra sessions, the replacement of one speaker by another of a different language, and other last-minute mishaps can upset even the best scheme. As a result, the chief interpreter must often redistribute his human resources, sometimes to the distress of the interpreters who studied for certain sessions and are now being changed at the last minute. Such changes can also compromise the quality of language services.

Another important role the chief interpreter has to fulfill is the procurement of documents. Hopefully,
this has been done in advance of the event so that interpreters can better prepare. Nowadays this information is more readily accessible online through glossaries, websites containing background information on the conference, previous related events, and preparatory documents.

In addition, it is most helpful to have the names of the participants available, since official nametags are not always within sight, depending on the layout of the meeting room, and it is often hard to catch these names when they are rattled off by an inconsiderate chairman whose rate of speech might make it difficult to figure out who is being recognized.

Even more important is to have the latest versions of the documents you will be working with, since it is very difficult to interpret complicated jargon when it is read at a fast pace, much less second guess what changes the drafting committee has made in the original documents. Simultaneous interpretation is designed to be a faithful rendition of ideas, but not of style changes in writing. Without the latest version in hand, the interpreted version will not match the polished written version provided by the drafting committee. It goes without saying that the final declaration in the target language must be available for all interpreters in the booths to ensure coherence with the version in the hands of the delegates.

The chief interpreter and his or her assistants will do their best to procure the most recent documents, but it is also the responsibility of the booth interpreters to cover any shortcomings they may foresee. Of course, there are limits to what can be done, since interpreters simply can’t go running around indefinitely looking for the most up-to-date documentation. Getting information is often hindered by security measures, especially at high-level events, that prevent interpreters from having direct access to documents before the session. In the event of a discrepancy between the interpreter and the speaker, the chief interpreter must be prepared to field complaints and ascertain whether or not a misunderstanding was actually the fault of the interpreter and how serious it was. The results could affect future hiring, and verification of the facts must be done to avoid injustice to the interpreter.

A final responsibility that could fall to the chief interpreter, and one more reason why a good one can make all the difference in the world, is the payment of staff. As we all know, interpreters like to be paid, and promptly! How fast interpreters are paid often depends on whether the chief interpreter was a colleague designated by the organization in charge of the event (in which case, his job normally ends with the conference), or whether he is a staff member at the hiring agency. If it is the latter, then this individual will most likely be involved in the follow-up procedure of calculating overtime, travel vouchers, expedient payment, etc. While most interpreters will not refuse to work with certain chief interpreters since this could greatly restrict their possibility of being hired, we all prefer those who have been fair in the distribution of working hours, make logical booth assignments, and show concern for getting the proper documentation to you in a timely fashion.

Conclusion
What can we conclude from this article? More than an attempt to arrive at concrete conclusions, it was written to draw the reader’s attention to the nature of high-level diplomatic conferences (in this case, the Third Summit of Heads of State from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union), and in particular to the increasingly important role of the chief interpreter, who is truly a key player in conference organization. In a cursory review of the literature before writing this article, not much was found regarding this individual. Do interpreters and researchers not feel, as I do, that this role is a strategic one which contributes enormously to the success or failure of an international event? Hopefully any comments received by readers of this article will provide more food for thought on what I consider to be an important subject in conference interpretation.

References


Invisible in the Spotlight: Interpreting for Film and Performing Artists

By Ellen Sowchek

All creative artists are translators and interpreters. As translators, they create works that transform an idea, an esthetic, or a worldview into a form accessible to others. As interpreters, they communicate their works to audiences using a medium (film, dance, music, or text) that both creator and spectator understand. Creative artists (film and theater directors, actors, choreographers, dancers, and musicians) are often extremely articulate about their own work, but what if their spoken language is not the one the interviewer, the journalist, or the audience understands? Enter the interpreter, the conduit for communication, sharing the spotlight…but remaining invisible.

As part of this very unique world of interpreting, I have been in the spotlight with film and performing artists for several years. I am often asked what it is like to do this type of work and what kind of special preparation and skills are necessary to do it successfully. In the article that follows, I would like to address these questions, first by discussing the art and craft of consecutive interpreting in general, and then by taking you through an assignment, step-by-step, from pre-assignment preliminaries to the last word, highlighting what is important at each stage. Although some of the advice I am about to give is very specific to the entertainment industry, the process is one that can be modified for use with any type of consecutive interpreting assignment.

Interpreting as an Art and a Skill

Is interpreting an art or a skill? Is the successful interpreter an artist or a skilled craftsman? These are philosophical questions that could take pages to answer, but at the risk of being facetious, I am going to answer in one word: “Both.” Michelangelo was once asked how he determined what kind of statue to carve from a particular piece of marble. He answered that the determination was not his to make, and that the statue resulted from his work was simply the statue that was inside the marble waiting to be released. Was he an artist or a craftsman? Henri Langlois, founder of the Cinémathèque Française, once said that directors did not create films, that all films already exist, and that the director simply

...Presentation is extremely important when interpreting for film and performing artists. It is a performance art in and of itself....

reveals and records them during the filmmaking process. Alfred Hitchcock, François Truffaut, Federico Fellini—we they auteurs or craftsmen?

As interpreters, we do not create our own texts, so the argument could rightly be made that we are craftsmen, applying our skills to the works (or words) of others. However, the skilled interpreter who is able to render the thoughts of one individual, spoken in one language, into another language after the speaker or signer pauses, in a specific social context (The Terminology of Health Care Interpreting, A Glossary of Terms, compiled by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, www.ncihc.org). In the entertainment industry, the social context is almost always the discussion or promotion of the work or works of a particular artist.

Much has been written about the skills that should be developed in order to be a successful consecutive interpreter. The following, while not an exhaustive list, are the skills that we can work at improving: listening, voice, concentration, memory, note-taking, and presentation. Listening is listening not just for meaning, but also for tone, for nuance, for subtlety. Voice is the instrument used by the interpreter to verbalize what she or he has heard and understood. Concentration is what makes it possible for the interpreter to engage in sustained listening, unbothered by the distraction of other voices and other words. Memory is what enables the interpreter to take what has been said and treat it as a whole—in a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph—rather than as individual words. Note-taking is a tool to aid memory, and is available for use as the interpreter sees fit. Finally, presentation is what makes it possible to communicate what we have heard to an audience, whether of one or one thousand.

Presentation is extremely important when interpreting for film and performing artists. It is a performance art in and of itself. Good presentation skills make it possible for the interpreter to vanish, to become invisible, only to reappear as an extension of the artist, a surrogate voice that
seamlessly merges with the original. It requires a strong sense of self and a healthy ego that is not afraid of being submerged into that of another. And it is precisely in this area of ego that potential problems may arise, when the originator, the artist/creator of the words, is insecure and sees the interpreter as a competitor rather than an ally, as a dissonant rather than a harmonious voice. Does this happen? Yes, but not often. Most subjects recognize that the interpreter is there for them to facilitate their communication, and it is the responsibility of the interpreter to reinforce this idea.

We are there, not to share the spotlight or to take it away, but rather to enhance it through the process of bilingual, bidirectional communication.

The Interpreting Assignment

You have just received a telephone call to interpret for a visiting film director. You will be interpreting for journalists’ interviews for print and other media, doing a Q&A session following a screening, and attending a pre- or post-premiere reception. The job sounds exciting, as it is a filmmaker whose work you admire, and your immediate reaction is to say yes. However, before you do, review the following steps, as they will help to ensure that your assignment is successful, your client is satisfied, and that you will be called again.

Step 1: Before Accepting the Assignment—Pre-assignment Preliminaries

Find out the times you will be needed, and determine whether you are available for all of them. Be flexible, since this type of work often involves many last-minute additions and changes to the schedule. Ask for a copy of the schedule in writing, even if it is only a preliminary one. If you are not available for the entire assignment, let the client know when you are available. If you have worked for this client before and they like your work, they will sometimes alter the schedule to accommodate you. Continuity is an important factor, and it is generally better for the artist to work with one interpreter. If you cannot be there for the full assignment, even if the client is willing, it might be better not to accept it.

Find out whether you are also expected to attend, but not necessarily to constantly work through, luncheons, dinners, and parties. Is there travel involved? If so, is travel time compensated?

Discuss compensation. Is there a fixed fee for the entire assignment, or will you be paid based on an hourly or per diem rate? What about down time? If there are two interviews in the morning and a screening in the evening, will you be paid for the full day, or only for the times you are working? If there is travel involved, will both your travel time and your expenses be paid?

Find out who will be paying you. This is not as obvious as it may seem. When you are working with a director who is promoting a film that has a publicist, who has been hired by the distributor, who, in turn, is working for the production company, any one of these parties may be responsible for paying you. Be clear about who is giving the orders and where to send the invoice.

Finally, determine whether or not you are going to be working with a contract. If the client wants a contract, review the terms carefully before you sign. If the client does not offer a contract and you are not comfortable working without one, recognize that flexibility is often of paramount importance, and propose a contract that can accommodate change. It has been my experience that mutual trust and established relationships play a significant role in this industry and, as a result, very few assignments are done on a contract basis.

Step 2: Once You Have Agreed to Take the Assignment—Background Research

It is absolutely imperative that you do your preliminary research and be thorough about it. Expertise is important, so do not accept an assignment if you do not feel confident about your subject knowledge.

There are many sources of information about performing artists and their work, both online and in print. Look them up and check them out. For artists who are promoting a particular work or performance, the publicist, producer, or distributor will often provide you with information in advance of the assignment. If there is a press kit available, by all means ask for one. If it is a film, ask if it is possible to see it in advance, either at a press screening or on video.

What type of information should you look for? What information is useful? With regard to the individual artist, look for general biographical information (place of birth, education, etc.), titles of previous works, significant influences (names of teachers or colleagues who were important in the artist’s life or who influenced his or her work). If the artist is promoting a specific work, be familiar with the plot, the names of the characters, the names of cast and crew, and the title of the work in the original language and its foreign release title, if any. Make every effort to see the work—a question that may seem very strange and out of context may become totally comprehensible when you have seen the work and understand the references.
Who is your audience? Is it the general public, students, other professionals or journalists? Knowing who the audience will be helps you to know what level of understanding to expect and what type of terminology to use.

What is the venue? Is it a public or private setting? Is the interview in-person or by phone? Is it being recorded?

Will you be working in a public setting where there may be competing noise, such as in a hotel lobby, restaurant, bar, classroom, or theater? Or will you be working in a more private setting, such as a hotel room or business office, or in a radio or television studio?

If you will be working by phone, will you be together with the subject or will you be interpreting from a remote location via conference call?

All of this information should be ascertained in advance in order to make the actual day of the assignment run smoothly.

Step 3: On the Day of the Assignment—Prepare Before You Begin

Physical preparation is very important and should not be neglected. Try to get a good night’s sleep the night before: fatigue is the greatest enemy of concentration. Have your materials prepared: notepad, pencil, and any extra material (such as a cast list or credits list for name references). Be kind to your voice: bring throat lozenges, throat spray, or water with you. Keep your vocal chords lubricated.

Dress appropriately—know the type of event and dress accordingly. If you are working a full day, with interviews in the morning and a reception in the evening, bring a change of clothing. Wear subdued colors—it is the artist, not you, that should be the focus of attention, and bright colors can be distracting. And don’t forget to wear comfortable shoes—many in-theater sessions are done standing up!

You will be working very close to your subject, so do not wear any kind of scented product. Many people are allergic to perfume, and you do not want to cause your subject to have an allergic reaction. Breath mints are equally important.

If the interview is by phone, be clear about the time zones involved when setting the time for the call. Try to familiarize yourself with conference call technology, since sometimes you might be the one who has to set up the call.

Always arrive early: schedules are usually pretty tight. Once you arrive, introduce yourself to everyone. Talk with your subject before you begin, since this will put both of you at ease. It will also give you the opportunity to hear what the subject’s voice is like—whether they speak with a regional accent, talk fast, slow, loud, soft, if there is any kind of speech impediment, or if they speak any English. Remember, your subject is often just as nervous as you are. Let them know that you are there for them whenever they need you.

Talk with your subject and decide together where you will stand or sit. If you are using a microphone, find out if there is one for each of you or if you will have to pass it back and forth (organizers frequently forget to include an extra microphone, or an extra chair, for the interpreter). If recording equipment is being used, determine where you must stand or sit in order to be heard.

Step 4: When the Interpreting Begins

Remember that your work is bilingual and bidirectional, so it is important to establish a rhythm as soon as possible. Find out whether your subject prefers to speak in long or short sentences, and try to accommodate them as best you can.

If you are interpreting in a public forum, work with the interviewer. Let them repeat the question to the audience, since this gives you extra time to interpret the question to your subject. If someone in the audience asks a question in the subject’s native language, repeat it in English so that the rest of the audience understands.

Be true to your subject, to their words, and their emotions. Do not add to or subtract from what they are saying. Be discreet when needed. Remember that you are a communications professional. Accurately conveying the idea, rather than the exact words, is the ultimate goal in this type of interpreting. Speak naturally and without hesitation. It is important that you engage the audience’s attention, and sometimes this is as much about presentation as it is about interpretation. This is the moment when you are most visible. If you are doing your job well, the transition from one language to another will be seamless, an extension of what the subject is saying, and this will be the moment that you become completely invisible.

If you are working with journalists in individual or group interviews, establish a rapport with them. If you do this type of work often, chances are you will meet some of them again. In most cases, they will be recording the interview and yours will be the only voice they will understand. Let them know that you are available should they need to clarify something later on. Remember to give them your card—some journalists will mention you by name in an interview, some will not. If you are interpreting for a number of interviews in a single day, try to make
each interview seem fresh. Remember, this may be the fifth or sixth interview for the artist and for you, but it is the first for the interviewer.

**Step 5: When the Assignment is Over—After the Last Word is Spoken**

Once you have finished the assignment, be sure to thank all of the parties involved. Make sure to have business cards with you in the event someone has heard you and is interested in hiring you.

If you are working with journalists, ask when the printed interview will be published or the recorded interview aired. This is a good way to review yourself, and also serves as the foundation for a portfolio of your work.

Be sure to invoice promptly. In some cases, you may be asked to have the invoice with you when you arrive for the assignment.

Finally, follow up on anything that may have caused you problems in your interpreting: subject matter or terminology. This way, you will be prepared for the next time.

**Final Thoughts**

I consider it a great privilege to be able to work with film and performing artists and to enable them to communicate their works and ideas to the public. It is incredibly rewarding, but it requires a great deal of work and is not for the faint-of-heart. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of large audiences or working with some larger-than-life egos, this may not be appropriate work for you. However, the suggestions I have given above, when modified, are applicable to many other types of interpreting situations. They are based on my own experience, so when you read them, adapt them and make them work for you.

---

**An Exercise in the Organization of Interpreting Services at High-Level Diplomatic Conferences Continued from page 39**


---

**ATA Members**

Check out Retirement Programs through—

Washington Pension Center
888.817.7877
301.941.9179

---

**It’s Not Too Early To Plan**

***ATA’s 2005 Annual Conference***

Seattle, Washington
November 9-12

---

**Here are the top SEVEN REASONS why you should attend ATA’s Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada**

October 13–16, 2004

1. Networking
2. Sharing information with your colleagues
3. Making new contacts
4. Gaining inspiration
5. Learning what others are doing in the field
6. Learning or improving skills and techniques
7. Break from job/routine
Peter Less has been living in Chicago, where he practices law, for over 50 years. He attended the Geneva School of Conference Interpretation and, in 1946, interpreted at the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi war criminals. Less, whose mother, father, sister, and grandmother were killed by the Nazis, had to sit in the courtroom and interpret for some of the masterminds responsible for these atrocities. How could he do it? Come hear Mr. Less speak at ATA’s 45th Annual Conference in Toronto (October 13-16, 2004).

As I clip a microphone to Peter Less’s tie, he says: “That’s how they have microphones now, not these old ones bolted down in the middle of the table.”

I then show him some archival photos of the Nuremberg Trials.

He says, “Umm-hmm, those are the guys. There’s Hermann Goering and Rudolf Hess... Hjalmar Schacht—he was one of the three found not guilty. Erhard Milch—I had him in a deposition. He knew perfect English. If there was one word in my translation he didn’t like, he would correct it. He was usually right.”

Would you tell me about your childhood?

I grew up in a nice, comfortable middle class German home in Koenigsberg. My father was an attorney and my mother managed my grandmother’s store. As the Nazis came to power, things got worse and worse. In 1938, when I was 17, I told my parents we should leave Germany. But like so many intellectuals, they said: “This cannot go on much longer. Social democrats will come back soon.” So I left alone and went to Switzerland. They stayed. My family perished. My father, my mother, my grandmother, and my only sister are all gone. I am the only one still around.

Why did you choose Switzerland?

That was the only country where I could go without a visa at the time. For a while, my father would send me 50 marks a month to live on, but about six months later that became illegal. I had to find another way to survive, but I had no residence permit and no work permit. So I became a student of hotel management at the

École Hotelière in Neuchâtel, where I spent some very useful months. I learned to cook, to wait on tables, and I got good food.

When the course ended, I became an undocumented alien. The Swiss authorities issued me a so-called “tolerance permit” valid for three months. After three months, I’d go back to the police and they would ask: “Why haven’t you left Switzerland yet?” And I would say: “I would love to! Tell me where I can go! The Germans are in Germany, Austria, France, in Italy, all the surrounding countries—where can I go?” And so they would renew the permit.

Eventually, the Swiss put me in a labor camp, but it wasn’t bad. We got military food, so the Swiss soldiers ate the same things we did. Nice billets, a

nice commander, and weekends off. We were free to go to the big cities on the weekends. If we had a few pennies, we went to Zurich and had a good time chasing girls, going to the movies, and sitting in coffee shops.

What kind of work did you do in these camps?

 Needless work. Dig ditches one day, cover them up the next. We told those in charge that we could be helpful to the Swiss economy if they would only let us. “No, we can’t—these are orders from above.” But there were always nice people in Switzerland who helped refugees, such as the Quakers. They had pamphlets in French, and we would translate them into German, English, or
whatever they needed. And they paid us, which was totally illegal because we were not allowed to work outside of the camps.

Then one day, a nice Swiss Foreign Service officer named Merz, said: “We can get you out of here if you agree to do work where there is a shortage of labor. You have a choice: a butcher, a baker, a painter, or a barber.” I chose to be a barber and got placed with a barber in La Chaux de Fond who needed an apprentice, and stayed there for about a year.

Then Merz found out that the University of Geneva was willing to give refugees a grant. By that time I knew French, so I enrolled in the Faculté des Lettres and got my university degree. Attached to the University of Geneva was the École d’Interprètes, a Rockefeller-founded department that trained simultaneous interpreters. I spoke German, English, and French, and I enrolled there. It was a two-year course. They put us in a glass booth. At first, they would speak very slowly, accentuating every syllable: “Heute ist das Wetter sehr schön.”—“Today the weather is very nice.” After a few weeks, they would speak quickly and with an accent. We gradually learned to listen and speak at the same time.

There were about 15 or 18 students in my class. We graduated shortly after WWII ended. At that time, the Americans, the British, and the French were organizing an international war crimes tribunal. One day, American officers in uniform came to the school. They tested a dozen people and hired three, including me. “Tomorrow morning,” the American officer said, “you must fly to Nuremberg.”

As students, in addition to learning the skill of listening and speaking at the same time, we studied various terminology—military, political, legal, including Nazi terms, and the rank equivalents in the French or American army—so we were prepared.

I was 25.

When we arrived at Nuremberg, they gave us a couple hours of training and then put us in a glass booth in the courtroom. We worked in hour-and-a-half shifts (an hour-and-a-half in the morning, an hour-and-a-half in the afternoon), and it felt longer than an eight-hour day at the office. The day wasn’t finished then, either, because at night we had to correct the gibberish transcribed during the day. When you interpret fast, sometimes you don’t speak elegantly, but when it gets printed in the record, everything must be correct.

We also did translation work. For example, when the final judgment was issued, it had to be translated. It was 360 pages long. The military police locked us up in an old Bavarian castle and told us: “You will be court-martialed if a word leaks out of what’s in those papers. Every reporter is going to offer you your weight in gold to get a scoop, to be the first.” We couldn’t leave, couldn’t even use the phone.

What was the average age of the Nuremberg interpreters?

We were fairly young. The two French sisters were only 22, but the others were a little older.

There were four languages used for interpretation in the courtroom: German, French, English, and Russian.

The interpretation equipment was primitive: a microphone bolted down in the middle of the table, and you had to bend over to speak into it. It was uncomfortable and strained your back. You couldn’t turn your head because then it wouldn’t capture your voice. The earphones were big, like you see in old movies. They fit over your head, heavy and tight, and crushed your ears. They were terrible, very uncomfortable. Your ears were red when you finally got rid of them.
And the sound was scratchy, like an old record. There was also a button you could push in the interpreters’ booth. It would turn on a red light that told the speaker to slow down. They’d see that red light, slow down for about 15 seconds, then go back to their usual manner of speaking. The volume depended largely on the speaker. If the speaker did not speak loud enough, there was nothing you could do to enhance the volume. And if they were shouting too loud, there was nothing you could do to tone them down. I interpreted the proceedings between German and English.

I had to interpret as well as translate. If a witness testified that she had to jump out a first floor window, the Americans would say, “big deal, street level.” I had to translate it “second-floor window”—then they would say, “oh, that was quite a fall.”

Sometimes witnesses would use languages not offered at the trial. They would use Yiddish or else speak too fast. In those cases, you could just get the gist of what the witness was saying across, but you had to make it clear that this was not a literal translation. Some witnesses were crying, muffling their words with their sobs. We did the best we could.

What were some of the other languages that witnesses used? Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian.

How were those languages handled in the courtroom? In those cases, the witnesses had to give a written statement that was translated into English. The authorized translation would then be read into the record.

Where were you staying while interpreting at the trials? We were housed in beautiful villas confiscated from top Nazis, located in the suburbs of Nuremberg. There were about three or four interpreters per villa. At the end of the workday, jeeps would drive us to our temporary homes and pick us up again in the morning to go to the courthouse.

We ate at the Grand Hotel, the only hotel that was still standing. Everything else was destroyed, but the Allies kept the hotel in good shape because they had to sleep somewhere. The waiters and waitresses were all Germans. They got paid in cigarettes. I sent my entire salary home to my wife, and used the allowance of cigarettes I got to buy things.

Once that same year, 1946, I was flown to the Four-Power Conference in Berlin to translate for two days. On my time off, I walked the streets and bought a typewriter—and paid almost a whole carton of cigarettes for it. I still have it.

How many interpreters were there total? About 30 or 40 altogether, in all languages. All the time I worked there I didn’t even know all of them, since they had different hours and shifts. I saw the ones that were sitting next to me during the same shift.

We were young and not very experienced, but we were indispensable. The École d’Interprètes was the only place that trained interpreters at that time.

Did you have a supervisor? Yes, Brigadier General Telford Taylor was an intermediate boss. He died recently, in 2003 in New York. The real boss was Robert H. Jackson, the Supreme Court judge who was the chief counsel. I spoke to him on the telephone just before he died.

Did you get any time off? Yes, we had some days off, and weekends. Once I got Friday off, so I
quickly went to Paris to meet my wife, who came up from Geneva.

**What stands out in your mind today about your work as an interpreter at Nuremberg?**

I guess the fact that we were the first. The Nuremberg Trials were the first time simultaneous interpretation was used. They had to use it, because if they used consecutive interpretation, especially with four official languages, the trials would only just be finishing now. So we felt like pioneers, but at the same time we didn’t think we were anything special. We were kids, we were adventurous, and we liked what we did. At night we went to the movies.

**How did you maintain your neutrality?**

It wasn’t easy. You were sitting in the same room with the people who probably killed your parents, but you could not let your feelings interfere with your job. You swore to interpret as faithfully as possible, to put the speaker’s idea into the listener’s head. So we did.

At the recent International War Crimes Tribunal of Slobodan Milosevic, interpreters received psychological aid to deal with the descriptions of atrocities they had to interpret. Did you receive any psychological aid?

No, they didn’t really know what psychology was back then—Freud had just died in 1939—but we were young and we could disassociate our feelings from our job.

When you moved to the U.S. in 1946, did you work as an interpreter here?

No, but I did work as a translator and teacher for Berlitz, teaching German and French to GIs coming home from the war. We taught them how to say things they wanted to know (like “where are the girls?” or “which is the best beer?”). My wife translated for the Red Cross. She also worked for them in Geneva, translating records, looking for missing persons and prisoners of war. She even met Winston Churchill.

You told me that you were a member of, I think it was called the International Association of Parliamentary Interpreters, the forerunner of today’s AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters). Did you remain a member after you left Geneva?

Yes, for a year or two, and then I lost contact. But I still have a certificate hanging on the wall at my house.

**What was the mood like on the part of the audience?**

Well, they had to remain calm, because any commotion would get you expelled from the courtroom. They had to just sit there and observe. They couldn’t smile, applaud, or express any hatred or repugnance. Courtrooms are run with a lot of decorum in general, and that was especially true there, when the eyes of the world were on that courtroom. All the newspapers were there, and there was radio equipment all over the place.

**Do you know if the court building is still there today?**

Oh yes, I saw it years later.

**What were the defendants’ attitudes?**

They were all different. Hans Frank showed genuine remorse, while others showed phony remorse in order to get a lighter sentence or escape the hangman’s noose. Some were not remorseful at all, but said they “just sat in their office and signed papers.”

**What special terminology did you have to know?**

The Nazi terminology and ranks for the army and the SS—we translated them into equivalent American or British terms. Oberst was a colonel, for example. Some things we didn’t translate, like “the SS.” It stands for Schutzstaffel, but you

---

*Attorney Paula Weisberg (Less’s colleague), Peter Less, and Tanya Gesse at lunch at The Berghoff, a German restaurant in downtown Chicago that Peter has frequented for the past 50 years.*
didn’t translate that since everybody knew what it meant.

**Did you meet all of the interpreters at Nuremberg?**

No, there were nine other trials going on. I interpreted at the major war criminals’ trial—Hermann Goering, Rudolf Hess, Hans Frank, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, and others. There were also the doctors’ trials, the concentration camp trials, the industrialist trials, and others. They went on from 1945-46, all the way until 1949. I did not stay until the end.

**Why not? You said you were making a great living.**

I sure was, but I got a visa to go to the U.S. and couldn’t let it expire.

**Was your visa to the States kind of a thank-you gesture on the part of the Americans that hired you?**

No, I got the visa on my own. Now, because I was attached to the U.S. Army, upon my arrival in the U.S., I had to report at the Pentagon in order to get an official release from my duties.

**After Nuremberg, did you consider continuing as an interpreter?**

Yes, for a while. I wanted to work at the newly founded United Nations, but they didn’t need German.

**So after you didn’t start working at the United Nations, what did you do?**

I went to law school. I always wanted to be a lawyer because my father and my uncle were attorneys. I did all kinds of odd jobs to get through school.

**Did you make any mistakes at Nuremberg that you remember?**

Oh yes, once I made a big mistake and almost caused World War III. It was over a word—a name, actually—“Rascher.” The question was “What did Rascher do?” and I translated: “What did Russia do?” The Russian officer immediately jumped up, shook his hands in the air, and said: “WHAT?!! What are you involving Russia for?” I then had to explain that I meant the German General Rascher, not Russia the country, and apologized.

**What were some of the difficulties?**

Well, the fact that the German defense counsel were good attorneys in Roman law, and the Americans and the British were good attorneys in common law. That sometimes made it difficult to explain the concepts, not the words.

**Could you do that while interpreting?**

No, you had to explain the concepts before and after, off the record, because they would use terms that the other side couldn’t understand. When an American attorney speaks about the writ of habeas corpus, a German would say, “what is he talking about?” Then you had to explain what legal document they had. On the other side, the Roman law professionals would use Latin terms that we don’t know in America, and you had to be careful in explaining it, but you can’t always do this in open court.

**So you had to be a legal expert?**

Yes, we studied legal terminology at the Geneva School. We studied international law, Roman law, and common law. So we knew what it was, but to impart these ideas into the head of the listener is not very simple, because they are all brought up in their own culture, which, to them, is the only meaningful and correct one. They don’t realize that other systems are built on different assumptions.

**What kind of law do you practice now?**

Mostly family law.

**Having lived through tumultuous historical times, what advice would you give us today?**

Don’t follow somebody who tells you what’s good for you. I like the motto “Lead me to those searching for truth, but keep me away from those who have ‘found it.’”

The author wishes to specially thank attorney Paula Weisberg for making the connection between the two generations of interpreters, Agnès Donnadieu for her photo work, and the many professional interpreters from New York to London to Jerusalem who submitted questions for the interview.

---

**Call for Papers**


**XVII World Congress of the International Federation of Translators**

“Rights On!”

August 4-7, 2005
Tampere, Finland
Certification Forum:

The Newest Additions to the Certification Program:
Croatian→English and English→Croatian

By Terry Hanlen, Certification Program Manager

I am happy to announce that Croatian into English and English into Croatian have been added to the testable languages that make up ATA’s Certification Program. The ATA Board of Directors approved the additions in July and candidates may begin ordering practice tests immediately. Examinations in these combinations will be available at all exam sittings when the new exam year begins in 2005.

Adding a new language combination for testing is a labor-intensive, all-volunteer process. The only assistance ATA Headquarters and the Certification Committee can give is to help with coordination, oversight, and advice. On average, it takes a minimum of two years, from the initial steps to final approval from the ATA Board, to add a language combination. There were many helping hands involved in securing approval for Croatian in both directions, but the tireless driving forces who deserve to be recognized are Marijan Bošković, Paula Gordon, and David Stephenson. This accomplishment would not be possible without them. And they did it all in remarkable time—just under two years.

Currently, there are efforts underway to prepare other language combinations for testing. This gives me the opportunity to present our procedure for establishing new languages for testing. The process is detailed and the volume of work is daunting, but the goal is to establish language combinations that are relevant and in demand, and to ensure that the testing program can be sustained for years to come.

Procedure for Establishing a New Language Combination Within the ATA Certification Program

The addition of new language combinations to ATA’s Certification Program is enthusiastically supported and encouraged by the ATA Board of Directors, Certification Committee members, and Headquarters staff. In adding a language combination, the majority of the work is done by the members of the workgroup who desire testing in the new combination. The role of the Committee and Headquarters staff is to provide guidance, information, and oversight to facilitate the process. (Headquarters staff is unable to take on the routine administrative tasks related to the establishment of a new language.) Since this work is done by unpaid volunteers, it is important to be aware of the time and effort that will be required in order to establish a new language combination into the Certification Program. The process takes several years and requires a dedicated and knowledgeable workgroup. Please note that costs of establishing a new language pair cannot be covered or reimbursed by ATA (this includes photocopying, postage, long distance telephone, as well as travel expenses for attending meetings or grader training). Limited costs of grader training are reimbursable only upon formal introduction of the new language pair into the Certification Program.

Note the steps marked with **. At these points, documentation needs to be provided to the Certification Program Manager.

1) Contact the Certification Program Manager at ATA Headquarters for information about the steps of this grass-roots process.

2) Contact colleagues to discuss the matter and find volunteers to form a committee. A notice can be placed in the Chronicle and appropriate chapter or division newsletters, and meetings may be organized at the Annual Conference.

3) ** Select a chair and establish formal contact with the Certification Committee. Provide the Certification Committee with a list of the committee members.

4) ** Prepare a list of ATA members and nonmembers who would be interested in taking the exam. Provide documentation to verify that: a) there is support for adding a new language combination; b) there will be enough sustained interest to ensure continuing administrative support on their part; and c) other candidates will come forward to take the exam in successive years. This is necessary since offering the exam on a temporary or limited basis is inconsistent with the philosophy upon which the Certification Program is based. Were a test offered on a one-time basis, those who failed could not retake the test. At least 50 names should be submitted.

5) Decide who will select the passages and who will grade the initial round of exams (at least four graders should be designated for each language combination). These graders must be ATA members, have appropriate credentials, and be willing to commit a minimum of two years as graders to ensure some continuity as appropriate candidates pass the exam and are brought into the grading workgroup. Graders must also be aware that this obligation requires that they forfeit their opportunity to become certified until the exam year after they are no longer involved in grading or passage selection. The key grader selection will be the Language Chair and Deputy Language Chair. The Language Chair will coordinate the activities of the grader.
workgroup and become the liaison to the Certification Committee. The Deputy Language Chair is responsible for organizing passage selection and should be willing to eventually assume the Language Chair position.

The original chair and committee may or may not become the Language Chair and grader workgroup. If they do not take on these roles, their responsibilities will be to coordinate collection of the necessary documentation and to locate the appropriate candidates to be graders. Once the grading workgroup is established, the original subcommittee’s work is completed and the grading workgroup takes over.

To help locate these graders, the Certification Committee suggests conferring with the appropriate ATA division, contacting universities that offer training in the language, or communicating with a counterpart professional organization in another country. If these resources are unavailable or unhelpful, the Committee, Headquarters, and the newly formed subcommittee will work together to investigate alternatives.

6) ** Submit grader resumes to ATA Headquarters. On approval, the Certification Program Manager will provide appropriate materials, including job descriptions for the Language Chair and graders, guidelines for passage selection, sample passages, grading standards, and other useful information. A mentor from an existing language combination may be available to assist.

Note: Once the grading workgroup is selected, graders may attend any grader workshops offered by the Certification Committee, and the Language Chair or a workgroup representative is invited to any workshops for Language Chairs. At least one member of the workgroup must attend such a workshop before the language combination will be approved.

7) ** Select an initial set of three passages. The grading workgroup, led by the Language Chair, selects three practice test passages and submits them to the Certification Committee for review and approval. (Provide an English translation for foreign-language passages.)

8) Prepare grading guidelines. The Language Chair prepares passage-specific (for the three practice-test passages) and language-specific grading guidelines and submits them to the other graders for discussion. If necessary, the Language Chair revises the grading guidelines based on workgroup response.

9) ** Submit both sets of grading guidelines to the Certification Committee for review.

10) Grading training and practice. Once the grading guidelines are approved, the graders take the practice tests, grade each other’s translations according to the grading guidelines, and discuss their grading decisions. (The language-specific guidelines may be revised as part of this process.)

Note: The Language Chair should contact the Certification Program Manager to arrange for at least one of the graders to attend a grader training either at the spring Language Chair meeting in Alexandria, Virginia (usually April or May) or at the ATA Annual Conference. No funding is provided for this initial training.

11) Select remaining sets of passages. The workgroup selects another six passages (three for the first year’s exams and three backup passages, which become the second year’s exams) and prepares sample translations and passage-specific grading guidelines for these passages.

12) ** Submit all passage-related materials to the Certification Committee. When grader training, passage selection, and grading guidelines are complete, present the materials to the Certification Committee for final review and approval and for its recommendation to the Board.

13) Approval procedure. Upon receiving the Certification Committee’s recommendation, the Board will vote formally to establish the new language combination at the next scheduled Board meeting. Once approval is given, an announcement is placed in the *Chronicle* and on ATA’s website and in the association’s literature. Practice tests will be available immediately and exams may be taken at sittings following the announcement.

14) The approved graders will grade exams taken during the remainder of the exam year, recommend new graders from excellent exams, select passages and backup passages for the next year, and work with the Certification Committee to maintain the program in subsequent years.
A recent story first published in Beijing daily 
*Keji Ribao* and translated into English by the CIA’s Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) cites the “Folding Chair” and “Wine Jug” systems, both of which it claims are used for the “latest generation of U.S. military surveillance satellites.” FBIS is part of the intelligence arm of the U.S. government; it collects, translates, and publishes open-source (i.e., not classified) material from foreign broadcasts for consumption by clients in government.

Yet U.S. government experts insist that neither Folding Chair nor Wine Jug exists. Nor do the French surveillance spacecraft “Cherry” and “Zenong” mentioned in the same article, they say.

The misunderstanding appears to stem from slipshod translation, or so says a former CIA analyst and specialist in national security in the intriguingly named Secrecy News, a newsletter published by the Federation of American Scientists as part of their Project on Government Secrecy.

According to this source, Folding Chair refers to the “Jumpseat” satellite program and Wine Jug to codename “Magnum,” while “Cherry” and “Zenong” are none other than France’s CERISE and Xenon programs.

The errors result from retranslation of Chinese phrases based on English source material by linguists unfamiliar with the U.S. satellite programs—much as transmission errors in the children’s game “telephone” distort the original message. It’s amusing for kids, but more worrying when you get the names of your government’s own programs wrong, says the reader who sent this in.

In technical translation, such mishaps typically occur when translators are working too quickly or lack basic information about what they are translating. Steve Aftergood of the FAS agrees that translation quality is an obvious issue in a high-volume undertaking that sees hundreds, if not thousands, of pages translated every day. When mistakes arise, he told The Onionskin, it is often not due to “translation incompetence, but rather insufficient subject-matter expertise.”

Yet surely knowing your field inside out is an integral part of the skill set required for translating in this high-tech, security-critical domain. Most professional translators insist that you cannot translate what you do not understand. If you don’t track your subject closely, it becomes extraordinarily difficult to fit the linguistic pieces together—no wonder magnums become wine jugs.

The FAS Project on Government Secrecy project was set up to challenge excessive government secrecy and promote public oversight through research, advocacy, and public education. Clearly, translator education is needed, too.

**Black Hats in the Sun?**

“Greetings from sunny Catalonia, where the sun is shining, the sangria is flowing, and the translations are not done by natives,” writes another reader.

True, summer would not be summer without a fresh crop of oddly translated tourist brochures. Low budgets and a resolutely do-it-yourself mindset among local tourist authorities are the main culprits, as usual.

Looking on the bright side, the resulting errors bring both comic relief and insights into how processes get off track (and might be set straight).

A glossy guide to the beaches of Sitges in Catalonia (Spain) is a case in point. Published by the municipal authorities, it begins with a warm message from mayor Jordi Baijet i Vidal in Catalan, Spanish, and English entitled “Saluting the mayor.”

The tone set, Mr. Baijet i Videal goes on to describe this otherwise informative booklet as a “tool [that] will allow all citizens, both people who visit us during the summer as the villains, enjoy the information as much as possible […]”.

Is this seaside town actually looking to draw gangsters?

No, a patient Catalan speaker explained. After breaking rule number one of the translator’s guide to good practice (work only into your native language), the perpetrator appears to have simply misread a dictionary entry, looking up *vilatan(e)* (Catalan for “citizen”) under *vilan(e)*—villain, rustic.

What with the sun shining and the sangria flowing, our attempts to locate and educate the stumbler(s) failed, although all signs point to an unnamed town hall employee. Yet with the Catalan translators’ association gearing up to launch its own client education brochure and the Sitges team alerted to the problem, next year’s edition will be better, we are assured.

**Signage Revisited: Success Stories**

Translation work that is literally carved into stone introduces a whole new level of accuracy anxiety, reports ATA corporate member Ken Clark.

In 1994, his company, 1-800-Translate, was approached by
architect Joseph De Pace to translate “Let Freedom Ring!” into 36 languages to appear on a monumental work at the Community College of Philadelphia. Located in an exterior courtyard, this sandblasted granite cosmogram is 24 feet in diameter with concrete walls, steps and ramps, plus granite seating and copings. Languages were selected to reflect the population of the school, but also a metaphorical journey around the world, says De Pace. They even included an historical reference—Leni-Lenape, spoken by Native Americans in Philadelphia before the arrival of Europeans.

When the proactive client provided an initial Lenape version, Ken Clark asked if it had been checked for accuracy. No need, he was told, since it’s a dead language. His interest piqued, Clark nonetheless set about tracking down surviving speakers of Unami, the dialect of Lenape once spoken in the Delaware Valley. He eventually found three elderly individuals, all in Oklahoma, including an experienced linguist.

“Betsy Snake was kind enough to review our client’s translation from her hospital bed,” Clark told The Onionskin, “and she laughed out loud at our version: what we thought was Lenape for ‘Let Freedom Ring’ was actually ‘Kill the guy with the bell’.”

For this quality-obsessed supplier, the moral of the story is simple: “It always pays to check translation, carved in stone or not.”

In the U.K., Didier Philippart of Cicero Translations, too, knows that attention to detail pays. Asked to translate a welcome sign for visiting Japanese dignitaries, his company spent over a week compiling information on names, functions, and relative positions in the corporate hierarchy—essential to compose a suitable greeting.

And clearly something went right: a memo received from the client after the ceremony enthused “Had our meeting yesterday with the Japanese guests. The ‘Welcome’ translation went down very well, and certainly helped set the stage: ‘Ships entering port must now have a container for their catering waste when they come into dock. This container must be identified as such.’”

These stories and others are welcome reminders that there are translation suppliers out there prepared to go the extra mile. Yet budgets remain an issue, tempting ill-informed clients to go the cheap route.

Nick Rosenthal of Salford Translations in the U.K. summarized a prevailing corporate view as follows: “The reason most signage translations go wrong is very, very simple: “Filipino, Arabic, Russian, and Hindi.” A blind translation of the three words would have made little sense, but the client stepped in to set the stage: “Ships entering port must now have a container for their catering waste when they come into dock. This container must be identified as such.”

These stories and others are welcome reminders that there are translation suppliers out there prepared to go the extra mile. Yet budgets remain an issue, tempting ill-informed clients to go the cheap route.

Nick Rosenthal of Salford Translations in the U.K. summarized a prevailing corporate view as follows: “The reason most signage translations go wrong is very, very simple:

---

A Lesson in Korean Linguistics

Secrecy News missed some nuances and included some errors in a recent discussion of the simmering controversy over whether the name of the South Korean president should be written “Roh Moo-hyun,” as the South Korean government prefers, or “No Mu-hyun,” as the CIA World Fact Book would have it (SN, 07/16/04).

Tom Emerson, a computational linguist specializing in Chinese, Korean, and Arabic natural language processing, helped set the newsletter straight.

“The pronunciation of the president’s name sounds like ‘Roh,’ so a transcription of his name would use this, as it reflects the sounds heard,” Mr. Emerson explained.

“However, if you transliterate the actual Korean letters used to write his surname, you will literally get ‘No’ in all extant transliteration systems, including the McCune-Reischauer system” and half a dozen others.

“The CIA uses a transliteration of the native hankul spelling of the president’s name, which is perfectly valid,” he said, adding, “The objections coming from the Koreans stem, I expect, from the fact that ‘No’ carries semantic baggage that is detrimental to the public image of their president.”

“Interestingly enough,” notes Emerson, “Roh’s name is spelled differently in North Korea than it is in South Korea. If you take North Korea’s spelling and transliterate into Latin you would have ‘Lo.’ You can imagine the complexities of dealing with names when searching for people on watch-lists and the like.”

Reprinted with permission
Secrecy News from the FAS Project on Government Secrecy
Volume 2004, Issue No. 67
July 19, 2004

---

Continued on p.55
Dictionary Reviews Compiled by Boris Silversteyn

Silversteyn is chair of the ATA Dictionary Review Committee.

The Interpreter

Author: Suzanne Glass
Publisher: Steerforth Press: South Royalton, VT (302 pages)
Publication date: 2001
ISBN: 1586420038
Price: $11.16 (Softcover) on Amazon.com
$22 (Hardcover) on Amazon.com

Reviewed by: Nancy Schweda Nicholson

“As an interpreter, I choose words as a sculptor chooses clay” (43).

“Foxes. We interpreters are foxes and the speaker’s words are our prey. We sneak up behind them, snatch them, flip them upside down, and play with them as we choose.” (96).

The above quotes, taken from The Interpreter by Suzanne Glass, illustrate the importance of words and the role they play in an interpreter’s professional life. Dominique, the novel’s protagonist, is a conference interpreter whose story unfolds not only through her own eyes, but also through those of Nicholas (an Italian leukemia researcher who takes a job in New York) and Anna (an old friend from interpreting school). The novel is set in the world of pharmaceuticals and medical interpreting.

Glass crams much about being an interpreter into the first few pages of this book and offers the reader an authentic depiction of the job. She covers such topics as: stress (“...I vowed to get out of the habit of digging my nails into my palms till they bled while I translated” [3-4]); the practice of team interpreting, including having your partner take over after 30-minute interpreting stints; the experience of having other people’s words running through your head after the conference ends; the importance of not leaving your boothmate(s) for an extended period; topic preparation; confidentiality; and rescuing a colleague in trouble or working with one who is unbearable. Other common characteristics/problems of the profession appear throughout the book. These include: the challenge of idiomatic expressions; nightmares about losing one’s voice before an important meeting; going to lunch with conference delegates, but having little chance to eat when seated between two attendees who speak different languages; the use of *chuchotage* (“whispering”) for clients at small meetings; an “interpreter-unfriendly” positioning of the interpreting booths so that they face the audience without affording a view of the speakers; the role of anticipation and prediction; and the difficulty of the heavily accented philosophical output of a nonnative speaker (“...translating his words was the mental equivalent of doing sit-ups with the flu,” 109). Even without her notepad to assist with recall, Dominique is able to remember some critically important information in a very detailed fashion (a nod to interpreters’ excellent memory skills). Dominique also shares the student motto at her interpreting school with her audience: “...with the hide of a rhino you might get out of here alive” (33). All in all, interpreters will find themselves nodding their heads in agreement as they encounter these points in the text.

The reader shares life in the booth with Dominique and her colleagues. Glass includes comments intended for the uninitiated, including the difficulty of the interpretation task and the “cerebral dexterity” (9) involved. Dominique’s friend, Nicholas, states that he used to think of interpreters “...as no more than translating machines,” and that he still feels “…guilty at [his] one-time lack of appreciation of the interpreters” (9).

In this way, Glass uses a principal character other than the interpreter herself to educate the audience about the interpreting process. Throughout the book, Nicholas pays Dominique many compliments on her interpreting skills. At one point, he says that watching her work is “…like watching the eighth wonder of the world” (145). A bit too self-serving for Glass? Well, after all, Nicholas IS in love with Dominique! Chalk it up to romance!

Early on, Dominique characterizes consecutive interpretation as “…undoubtedly the most terrifying” job (18). She offers an explanation of how this mode of interpreting is carried out by stating that the interpreter sits near the speaker “…notating his every word in symbols” (18). To elucidate, she provides the example of drawing a picture of an umbrella and suggests possible meanings for the sketch depending on the context. Not to be a picker of nits but, as an interpreter trainer who has been teaching consecutive note-taking for over 20 years, I was surprised by the statement that all of the words were transformed into symbols in the interpreter’s notes. Although most agree that note-taking is highly personal (Schweda Nicholson 1993; 1990), some
systems have been proposed over the years (Rozan, 1956, for example, although even his framework does not consist solely of symbols). As a result, I believe Dominique’s statement is somewhat misleading for the non-interpreter reader. It has an air of hocus-pocus about it, perhaps intentionally so.

The text is peppered with childhood reminiscences of the tenuous and often vitriolic relationship between her parents, as well as her mother’s flashbacks of Nazi wartime experiences. For example, preparing to go on a trip reminds Dominique’s mother of the packing and repacking she did as a child when running from the Nazis. As a result, leisure travel—a source of adventure and excitement for both the child and the adult Dominique—brings back terrifying memories for her mother.

Glass also includes numerous references to words and their various definitions/interpretations, a testament to the fact that the author is truly fascinated by language. Text in French, German, Italian, and Hebrew appears in addition to descriptions of Zurich (and other Swiss cities), New York City, and Florence.

I noticed several prevalent themes running throughout the novel. For example, a research scientist’s isolation in his or her lab is compared to the interpreter’s solitude in the interpreting booth. In this same vein, Glass parallels the lack of appreciation for interpreters with a lack of feedback at Nicholas’s research job. Both the presence of light and the lack of it pervade many descriptions. For instance, Dominique prefers the booth to be dark, needs a pitch dark room to sleep, and offers images of dimly lit restaurants and museums throughout the book. The ideas of individuality, personal freedom, and suppression of ego also dominate. Dominique states: “We cannot create. Only recreate. And eventually if we allow ourselves to be trapped in the world of secondhand words our imaginations shrivel and die” (79). When Dominique confides to her friend, Anna, about overhearing people talking about some illegal activity at the end of a conference because a delegate’s microphone has been left on, Anna becomes very emotional and angry. Dominique is concerned about breaching confidentiality, an ethical canon that was pounded into them in interpreting school. In response to Dominique’s quandary, Anna says: “Don’t you have a voice?” (227), a very symbolic answer that stresses the difference between speaking one’s own words as opposed to expressing others’ thoughts. At one point, Dominique pays Nicholas a compliment, saying, “You know how to make people talk” (189). Glass wants the reader to interpret this as “you know how to make me talk,” as if to say that the talking Dominique does all day as an interpreter doesn’t really count. What matters is when she speaks her own words, and it is Nicholas who is able to draw her out. It is probably no coincidence that the book jacket photo places the title word Interpreter over the woman’s lips, stressing once again the focus on language.

Glass offers an interesting analogy when she compares the interpreter to a surfer:

“...when you were interpreting and you had got it just right. You wanted to stay up there, triumphant on the bright blue surfboard, riding the crest of the wave behind the speaker’s words, but sometimes the spray was too strong, some outside noise distracted you, or your headphones dug into your ear and you began to wobble. You missed a word, a sentence, an idea and right there in the booth you lost your footing and you toppled” (186).

While the dénouement is not completely predictable, it is not a total surprise to the reader, either. The quality of the writing is average. The Interpreter is definitely not a page-turner with plot twists and turns like the novels of Scott Turow and John Grisham. Although Glass does wobble now and then, I believe that most interpreters will probably enjoy this book, as it presents an opportunity to read about their work in a popular mass media publication rather than in a research article! And, as Rosemary Dann (a National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators colleague) told me as we chatted in the shuttle to the Denver airport, The Interpreter will soon be made into a major motion picture with Nicole Kidman in the lead role. Look out, world! Interpreters are soon to be pop culture icons!

References

The Onionskin Continued from page 52

People try to cut costs. Rule 1 in the Quality Assurance game is ‘do it right the first time.’"

Buyers may balk at paying $400 for a good translation, says Rosenthal, but happily spend $800 on having the sign produced and fitted. So any saving off the $400 is a false economy.

Whence a final tip to sign commissioners: Get the translation done professionally, and PAY to get the translation done professionally. Don’t try to get it done cheap. Don’t leave the sign-making company to sort it out. Making good a sign gone bad is more costly than getting it right first time around.

With thanks to Bob Blake, Lillian Clementi, and Jean-Luc Herin.
P
eople who work from English as
their source language should take
note of a trend in that language
that grows stronger every day: the use
of the adverb with the “-ly” ending is
becoming an endangered species. It is
being replaced by “on a ______ basis.” You may fill in the blank with
the adjective (“rolling,” “persistent,”
“alternating”), or even the adverb
(“daily,” “weekly,” “monthly”). Of
course, this makes the phrase really
absurd (a form of linguistic elephanti-
asis, as the Underground Grammarian
would say). The absurdity is height-
ened by the fact that the same language
is plagued with excessive abbrevia-
tions which are presumably used to
save time. If so, then why this elephant-
iasis? The Translation Inquirer fully
expects in the near future to go to a
public place where there is some sort
of emergency. A public safety director
will emerge with a bullhorn and urge
people to “Be alert, and move along on
a quick basis!”

[Abbreviations used with this column:
E–English; F–French; G–German;
I–Italian; Pt–Portuguese; R–Russian;
Sp–Spanish]

New Queries

(E-Sp 9-04/1) An anonymous
contributor worries that she cannot
find the right phrase for never gets
old. The phrase that stumped her
goes like this: The honor of being in
the top 500 franchises never gets
old. In fact every year we look forward
to the report with hopes that our efforts
are recognized.

(E-F 9-04/2) No one ever quoted
Ralph Waldo Emerson to me, but this
Lantran wonders if a French version
already exists for his phrase: To the
illumined mind the whole universe
dances and sparkles with light. Is
there already a version and, if not,
who wants to attempt it?

(E-I 9-04/3) In this contract-law
text encountered by a ProZ user, the
following was a problem: The sup-
plier shall promptly discharge any
lien which is attached to Work, Plant
or any part thereof… How to render
this into good Italian?

(F-E 9-04/4) In a collective agree-
ment for a company that manufactures
security seals, this Lantran had
trouble with the department (“fils et
pincés”) (4.a) and the designation of
the job title (“Opérateur machine à
broche”) (4.b). What are they?

(F-E 9-04/5) In translating some
employees’ responses to a survey, a
Lantran found this: “organiser des
dîners à batons rompus avec les
gérants…” The two words in bold
print, she surmises, might mean
something like no holds barred, but
she is not sure.

(F-E 9-04/6) A title of a museum
exhibition, “parcours-découverte,” sug-
gested itinerary to a Lantra-l member,
who promptly rejected it as not fitting
the context. What might it be?

(G-E 9-04/7) The problem for a
ProZ user in dealing with the Swiss
legal terms “Rechtsöffnung” (7.a) and
“Rechtsvorschlag” (7.b) is not in
understanding them, but in getting
acceptable English equivalents. What
might these be? They were found in
the “betreffend” line of an appeal to
the Swiss Federal Court.

(G-E 9-04/8) Also from Swiss law,
what would one in English call an
“Audienzrichteramt?” In this case, it
happens to be an office within the
Bezirksgericht Zürich. It might be
somewhat equivalent to the office of
an administrative law judge, but that
might be way off.

(Pt-E 9-04/9) A Lantra-l correspon-
dent ran into “propedêuticas” in a
description of a medical course in
Portugal, and wonders how to best
render this in English. (This came up in
Russian for the Translation Inquirer,
too.) A series of these exist: “prope-
dêutica cirúrgica, propedêutica
médica, propedêutica obstétrícia e
ginecológica, propedêutica pediátrica.”
What is a good English equivalent?

(R-E 9-04/10) There must be some-
thing more than mere levels of respon-
sibility in the phrase that troubled a
ProZer, namely уровень ответст
венностии в строительстве. As these
terms relate to building regulations, they
keep appearing again and again, and it’s
clear that only two of them exist. This is
also related to licensing requirements.

Who is familiar with this?

(Sp-E 9-04/11) This is a cluster of
unknown terms from Colombian
higher education: under the category
of “nombre asignatura”: (11.a)
“Cátedra rosarista N” (11.b) “cuadro
resumen de créditos”; (11.c)
tipologías”; and the abbreviations
“B, C, O” in (11.d) “indispensable
B”; “complementarias C”; and “elec-
tives Hem O.” Also, the “Hem” (11.e)
is problematical.

(Sp-E 9-04/12) Relating to a
power transformer, a denizen of
Lantra-l found “contacto de disparo,”
and got totally stumped by it with a
tight deadline. What is it?

Replies to Old Queries

(E-Sp 3-04/3) (goop): Ricky
Lacina knows this only as the
cleaning agent for hands. It is also a
brand name. The Translation Inquirer
also admits that he never heard of any
usage of the word goop to designate
an airborne substance dropped to fight
fires on the ground. Are there any

The Translation Inquirer  By John Decker

Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmoor Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail address: jdecker@uplink.net. Please make your submissions by the 25th of each month to be included in the next issue. Generous assistance from Per Dohler, proofreader, is gratefully acknowledged.
emergency medical technicians and fire fighters out there who can comment on this unusual usage?

(F-E 5-03/5) (“agent de maintenance”): Yes, says Ricky Lacina, this is a cleaning person, but the objection she raises is that it is prefaced on page 58 of the January 2004 Chronicle by the derogatory words just a. The use of them is what has given rise over the years to such euphemisms as sanitation engineer.

(F-E 1-04/5) (“sans prejudice de”): It means without prejudice to, says Ricky Lacina. Using Harrap’s New as the support, she finds this example: to accept a principle without prejudice to the measures already taken.

(F-E 4-04/2) (“être dur à mon corps”: It refers to having high tolerance for pain, hardened, or inured to, says Ricky Lacina.

(F-E 5-04/4) (“disponibilité”: The usual meaning of this is availability, asserts Ricky Lacina, and she believes the writer meant that the more personnel available, the greater the demands put upon them (see the original lengthy context quote on page 47 of the May Chronicle).

(F-E 6-04/3) (“conjoint[e]”): Dana Goodier calls this simply a partner, a non-married live-in boyfriend or girlfriend, as Canadian French renders it. Ricky Lacina considers it a term for spouse of either gender. She finds it in her 1959 Larousse, and the meaning is remarkably modern there, considering that it was 1959: “intimement uni.” More to the point is this: “chacun des époux par rapport à l’autre” (each of the spouses with respect to the other).

(F-E 6-04/5) (“publireportage”): Leah Brumer suggests infomercial for this, and if it is limited to only a few minutes, it may be translated as mininmercial.

(F-E 6-04/7) (“jacquette”: For Dana Goodier, this is a button-down sweater or cardigan.

(F-E 6-04/8) (“chaînes de roulement”: The context suggests to Leonard Gornik that the chains here have nothing to do with the chains that are put onto wheels. The term is out of place here. Caterpillar and other companies make tractors with tracks consisting of rubberized metal links, rather than plain steel links. The term track in French is “chenille” or “chemin de roulement,” and this is what they had to use, he contends.

(G-E 6-04/10) (“Tennenfläche”): Although not especially familiar with construction terms, Denzel Dyer believes this refers to a tamped surface, as on a field where some sport is played.

(R-E 6-04/12) (ПОСТУПЧИК КОНТРОЛЯ): Leonid Gornik prefers 100% inspection to piece-by-piece. The latter is a random (or sample) inspection, carried out by sampling a specified quantity of identical items from the batch. Denzel Dyer replies that in the U.S., inspection of every item is, as Leonid said above, 100% inspection.

(R-E 6-04/13) (смотреть как баран на новые ворота): Again, our response comes from Leonid Gornik, who gives the standard dictionary definition of to stare like a stuck pig. To use paralyzed appears to be too strong for this condition, expressing an incident in a story where a sheep comes back home and sees a new gate. The implication is that the person is baffled, bemused, and cannot figure out what happened.

(Sp-E 1-04/13) (NBI): One need not quibble about basic vs. essential, asserts Ricky Lacina, in this abbreviation which works out to be “Necesidades Básicas Insatisfechas.” What caused her to laugh was the notion of what one considers basic. Take flush toilets, for example. Are they essential, asks Ricky? No, they represent a step up from truly basic facilities like latrines, which, as she says, are “basic basic.”

(Sp-E 4-04/9) (“seguridad de suministro”: This has to do with a reliable supply, which is a concern in the case of energy for many countries around the world, opines Ricky Lacina.

(Sp-E 4-04/10) (“energia comprimida”): This kind of “comprimida,” says Ricky Lacina, is precisely the same as the compressed air or oxygen under pressure in diving tanks, and the kind of stuff that one is not permitted to carry aboard aircraft.

The Translation Inquirer will want to meet as many of the above contributors as possible in person at the Toronto conference! You know what I look like—just turn back to the start of this column!
Humor and Translation  By Mark Herman

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

Lost in Translation by Richard Lederer

The 2003 film “Lost in Translation” owes much of its popularity and humor to the language barrier that looms between the English and Japanese languages.

In a Japanese fashion magazine appears “JOYFUL ENGLISH LOVELY” printed beneath a cartoon of Bambi. Much of Japanese commercial English, also known as “Engrish,” is English Lovely or English Charming, or English Confusing.

A T-shirt carried this actually poetic passage of English Lovely: “This wants to show the continuation of a dream for them, even if the day which bursts into flames even if it rains and a wind blows and a calm night are the ends in the world.”

I’d wear that shirt!

A Nagasaki coffee shop sports the name Placebo Labor Handbag. Other Japanese establishments display monikers such as Ghastly Custom Shops, Ox-Creation Beauty Parlor, Business Incubator, Tomato Bank, Cafe Feel, and Cafe Aspirin.

Believe it or not, there’s a soup made in Japan called The Goo, a line of cosmetics named Cookie Face, and rolls of toilet paper identified as Naïve Lady and My Fannie Print. Proof that the Japanese have a love affair with all things English can be seen in their signs and brand names—Great Coffee Smile, The Bathing Ape, Acid Milk, Booty Trap Jeans, Sweet Camel Jeans, Love Body, X-Box, Catch Eye! Catalog Shopping, Ministry Candy Stripper, and Hawaiian Plucked Bread.

The slogan for a brand of bread baked in Tokyo announces, “All of contents are no additional. It’s burned to a crisp with all our heart,” and an ad for a calendar heralds “Skin clock for those wishing to become a dog.” Among other Japanese ad lines we discover “Number worth plentys mean,” “Happy is he who other men’s charms beware,” “A frolicking pure spiritual existence out of the blue,” “No stagnant emotion,” “Girl meet boys,” “Violence jack off,” “Look at reality, walk straight ahead,” and—a typical message printed on a Japanese shopping bag—“Now baby. Tonight I am feeling cool and hard boiled.”

The Japanese take on English doesn’t stop there:

- A greeting card message: For you, I always think of your thing.
- A hotel sign: Come on My House
- Sign for restrooms: Go back toward your behind.
- On a motel: Pleasurable and gratifying rooms
- In a restaurant window: Please do not bring outside food, excluding children under 5. Thank you.
- In another restaurant: Please Keep chair on position & Keep tables cleaned after dying. Thanks for your corporation.
- In yet another restaurant: Persons eating restaurant using cell will be eliminated.
- In a hotel: Maid tipping is generous for services. More is better.
- Wake-up message from the front desk of a hotel: Your time is up.
- Sewerage treatment plant as marked on a Tokyo map: Dirty Water Punishment Place.
- On a package of drinking straws: Let’s try homeparty fashionbly and have a joyful chat with nice fellow. Fujinami’s straw will produce you young party happily and exceedingly!

And from all over the Nipponese nation gleam out these Japanese Rules of the Road:

1. At the rise of the hand of the policeman, stop rapidly. Do not pass him, otherwise disrespect him.
2. When passenger of the foot heave in sight, tootle the horn trumpet melodiously at first. If he still obstacles your passage, tootle with vigor and express by word of mouth the warning “Hai. Hai.”
3. Beware of the wandering horse that shall not take fright as you pass him. Do not explosion the exhaust pipe. Go soothingly by him or stop by the roadside till he pass away.
4. Give big space to the festive dog that make sport in the roadway. Avoid entanglement with your wheel spoke.
5. Go soothingly on the grease mud as there lurk the skid demon.
6. Try bigger and bigger, but press more and more daintly.
7. Press the brake of the foot as you roll around the corner to save the collapse and tires.

1. Richard Lederer has recently had two pieces printed in the Funny Times. Here is a slightly expanded version of his first piece, reprinted here by permission of Richard Lederer. His second piece will appear here next month.

For updated conference information, visit www.atatnet.org/conf2004
Join ATA & Save
Receive discounted registration fees as well as 3 months free membership when you register for the conference and join ATA at the same time!

To take advantage of this first-ever offer, complete the application on the reverse side.

Cancellation Policy
Cancellation requests received in writing by Oct. 1, 2004 are eligible for a refund, subject to a $25 administrative fee. Refunds will not be honored after Oct. 1.

3 Ways to Register
Register online at www.atanet.org/conf2004
Fax registration form to (703) 683-6122
Mail registration form to ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Don’t Forget
Include payment with your form
Make your hotel reservations
Tell a friend about this event

Committee Registration Form
45th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association

Last Name    First Name    Middle    ATA Membership#

Employer/School (Only list employer or school if you want it to appear on your badge.)

Street Address

City    State/Province    Zip/Postal Code    Country

Telephone    Fax    Email

Registration Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>ATA Member</th>
<th>Nonmember</th>
<th>ATA Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USD</td>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After September 10:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-day (indicate day ____________):</td>
<td>$305</td>
<td>$420</td>
<td>$425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-day (indicate day ____________):</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onsite (after October 1):</td>
<td>$380</td>
<td>$520</td>
<td>$530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onsite (indicate day ____________):</td>
<td>$195</td>
<td>$270</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Preconference Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>USD/CAD</th>
<th>USD/CAD</th>
<th>USD/CAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
<td>$50 / $70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seminar A: Translation Company Division Dessert Reception, Wednesday 8-10pm
Seminar B: German Language Division Happy Hour, Friday 5:30-6:30pm
Seminar C: Interpreters Division and Medical Division Reception, Friday 6-7:30pm
Seminar D: Closing Banquet, Saturday 7-9pm
Seminar E: Round Robin Tennis Tournament, Friday 4-6:30pm
(Please indicate: Casual Player Avid Player)

Special Event Tickets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>USD/CAD</th>
<th>USD/CAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$30 / $40</td>
<td>per person x ___ = $ ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$20 / $30</td>
<td>per person x ___ = $ ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$25 / $35</td>
<td>per person x ___ = $ ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$55 / $75</td>
<td>per person x ___ = $ ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$25 / $35</td>
<td>per person x ___ = $ ______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special Event Tickets = $

Payment

Total Payment (include membership dues from reverse side, if applicable) = $

Check/Money Order: Please make payable in U.S. or Canadian funds, to American Translators Association

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard AMEX Discover (U.S. only)

Credit Card Number

Name on Card

Signature

Please indicate if you require special accessibility or assistance and attach a sheet with your requirements.
### Application for New Members

**Get 15 Months of ATA Membership for the price of 12**


**Join ATA & Save**

Receive discounted registration fees as well as 3 months free membership when you register for the conference and join ATA at the same time!

**ATA Membership**

To learn more about ATA membership, visit www.atanet.org or contact ATA at ata@atanet.org or (703) 683-6100.

**Refund Policy**

Dues are non-refundable and non-transferable. Dues are not deductible as a charitable contribution for federal tax purposes, but may be deductible as a business expense.

**ATA Chronicle**

The publication of The ATA Chronicle magazine for one year ($43) is included in membership dues.

---

I hereby apply for ATA Membership: | I also apply for the following division(s): |
---|---|
○ Associate Membership $120 / $165 | ○ Chinese Language Division $15 / $20 |
○ Student Membership $65 / $90 | ○ French Language Division $15 / $20 |
○ Corporate Membership $300 / $415 | ○ Interpreters Division $15 / $20 |
○ Institutional Membership $150 / $210 | ○ Italian Language Division $15 / $20 |
○ Joint Membership $365 / $505 | ○ Japanese Language Division $15 / $20 |
| | ○ Literary Division $20 / $30 |
| | ○ Medical Division $15 / $20 |
| | ○ Nordic Division $15 / $20 |
| | ○ Portuguese Language Division $15 / $20 |
| | ○ Slavic Languages Division $15 / $20 |
| | ○ Spanish Language Division $15 / $20 |
| | ○ Translation Company Division $30 / $40 |

International Postage for Non-U.S. Residents:

- Countries except Canada & Mexico $35 / $50
- Canada & Mexico only $15 / $20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Membership Dues (Add membership dues to Conference Registration Form on reverse side) = $</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Additional Applicant Information:

**Website Address**

**Native Language** | **Native Country**
---|---

I am a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident of the U.S.  ○ Yes  ○ No

**Applicant’s Signature**

○ Please check this box if you have ever been an ATA member.

Print the letter of your last name under which you wish to be listed in the Membership Directory:  

○ Do not include my information on lists rented to qualified advertisers.

○ Do not send me ATA broadcast announcements via email. (Does not include payment confirmations or receipts.)

Do not list the following in the Membership Directory.

○ Telephone Number  ○ Fax Number  ○ Email Address

If applying for Corporate, Institutional, or Joint Membership, please provide the following information:

**Name of Corporation or Institution**

**Name of Contact Person** | **Title**
ATA Certification Exam Information

Upcoming Exams

All candidates applying for ATA certification must provide proof that they meet the certification program eligibility requirements. Please direct all inquiries regarding general certification information to ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100. Registration for all certification exams should be made through ATA Headquarters. All sittings have a maximum capacity and admission is based on the order in which registrations are received. Forms are available from the ATA website or from Headquarters.

Canada
Toronto
October 16, 2004
Registration Deadline: October 1, 2004

Massachusetts
Somerville
February 27, 2005
Registration Deadline: February 11, 2005

New Certified Members

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

English into Spanish
David Gala
Santa Barbara, CA
Jessica Lockhart
Zulueta, Spain
Carlota Ribas-Lopez
New Haven, CT
Find the right word – quickly and easily!

Why a bookshelf, when you can have access to all dictionaries on your computer?

- Save time
- Always the right word
- Advanced search options
- Flexibility
- Diversity – more than 100 dictionaries
- Variety of languages to choose from – English, Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Finnish.

Special offer!
WordFinder with COLLINS German Dictionaries, En-Ge/Ge-En
– more than 320 000 entries!

$225

WordFinder with COLLINS Spanish Dictionaries, En-Sp/Sp-En
– more than 230 000 entries!

$225

A “must have” guide to the world of freelance translation!

- 173 pages with all you need to know: how to be professional, work with agencies, market your skills, work as self-employed, work in a team, organize your office, and more
- Insights from veteran professional translators
- Resources section with hundreds of agency addresses, schools, associations, equipment, and self-employment references

“I wish this book had been around 20 years ago when I started in this business…”
Rosalie Wells, Pennsylvania

E-book now available as a PDF file at www.languagemasters.com
Déjà Vu X - Taking Translation Technology to Higher Levels

The Déjà Vu X computer assisted translation system is an all-new line up of products designed from the ground up to meet translators’ top needs - increased productivity and improved translation quality and take them to new heights.

Select the right level
Atril’s knowledge and expertise has produced an exceptional product line up - Déjà Vu X Standard and Déjà Vu X Professional for freelancers and Déjà Vu X Workgroup for larger users and a free Déjà Vu X Editor to translate the satellite projects created by Déjà Vu X Workgroup. All backed by Atril’s enviable reputation for high quality support and training.

Now push the button
Don’t take our word for it. Download a free, fully featured 30 day product and see for yourself just how Déjà Vu X can take you right to the top.

FREE DOWNLOAD
Contact us today at:
www.atril.com

call: 617 273 8266
email: usasales@atril.com

Atril, Independence Wharf, 4th floor, 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston MA 02210
Today, more words need to be translated than ever before, and the trend is expected to continue.* **Get Ready** to translate faster and better with TRADOS 6.5 Freelance, the world’s most popular Translation Memory software.

- Increase your productivity and complete jobs faster
- Ensure consistency and language quality at the term and sentence level
- Avoid ever having to translate the same sentence more than once
- Win more business

* Translate virtually any file format including Excel, PowerPoint and Word 2003

Order today at www.translationzone.com or call +1-408-743-3500 or +1-888-464-4186.

**TRADOS 6.5 FREELANCE**
**More Power, More Freedom, More Value**

Includes MultiTem 2003 release

Order or Upgrade today at www.translationzone.com

---

* A majority of members of ProZ.com, the world’s largest community of translators, agree with the statement, “The translation industry has never been busier.”

© 2004 TRADOS, Inc. All rights reserved. All pricing is in USD. This offer cannot be combined with any other TRADOS offers unless otherwise specified. Certain other restrictions apply.