in this issue: terminology
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.

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

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

An Easy Reference To ATA Member Benefits

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

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...And, of course, as an ATA member you receive discounts on the Annual Conference registration fees and ATA publications, and you are eligible to join ATA Divisions, participate in the online Translation Services Directory, and much more. For more information, contact ATA (703) 683-6100; fax (703) 683-6122; and e-mail: ata@atanet.org.
29  A 10-Year Retrospective on a Distance Revision Course: Most Frequent Translation Problems (Part II)
By Leandro Wolfson, Translated by Alicia Marshall
Is it possible to come up with a translation acceptable to all Spanish speakers? Up to what point must the personal intensity of an expression be sacrificed by using a generic alternative that will be understood by more people? Is there a “trick” or hint that may allow the translator to recognize an intertextual reference?

34  Common Statistical Errors Even YOU Can Find: Part 1
By Tom Lang
A description of several of the more common statistical errors found in biomedical literature that can be identified even by those who know little about statistics.

39  Translating Proverbs
By Peter Unseth
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43  Neutral Spanish: Is it Necessary? Does it Exist?
By Guillermo Cabanellas de las Cuevas
Is it possible to write in neutral Spanish, and is it necessary or even appropriate?

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

ATA will hold its Financial Translation and Interpreting Conference, April 29—May 1, 2005, in Jersey City, New Jersey. This three-day conference will target practicing financial translators and interpreters seeking advanced-level training. A combination of non-language-specific sessions presented in English and language-specific sessions will be offered.

See page 63 for details!

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About Our Authors...

Alain Côté is the director of linguistic services at Janssen-Ortho in Toronto, a member of the Johnson & Johnson family of companies. He holds a B.A. in French and a B.A. in business administration. He has translated documents into French for the Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada, a major translation firm and now a pharmaceutical company. He is a certified translator of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario, as well as an associate member of ATA. He is president of the Translation Group—Rx&D, which brings together the translators of Canadian brand-name pharmaceutical companies. Contact: acote@joica.jnj.com.

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Ian Hinchliffe is a translator, copywriter, author, and lecturer. Born in Sheffield, England, he now lives in the south of Sweden. He is a founding member of the Swedish Association of Professional Translators, and, together with coauthor Philip Holmes, was awarded the Swedish Language Council’s prize in 2004 for Swedish: A Comprehensive Grammar (Routledge, 1994 and 2003), an extensive English-language description of Swedish. Contact: ian@sprakman.se.

Tom Lang has been a technical or medical writer-editor since 1975. For many years, he was manager of Medical Editing Services for the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio. Before forming Tom Lang Communications and Training, he served as a senior scientific writer in the Division of Clinical Care Research at the Tufts University-New England Medical Center in Boston. Specializing in the critical appraisal and reporting of biomedical research in scientific journals, he is the author of How to Report Statistics in Medicine: Annotated Guidelines for Authors, Editors, and Reviewers (Philadelphia: American College of Physicians, 1997), which has been translated into Chinese. Other publications have addressed research into written communication, various aspects of statistical reporting, theory-based patient education materials, a college text on personal health, and measures of the productivity and value-added services of medical writers. In 1994, he received the Golden Apple Award (for excellence in teaching) from the American Medical Writers Association and, in 2002, the Excellence in Continuing Education Award from the American Statistical Association. He is also a past president of the Council of Science Editors. Contact: tomlangcom@aol.com.

Nicky Llamas is a Spanish→English freelance translator specializing in legal and business. She has 16 years of experience in international business with a major corporation, and has taught university-level Spanish and English as a Second Language. She holds a B.A. in Spanish from Colorado College and an M.A. in linguistics from the University of Colorado. Contact: nillamas@cox.net.

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

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

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 (www.ncata.org), an active member of ATA, a regular contributor to the ATA Chronicle, and serves on ATA’s Public Relations Committee. Contact: alexandrarb@yahoo.com.

Pete Unseth is a member of the faculty of the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics in Dallas and is part of SIL International. He worked for 12 years in Ethiopia, where his language-related work included organizing and teaching courses on translation for the Ethiopian Bible Society. His favorite proverb was taught to him by his father during his childhood in Japan: “Even a monkey can fall from a tree,” meaning “Even experts err.” Contact: pete_unseth@gial.edu.
Sociolinguistic Study on Biculturalism and Bilingualism Needs Volunteers

Can you or someone you know answer “Yes” to the following questions:

- Are you 18 or older?
- Is the native language of your mother different than your father’s?
- Is the nationality, ethnicity, and/or race of your mother different than your father’s?

If so, we would like to include you in an international study on biculturalism and bilingualism. This psycholinguistic study is an international investigation of the individual factors that statistically determine the development of multilingualism and multiculturalism in persons who have bilingual and bicultural parents. Since the majority of research on the interaction between language and cultural identity has overwhelmingly been conducted on young respondents up to the age of 18, this study also seeks to trace the development of linguistic and cultural identity in adult subjects. Further, to provide information that may lead to the identification of universal correlates, this study is being simultaneously conducted in several different nations, including Australia, Wales, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and Switzerland.

You need NOT be bilingual to participate. If interested, please e-mail your name and U.S. street address to mavi.yaz@web.de, and an official survey will be sent to you.

An Opportunity from the National Virtual Translation Center in Washington, DC

The University of Washington is conducting a brief survey to determine the region’s capacity to provide qualified translators for a major national translation project. This project would create a Pacific Northwest satellite office of the National Virtual Translation Center in Washington, DC. Various government departments would use the translation service for their research. The contract work would require timely and accurate translation of a variety of open-source written and spoken materials from the languages of the world into English. If this project is funded, translators will work remotely, on a flexible schedule, with access to a variety of online resources and concordances. This would be an excellent opportunity for translators of any modern language.

If you have a strong foundation in any world language(s) and excellent written and oral communication skills in English and think you would be interested in translation work, please follow the link below to complete a short two-minute survey to help us determine our capacity for providing translation services in this region.

http://depts.washington.edu/llc/translation

* A few of the many languages of interest include: African languages; Amharic; Arabic (all dialects); Armenian; Bosnian; Chinese (all dialects); Croatian; Dari; Farsi; Finish; French; German; Greek; Gujarati; Hebrew; Hindi; Indonesian; Japanese; Kazakh; Korean; Kurdish; Nepali; Nigerian; Norwegian; Pashto; Punjabi; Russian; Serbian; Sinhalese; Somali; Spanish; Swahili; Tamil; Tongan; Tigrinya; Turkish; Urdu; Vietnamese; Yiddish.
From the Executive Director

... And Another Thing

As you make your plans for the new year, please be sure to include ATA and professional development. Here are several items of note for your action:

**ATA Membership Renewal.** If you have not renewed your membership, please do. From discounted business services and targeted and timely education seminars to networking that builds referral sources, ATA gives you the strategic edge that benefits your bottom line. You may renew online at [www.atanet.org/membersonly](http://www.atanet.org/membersonly). Also, be sure to renew your division membership(s). Thank you for your past support and for renewing for 2005.

**Financial Translation and Interpreting Conference.** Plan now to attend ATA’s Financial Translation and Interpreting Conference, Jersey City, New Jersey, April 29-May 1, 2005. See page 63 for information and to register for the conference. What makes this conference so valuable is the tight focus on advanced-level, financial-specific topics in multiple languages. This year’s conference builds on the success of the three-day Legal Translation Conference in 2003 and the three-day Financial Translation Conference in 2001. More information, including the tentative agenda, will be published as it develops.

**Professional Development Opportunities.** In addition to the Financial Translation and Interpreting Conference, three one-day seminars are in the works plus, of course, the 46th Annual Conference to be held at the Westin Hotel in Seattle, Washington, November 9-12. Besides planning to attend the conference, please share your expertise with your colleagues by giving a presentation. To be considered for a presentation, please complete and submit a conference presentation proposal form. The form is online at [www.atanet.org/conf2005/abstract_online.htm](http://www.atanet.org/conf2005/abstract_online.htm). Other professional development opportunities to consider include division and chapter events. We will publish information on these various opportunities as the details become available.

**ATA and American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI) Awards.** With the new year, consider applying for an ATA or AFTI award or submit a nomination for ATA’s most prestigious honor, the Gode Medal. This year, ATA is seeking nominations for the Gode Medal, the German Translation Award, and the Student Translation Award. The Spanish Language Division will also be seeking nominations for the Harvie Jordan Scholarship. AFTI is seeking nominations for the JTG Scholarship in Scientific and Technical Translation or Interpretation and the S. Edmund Berger Prize in Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation. (The first Berger Prize, given in 2004, was awarded to longtime ATA member Patricia Bobeck of Austin, Texas.) See page 12 for more information on the awards.

**Year of Languages.** In our efforts to further client education, we are supporting and promoting 2005: The Year of Languages (YoL). YoL, coordinated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, will highlight the importance of language in the U.S. Each month will have a different focus. For more information, please visit [www.yearoflanguages.org](http://www.yearoflanguages.org).

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**Internet Scam Alert to ATA Members**

As e-mailed to all members in December, this message is to alert you that some members of the American Translators Association (ATA) have received e-mail messages that appear to be an internet scam. The messages note that the sender got the recipient’s name from the ATA Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services (or a chapter directory). The sender then goes on to describe a 10-day interpreting job for his daughters who will be “…going out for shopping and visiting some beautiful places…” The e-mailer continues “and let me have your full name and address and where partial payment should be sent.” Other versions ask for the recipient to bid on interpreting for his fiancée at their wedding ceremony and for a business meeting: “My staffs are coming over to the united state for a 4days […] seminar which is taking place in a hotel hall in texas which involves the discussion of Business around us today Globally.”

Your entry in the ATA online Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services is a marketing tool, and so is available to the public. Don’t let your guard down just because an unknown sender mentions it. Be prudent and do your best to verify that the sender is legit. For more information on recognizing and addressing fraud through the Internet, please visit [www.fraud.org](http://www.fraud.org), a site administered by the National Consumers League.

Finally, thank you to those members who contacted ATA Headquarters to let us know about this matter and for taking the time to share this information with your colleagues.

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The ATA Chronicle | January 2005

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org
A Look at the Online Directories

The ATA online Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services for individuals and the Directory of Language Services Companies are more popular than ever. Listings in these online directories are only available to ATA members. The individual directory features 5,546 profiles. The company directory has 333 profiles. Overall, the ATA site had 1.5 million hits for 2004.

Be sure to keep your listings updated. To update or add your listing, go to www.americantranslators.org/tsd.

And, just a reminder, these directories are different from the online Membership Directory, which is in the Members Only section of the ATA website. The Membership Directory is set up strictly to facilitate communication between members; the online directories are structured to market and promote members’ services to ATA members and the general public.

The directories are a very popular and important member benefit. Much of the success of the directories has been from refining the directories based on member/user feedback. With this in mind, we have seen a continuing demand for the ability to do non-English into non-English language combination searches. We are close to offering this option. Information on this significant addition will be announced when the programming is completed, so that members may update their profiles to include this capability.

Here is a look at some of the stats for 2004:

**Top 10 language combinations—from most queried to least—for individuals:**
1. Spanish into English
2. English into Spanish
3. English into French
4. German into English
5. Chinese into English
6. Japanese into English
7. English into Japanese
8. French into English
9. English into Chinese
10. Russian into English

**Top 10 areas of specialization—from most queried to least—for individuals:**
1. Medicine (General)
2. Law (General)
3. Business (General)
4. Software localization
5. Engineering (General)
6. Computers (General)
7. Pharmaceuticals
8. Industry & Technology (General)
9. Economics & finance
10. Contracts

**Top 10 language combinations—from most queried to least—for companies:**
1. English into Spanish
2. Spanish into English
3. English into All
4. All into English
5. English into French
6. French into English
7. English into Chinese
8. Chinese into English
9. Russian into English
10. Japanese into English

**Top 10 areas of specialization—from most queried to least—for companies:**
1. Medicine (General)
2. Law (General)
3. Business (General)
4. Arts & Humanities (General)
5. Engineering (General)
6. Health care
7. Computers (General)
8. Industry & Technology (General)
9. Entertainment (General)
10. Education
Opinion

Gabe Bokor’s Statement to the Board of Directors of ATA
Board Meeting, October 16, 2004, Toronto

ATA’s policy on nonintervention between member commercial disputes

First of all, I would like to thank ATA President Scott Brennan for affording me this opportunity to address the Board, and all of you for your willingness to stay on beyond your scheduled time for this meeting.

I would like to speak about ATA’s published policy on nonintervention in members’ commercial disputes. I voiced my disagreement with this policy in a Letter to the Editor published in the Chronicle some years ago, when the policy was still under discussion. To my regret, it was adopted then, and it has been in effect ever since. I understand this policy was formulated in the wake of the investigation of ATA by the Federal Trade Commission in the 1980s, which resulted in $200,000 in legal costs for ATA. Since that time, the association has been paralyzed with a morbid fear of lawsuits, where the mere mention of legal action is sufficient for ATA to even change established policies.

During the years following those events, in conversations with many ATA members, I became even more convinced that help in commercial disputes is an issue many freelance translators have high on their list of priorities among the services to be provided by ATA. I’m also convinced that ATA can help its members by enforcing its Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices without exposing itself to legal risk, and that it can do so at a reasonable cost. We should, first and foremost, encourage an amicable resolution of any conflict. Failing that, we should have mediation and/or arbitration procedures in place to help the parties reach an agreement. As a last resort, our bylaws authorize us to apply sanctions up to and including expulsion from the association for “demonstrable and serious violation of ATA’s Code of Professional Conduct.”

I urge the Board to revise its policy and meet ATA members’ expectation of help in the event of commercial disputes.

Gabe Bokor
gbokor@accurapid.com

ATA Board of Directors on Dispute Resolutions

That the Board of Directors examine procedures and institutions for resolving business disputes between members, including but not limited to external arbitration services and conflict resolution procedures, preliminary results to be reported at a future [Board] meeting.

Motion passed.

—October 17, 2004
Honors and Awards: Calls for Nominations and Applications

ATA Alexander Gode Medal

The Alexander Gode Medal, the American Translators Association’s most prestigious award, is presented to an individual or institution for outstanding service to the translation and interpreting professions. This award may be given annually.

Individuals or institutions nominated do not have to be members of ATA; however, a history of constructive relations with ATA and the language professions in general is desirable. Nominees do not have to be U.S. citizens. Petitions and letter campaigns are not encouraged.

Nominations should include a sufficiently detailed description of the individual’s or institution’s record of service to the translation and/or interpretation professions to enable the Honors & Awards Committee to draw up a meaningful short list for approval by the ATA Board of Directors.

Nomination Deadline: May 1, 2005.

ATA 2005 Student Translation Award

In 2005, the American Translators Association will award a grant-in-aid to a student for a literary or sci-tech translation or translation-related project.

The award, to be presented at ATA’s Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington (November 9-12), is open to any graduate or undergraduate student, or group of students, attending an accredited college or university in the United States. Preference will be given to students who have been or are currently enrolled in translator training programs. Students who are already published translators are ineligible. No individual student may submit more than one entry.

The project, which may be derived from any facet of translation studies, should result in a project with post-grant applicability, such as publication, a conference presentation, or teaching material. Computerized materials are ineligible, as are dissertations and theses. Translations must be from a foreign language INTO ENGLISH. Previously untranslated works are preferred.

Applicants must complete an entry form (available from ATA Headquarters) and submit a project description not to exceed 500 words. If the project is a translation, the description must present the work in its context and include a substantive statement of the difficulties and innovations involved in the project and the post-competition form the work will take. The application must be accompanied by a statement of support from the faculty member who is supervising the project. This letter should demonstrate the supervisor’s intimate familiarity with the student’s work, and include detailed assessments of the project’s significance, and of the student’s growth and development in translation.

If the project involves an actual translation, a translation sample of not less than 400 and not more than 500 words, together with the corresponding source-language text, must accompany the application. The translation sample may consist of two or more separate passages from the same work. For poetry, the number of words must total at least 300.


Award: $500, a certificate of recognition, and up to $500 toward expenses for attending ATA’s Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington (November 9-12). One or more certificates may also be awarded to runners-up.

ATA 2005 German Translation Award

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

Eligibility for the award, to be presented at ATA’s Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, November 9-12, 2005, includes a published translation that has been translated from German into English and published in the United States in 2003 or 2004.

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

The nomination must include:
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American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation

JTG Scholarship in Scientific and Technical Translation or Interpretation

This is a $2,500 nonrenewable scholarship for the 2005-2006 academic year for students enrolled or planning to enroll in a degree program in scientific and technical translation or in interpreter training.

Eligibility:
1. Applicants must be graduate or undergraduate students enrolled or planning to enroll in a program leading to a degree in scientific and technical translation or in interpretation at an accredited U.S. college or university.
2. Applicants must be full-time students who have completed at least one year of college or university studies.
3. Generally, an applicant should present a minimum GPA of 3.00 overall and a 3.50 in translation- and interpretation-related courses.
4. Applicants should have at least one year of study remaining in their program; however, in certain circumstances, one residual semester may be accepted.
5. Applicants must be U.S. citizens.

Selection Criteria:
1. Demonstrated achievement in translation and interpretation;
2. Academic record;
3. Three letters of recommendation by faculty or nonacademic supervisor;
4. A 300-500-word essay outlining the applicant’s interests and goals as they relate to the field of translation or interpretation.

Application Process:
1. Application forms may be obtained by contacting the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation at: Columbia Plaza, Suite 101, 350 E. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007; or by e-mail at aftiorg@aol.com.
2. Completed applications must be received by AFTI by June 1, 2005
3. A completed application consists of:
   a) Application cover sheet;
   b) Three letters of recommendation in a sealed envelope with recommender’s signature over the envelope flap;
   c) Essay;
   d) A copy of the applicant’s academic record with a copy of the major/minor or other program form, or a departmental statement of admission to the translation or interpretation program.

Award:
A national award committee will announce the name of the scholarship award winner by the end of August 2005. The committee’s decision is final. Disbursement of the award will occur at the beginning of the 2005 Fall Semester.

American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation

JTG Scholarship in Scientific and Technical Translation or Interpretation

This is a $2,500 nonrenewable scholarship for the 2005-2006 academic year for students enrolled or planning to enroll in a degree program in scientific and technical translation or in interpreter training.

Eligibility:
1. Applicants must be graduate or undergraduate students enrolled or planning to enroll in a program leading to a degree in scientific and technical translation or in interpretation at an accredited U.S. college or university.
2. Applicants must be full-time students who have completed at least one year of college or university studies.
3. Generally, an applicant should present a minimum GPA of 3.00 overall and a 3.50 in translation- and interpretation-related courses.
4. Applicants should have at least one year of study remaining in their program; however, in certain circumstances, one residual semester may be accepted.
5. Applicants must be U.S. citizens.

Selection Criteria:
1. Demonstrated achievement in translation and interpretation;
2. Academic record;
3. Three letters of recommendation by faculty or nonacademic supervisor;
4. A 300-500-word essay outlining the applicant’s interests and goals as they relate to the field of translation or interpretation.

Application Process:
1. Application forms may be obtained by contacting the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation at: Columbia Plaza, Suite 101, 350 E. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007; or by e-mail at aftiorg@aol.com.
2. Completed applications must be received by AFTI by June 1, 2005
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   a) Application cover sheet;
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   c) Essay;
   d) A copy of the applicant’s academic record with a copy of the major/minor or other program form, or a departmental statement of admission to the translation or interpretation program.

Award:
A national award committee will announce the name of the scholarship award winner by the end of August 2005. The committee’s decision is final. Disbursement of the award will occur at the beginning of the 2005 Fall Semester.

ATA 2005 German Translation Award Continued

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

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

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

Please send your nominations and/or applications for any of the above awards and honors to:
Marilyn Gaddis Rose, Chair, ATA Honors & Awards Committee • American Translators Association
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590 • Alexandria, VA 22314 • Phone: 703.683.6100, Fax: 703.683.6122, E-mail: ata@atanet.org
S. Edmund Berger Prize
In Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation

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

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

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

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

Nominations must be received by September 17, 2005, and will be judged by a three-member national jury. The recipient of the award will be announced during the 2005 ATA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, November 9-12.

2005 Harvie Jordan Scholarship
ATA Spanish Language Division

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

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

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

Deadline: September 17, 2005

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

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

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

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

ATA Honors and Awards Committee Seeks Readers

The Honors and Awards Committee needs to expand its corps of readers for its two literary translation prizes: the Unger Prize for Literary Translation from German into English, awarded in odd-numbered years, and the Lewis Galantière Prize for Literary Translation for all other languages into English, awarded in even-numbered years. The first reader for each book nominated must be fluent in the source language; the second reader need not be. Readers are furnished with a formal report form and have roughly two months in the summer to evaluate the book(s). There is no honorarium, but readers may keep the book(s) they evaluate. For more information on responsibilities, please e-mail Honors and Awards Chair Marilyn Gaddis Rose (mgrose@binghamton.edu). Anyone ready to volunteer now should e-mail Gaddis Rose, with a copy to Teresa Kelly (teresak@atanet.org) at ATA Headquarters.
A
though a relative newcomer to
the translation profession, I’ve
attended two ATA Annual
Conferences. In 2003, I went to
Phoenix as a prospective translator/
interpreter, and, after a year as a
working freelance translator, I
recently returned from the 2004 con-
fERENCE in Toronto. The Phoenix con-
fERENCE introduced me to the exciting,
vibrant field of translation and inter-
pretation, and greatly facilitated my
entry into the profession. In Toronto,
I gained expertise in the areas in
which I have decided to specialize
and widened my network of contacts.
For those who have never attended an
ATA conference, I’d like to present
my perspective on their value for
both aspiring and experienced trans-
lators and interpreters.

One of the more obvious reasons to
attend an ATA conference is to take
advantage of the educational sessions on
a variety of topics. Language-specific
sessions are offered in 12 languages,
with topics ranging from basic Spanish
syntax to the “Difficulties Encountered
by Speakers of English When Using
Russian” and “Chinese Information
Technology Terminology.” There are
also many specialty-specific sessions
dealing with such diverse areas as
legal, medical, literary, and training
and pedagogy, to name a few. This is
a good opportunity to pick up valu-
able tips to help with current projects.
For instance, at the Phoenix confer-
ence, I attended Jonathan T. Hine’s
“Taking Care of Business: Making It
Pay,” and used his advice to track and
manage my business.

Through conference sessions, a
novice can learn about segments of the
industry which he or she may want to
pursue. For example, last year I listened
with interest to “A Day in the Life of a
Court Interpreter” and “Guides to
Telephone Interpreting.” I have spent
the past year translating legal docu-
ments, so in Toronto, I eagerly attended
sessions targeting legal topics, such as
“Researching Legal Translations: The
Why’s and How’s” and “Transcribing
and Translating Spanish-language
Recorded Evidence.” The educational
sessions are great for gaining insight
into topics in a translator’s or inter-
preter’s field of expertise and also for
opening doors to new opportunities.

Attendees can enhance their educa-
tional experience by arriving a day
early and attending the various pre-
conference seminars. These seminars
are usually around three hours in
length, which allows the speaker to
treat a subject in greater depth than the
45-90 minutes allotted for the general
conference sessions. This year, the
high point for me was Tom West’s pre-
conference seminar, “Corporate Law
in the U.S. and Spain.” I looked for-
ward to Mr. West’s presentation
because he is the author of a legal and
business dictionary that I use regu-
larly, and I am pleased to say that I
was not disappointed. Last year, my
first pre-conference seminar was for
newcomers to the profession who
wanted to enter into a mentor/mentee
relationship with an experienced
translator or interpreter (“Strategies
for Getting the Mentoring You Need:
Skill-Building Workshop for New
Mentees,” by Courtney Sears-Ridge
and Linda Phillips-Jones). It was an
excellent method of meeting others
who were new to the field, as well as
professionals with a wealth of experi-
ence who were willing to share.

Another valuable area that is cov-
ered extremely well at the confer-
ence is technical information on
subjects such as translation memory
software, useful websites, and com-
puter tools for the translator. The
three-hour “Translation Support
Tools Forum” is an excellent intro-
duction to translation support soft-
ware, where vendors present their
products and answer questions. Jost
O. Zetzsche was energetic and
informative with his presentation of
“Translator’s Tool Box: A Computer
Workshop for Translators.” There are
also many other useful sessions in the
area of translation and computers.

Information on cutting-edge tech-
nology carries over from the sessions
to the Exhibit Hall. The vendors who
present their products at the “Support
Tools Forum,” such as TRADOS Inc.,
SDL International, and ATRIL (Déjà
Vu), set up booths with computers
where they demonstrate their prod-
ucts, answer questions, and offer con-
ference discounts on their products.
This provides a perfect opportunity
for a translator to become informed
through hands-on experience and to
do side-by-side comparisons of soft-
ware tools. As an added attraction,
some vendors give away several
copies of their software.

Vendors who specialize in books for
the industry are also represented in the
Exhibit Hall, complete with a wide
selection of their wares for participants
to peruse. I looked forward to visiting
the InTrans Book Service booth this
year for the rare opportunity to leaf

“One Member’s Perspective
on the ATA Conference Experience

By Nicky Llamas

“The ATA Chronicle | January 2005

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The ATA Chronicle | January 2005
through stacks of relevant references before making my purchases.

Universities with programs in translation and interpretation are also on hand to answer questions about their course offerings. In Phoenix, I picked up a brochure on the New York University Certificate in Translation, and I’m now in my second semester of study in their online program.

The Job Marketplace is a key feature of the Exhibit Hall. All attendees are welcome to display their resumes and business cards, and several large companies, such as Browne Translation Services, are present for recruiting purposes. In Phoenix, I met a translator who said she received her initial business by promoting herself at the Job Marketplace. As a side benefit, it affords novice translators/interpreters the opportunity to review experienced translators’ and interpreters’ resumes, brochures, and cards for ideas regarding effective promotion and presentation.

In the area of fringe benefits, ATA kindly provides computers in the Exhibit Hall at the Cyber Café for attendees to check e-mail, as well as complimentary massages. In Toronto, the Exhibit Hall was located in the heart of the conference action and was easy to access.

Probably the most important benefit of attending the conference is meeting other translators and interpreters. I didn’t know anyone in 2003 when I arrived in Phoenix, but the conference is designed to facilitate interaction. ATA hosts a Welcome Reception Wednesday evening with an abundant array of food. I found it easy to sit down at a table and begin conversations with those around me, which was my basic networking strategy throughout the conference. My fellow attendees were friendly and willing to share information about their experience, areas of specialty, the technology they use, etc. In addition to meeting people in the educational sessions, there are break-fasts, breaks, and a networking session that afford opportunities to interact. At the networking session, tables are set up for each language, making it easy to meet those with the same language pair. I should add that name badges are distributed during registration, and colored dots are made available to place on them so attendees can indicate which language(s) they translate or interpret. In addition, ribbons are attached to the name badges identifying those who are ATA-certified, exam graders, ATA Board members, presenters, mentors, exhibitors, or first-time attendees. As a further opportunity to meet attendees with similar interests, several ATA divisions host a dinner or other social events for their members.

An aspect of ATA conferences that should certainly not be overlooked is the official association-related business that is conducted during the meeting. For instance, candidates for association offices are presented and the election is held during the Opening Session. In 2003, I heard Marian Greenfield speak when she was a candidate for president-elect; she is now holding this office and is my Spanish-English commercial translation instructor for my online NYU class. The Annual Meeting of the Association gives attendees an opportunity to better understand the issues surrounding the organization and the profession. These business meetings also give attendees the chance to learn who is active in the field of translation/interpretation. ATA holds an “Orientation for First-time Conference Attendees,” a question-answer session on the certification exam, and a “Workshop on the ATA Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices.” ATA uses the conference as an opportunity to communicate information to its members and also to listen to their comments. In Toronto, tables were set up each day where members could have breakfast and discuss issues with ATA Board members.

To help attendees organize their conference time in advance, ATA published a preliminary conference schedule as an insert to the July issue of the Chronicle. Summaries of the sessions, an updated schedule, and hotel information were also published on the association’s website. I have found that careful review of the offerings before the conference allows me to make deliberate choices that will optimize the experience. Although several sessions run concurrently, both the preliminary and final programs present a consolidated schedule that is concise and easy to follow. Information on social events and exhibitors is also included.

The conference experience evolves as the attendee gains experience in the field. For example, my focus shifted between my first conference in 2003 and my second in 2004. In Phoenix, I gathered as much information as possible about every aspect of translation and interpretation. I knew no one when I went. My experience there shaped my choices as I entered the translation profession. In Toronto, I spent time with fellow NYU online students and focused on sessions related to my chosen areas of legal and commercial translation in order to build up useful vocabulary. I continued to enjoy meeting and socializing with new people and sampling prospective areas of interest. Conference sites are
Through the Lens: A Snapshot of ATA’s 45th Annual Conference
ISET-16  
June 3-6, 2005  
ISET Sets Sail for the Windy City

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

Informative Sessions
As at past IJETs, Saturday and Sunday will be packed with sessions. Saturday will begin with an opening ceremony and a speech by ATA President Scott Brennan. Shortly thereafter, Cornelius Iida, interpreter to Presidents Carter and Reagan, will give the keynote address. After lunch, 9 presentations on topics relating to translation and interpretation will be given in three breakout rooms. Sunday will feature 15 presentations, again in three breakout rooms.

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

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

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

Visit www.jat.org/ijet/ijet-16 and follow the links for more information. To receive periodic e-mails about the conference, contact Ben Tompkins, organizing committee chair, at ijet@sbcglobal.net.
Translation buyers often complain about the problem of keeping quality high. After carefully screening freelance translators, many report that even linguists who test well and do a fine job on their first assignment can slip into sloppiness. In September, a group of Washington-based international financial institutions (IFIs) that buy translations compared notes, realized there was a need for targeted training, and decided to do something about it.

The resulting seminar, entitled “Translating for IFIs,” was spearheaded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). It featured speakers from the IDB and three other IFIs—the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Inter-American Investment Corporation (IIC), an IDB affiliate. Though limited to translators already on the IFIs’ official freelance rosters, the event ultimately attracted 80 freelancers—twice as many as the organizers expected—plus some 60 IFI in-house translators, translation managers, and other staff.

For IDB Translation Section Chief Claudia Engle, the high turnout was a testimony to the participants’ professional commitment, and reflected a huge unmet need for training. Considering that participants were all highly qualified and experienced working translators, her observation testifies to the practical need for continuing education. And, yes, the numerous ATA members on hand did get continuing education points for attending.

Yet according to Anne Van Wylick, head of Language Services at the IMF, everyone stands to gain from mutual feedback. And participants clearly enjoyed the networking opportunity afforded by meeting each other in the flesh.

“Dare to Be Dull”

So just how do you ensure quality in freelance translations? In some 20 presentations over one and a half days, IFI speakers discussed multiple aspects of this question, from style to syntax, terminology to technology. For starters, IMF Deputy Division Chief Bill Skinner noted the “dynamic tension” between delivering top-quality work and meeting tight deadlines. His colleague Craig Dudley, of the IMF Arabic and Russian Division, defined the “mark of excellence” as “readability with accuracy.”

Addressing the readability issue, IMF English translator Neil Inglis gave a tip on writing style. The best advice he ever got at the IMF, he said, was to “dare to be dull.” He cautioned that “dull” did not mean literal, but “scrupulous.” To get a taste of the IMF tone and register, freelancers should take a look at the IMF website (www.imf.org), where they can see that the language used (for

IFI staff and freelance translators fill the IDB auditorium during the seminar.

Photo: Alexandra Russell-Bitting
example, in the IMF Annual Report) is “plain, neutral, and descriptive.”

“Dullness,” Neil explained, is using language that is credible with specialists (as opposed to linguists, journalists, or advertisers), as they are the readers targeted by IMF documents. He urged freelancers to avoid “verbal pyrotechnics.” As with any translation, Neil reminded us to bear in mind the type of document and its intended audience. Excellence in translation here means reaching the proper combination of intervention and restraint, that is, understanding the author’s intent and knowing how best to express it in the appropriate style.

As a rule of thumb, keep sentences short, he suggested. For instance, if you can, avoid the passive voice and stick to one main and one dependent clause. Other tips to keep the English style clear and concise are to use prepositions creatively and prefer common verbs like “make,” “do,” “put,” and “set” over synonyms of Latin origin. Also, watch out for Romance-language structures that just sound strange in English: for example, instead of “In the case of small enterprises, many operated in the informal sector,” say “Many small enterprises operated in the informal sector.” The goal, said Scott, is a translation that has a driving momentum, “like a freight train rolling downhill.”

At the end of each session, the floor was opened up for questions—and participants had plenty. Freelancer Tim Ennis, who flew in from Portugal for the event, asked about the tradeoff between daring to be dull and streamlining the English for concision. He would hesitate to trim the English too much, he said, for fear of losing an important nuance.

Neil responded that asking that question showed that he was on the right track. Scott concurred, noting that it was a judgment call in each case. For Bill, Tim’s question raised the issue of dialogue between revisers and freelancers.

What are IFIs?

“International financial institutions” (IFIs) are not-for-profit international organizations whose members are the governments of different countries. IFIs provide loans to developing countries for projects and policies that will promote socioeconomic development. They are also sometimes referred to as “multilateral development banks” or MDBs. Four participated in the IFI Seminar, but many others operate worldwide. For general information, see the following websites:

- Inter-American Development Bank: www.iadb.org
- Inter-American Investment Corporation: www.iic.int
- International Monetary Fund: www.imf.org
- World Bank: www.worldbank.org

Interagency cooperation: Scott Brennan (IDB), Igor Taimassov (IMF), Maridale Jackson (IIC), and Kathy Chamberlain (IDB) were among the speakers. Photo: Alexandra Russell-Bitting
Information Technology: What Do Freelancers Want?

IDB staff translator/reviser Kathy Chamberlain reported on an IDB survey of freelance translators on Internet resources. What freelancers want at their fingertips is—oh, surprise—good quality general information, background documents (especially for quoted material), and terminology.

Kathy gave some very helpful practical search tips. For instance, our favorite search engine, Google (www.google.com), will list sites that include a definition of a term if you type “define:” before the term. Another way to help narrow your hits by type of website (for instance, to NGOs) is to type “site:org” after the term.

The translation managers all agreed that machine translation is useless for the type of complex analytical documents IFI translators handle. However, “computer-assisted translation” (or “CAT”) is extremely useful. IIC translation officer Maridale Jackson and her colleagues Izaskun Fuentes and Guillermina Schinder discussed their very positive experience with the Déjà Vu translation memory software.

According to Maridale, Déjà Vu can slash translation time in half when it’s working well.

In response to questions from the floor about freelance translator access to reference materials, all four IFIs announced new or upcoming Extranet websites for freelancers on their rosters that will give them access to in-house glossaries, style manuals, and other resources.

Portuguese freelance translator Danilo Nogueira came all the way from Sao Paulo, Brazil, for the seminar. “It was not cheap to fly up here,” he noted emphatically, “but it was worth every penny.” (See his article, “Translation Taken Seriously,” in the Translation Journal at www.accurapid.com/journal/30seminar.htm.) In view of the enthusiastic response of the participants, the seminar is to become a regular event, with the World Bank hosting the next one in 2006.

Free Online Glossaries

IMF Glossary of Selected Financial Terms (English only):

IMF Terminology Database (multilingual glossary with English,

French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese):

World Bank Multilingual Terminology, “Termbase” (Arabic, English, French, and Spanish):
http://translate.worldbank.org/tb

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

A straightforward guide for newcomers to the professions.

$15. Members
$25. Nonmembers
Order online at atanet.org or call 703.683.6100.
Translating Feelings:
Why Good Ads Make Bad Translations

By Ian Hinchliffe

I'll let you in on a secret. If you don’t have the time or inclination to read through this article, you can stop right here and still get the message. Because the simple fact is, you can’t translate good advertising. And that’s what this article sets out to prove.

Forget those anecdotes you’ve heard about companies like Perdue Farms getting fouled up when trying to translate their “It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken” slogan into Spanish, or Kentucky Fried Chicken’s toe-curlin’ embarrassment when they discovered that the Chinese version of their famous slogan could be read as “Eat your fingers.” Instead, take a moment to think how you would set about translating “Beanz Meanz Heinz” or Amtrak’s “America at see level” into any of the languages you are familiar with. Or consider one of my own favorite examples.

It’s a Swedish ad for a small, inexpensive desktop photocopier with a headline across the top of the page that reads “2.2 kg Gnosjöanda.” I imagine you don’t need much help with “2.2 kg” (although your target audience might, especially in North America), but unless you happen to have spent a good deal of time in Sweden over the past 20 years, the rest probably needs a little explanation.

The word “Gnosjöanda” is a compound noun consisting of two elements. The second, “anda,” is the Swedish for “spirit” in the sense of disposition, attitude, humor (as in “fighting spirit” or the “Spirit of St. Louis”). The first, “Gnosjö,” is a place half the size of Lake Wobegon out in the boondocks in southern Sweden. But it’s not the location that’s important. The photocopiers that ride on the reputation of this place aren’t even made there!

It’s what the little community of Gnosjö stands for that makes it the ideal icon in this context. Gnosjö is famous in Sweden. For its size, it has more small businesses than anywhere else in the country. And these businesses are successful. Productivity is high and the little factories and workshops have made a name for themselves designing and manufacturing innovative, yet genuinely useful, reliable, no-frills workaday products. But not only that—these products offer great value for the money. You see, Gnosjö is at the heart of Sweden’s Bible Belt that runs through rural Småland in the south of the country.

“…What we human translators do is not translation. It’s transcreation…”

where God-fearing people are renowned for their hard work and prudent frugality. They are unassuming and unpretentious, trustworthy and honest. The list goes on. Say “Gnosjö” in Sweden and the message you send to your target audience includes all these virtues and a few more besides.

The problem is, unless you also happen to have a Gnosjö in Swaziland, Saskatchewan, or South Dakota, how do you translate all that “the Gnosjö spirit” stands for into any other language? And should you, by any chance, already be halfway towards a solution, bear in mind that the layout allows you 10 keystrokes in which to do it.

This brings me to a very simple rule I am eager to establish: if you want to get the message right, don’t even think about translating it. Because you can’t translate good advertising. That’s the rule. But like all good rules, it has to have at least one exception. And the exception is: you can translate good advertising. Sometimes. If you’re lucky. Very lucky.

Some years ago, for example, a carmaker ran a glossy magazine ad for its then new antilock-braking system. The picture (a car, slightly blurred at the front with a series of ghosted images, staggered one on top of the other across the page to suggest the sensation of speed and the rapid on-off-on-off effect of the antilock braking system) was overlaid with a headline that, I dare say, can be successfully translated into any language that uses letters rather than characters: “Can you b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b brake 15 times a second?”

More frequently, however, Lady Luck turns the other way when the translator has to tackle marketing texts. Often the challenge is obvious, as in the lip balm ad that reads simply “Lypsyled with a kiss.” Sometimes it is less so, as with the subtle, yet intentionally exaggerated use in Dunhill’s English-language marketing of letters whose elongated upstrokes suggest the shape of the long cigarettes inside the elegant pack.

Words are often described as the building blocks of language, but the more I think about that, the more I disagree. Words, especially when subordinated to the letters they contain, as in the old Dunhill ads, are simply the glue that holds ideas together. More often than not, you remember the idea long after you have forgotten the words. If we translators concentrate too much on the glue, ironically we, and our clients, risk coming unstuck.

I have chosen my examples from the world of marketing for two reasons: not only because this is an area in which I do much of my work, but also because I believe that the important point I want to make becomes more obvious when illustrated with...
examples like the following one.

In the mid-1990s, the Swedish home furnishings company IKEA ran an ad for lamps in England with the headline “IKEA—The Light Brigade That Doesn’t Charge As Much.”

You would perhaps agree that this headline could not have been written for any other market than the U.K. Although part of a marketing drive for a company that cherishes its Swedish image, the message relies heavily on associations that, while unknown to most Swedes, are very familiar to the target group in England.

The Charge of the Light Brigade, as immortalized in Tennyson’s epic poem of the same name, was the British Light Cavalry’s fearless, yet foolhardy, attack on the Russian army’s artillery positions in the Crimean War in the 1850s. British schoolchildren still read about it in their history books and plow through Tennyson’s poem in their English lessons. But, of course, here, in characteristic advertising style, the idea has been tweaked to invoke the familiar at a time as it infers something new. And “charge,” of course, means “ask a price” rather than “attack.” So, perhaps you could agree that this headline is as unequivocally English as the Gnosjöanda ad was Swedish?

But you’d be wrong.

The fact is, this headline was actually written and used first in Swedish. Only then it said: “IKEA lyser klart starkast i kampen om låga priser” (“IKEA shines brightest in the battle of low prices”).

I can hear what you’re thinking. You’re saying to yourself, “Hey, c’món on! Your Light Brigade example isn’t a translation of that!”

To which I say, “Exactly! Gotcha!” You can’t translate good advertising.

Of course, it all depends on what you (or rather, we) mean by “translate.” One of my hobbyhorses is that we translators have, for far too long, allowed our clients to believe that translation is something very different from what it is. These misconceptions manifest themselves in clients’ unrealistic deadlines, in their exaggerated faith in translation programs, and in the proliferation of those little, hand-held gadgets that can tell you what the word for lampshade is in 17 languages.

But not only have we failed to explain to our clients what translation really involves; worse still, we have also allowed them to believe that translation is something much simpler than it really is.

By the way in which we tackle the job we have to do, by the results we produce, and not least by how we charge for what we produce (word rates!), we have allowed our clients to think that translation revolves around the replacement of words and phrases in one language with words and phrases in another, when, in fact, it is about deconstructing messages, analyzing their content, and recreating it in a form that triggers equivalent ideas and arouses analogous emotions in cultures with a different mindset.

We’ve allowed far too many of our clients to think, given enough time and a decent dictionary, or a half-day course with a translation program, that they could do our job as well as we can. Well, they can’t. Because what we human translators do is not translation. It’s transcreation.2

If only we could convince our clients (and perhaps ourselves, as well) that much of what we are doing—communicating information effectively between cultures—deserves to be accorded ambassadorial status, then maybe our job would become even more stimulating, the results even better, and we ourselves more justly rewarded.

Our role is not to translate words, but to translate ideas and feelings. Words are merely the representation of ideas. They are the messenger, not the message. Professional translators (the good ones at least) know that. Consider those wordy valedictions in French business correspondence, for example. Who among us would ever consider translating them literally, when we know that their English equivalent is a simple “Yours truly”? So why do we not adopt the same approach wherever the message is more important than the words? When we identify the ideas and emotions in a text and transfer them to another culture in words that share the same register and resonances, then those words evince the same response among our target-language audience as they did in the source language. To do this, we must look beyond the words themselves. They are merely the tip of the iceberg, the visible fragment of a huge body of ideas submerged beneath the surface of the text. We need to identify the connotations that make a good marketing text memorable, commercial, and effective. Overlook them, and you’ve underperformed.

Basically, these connotations fall into three main categories: cultural, linguistic, and (in the case of advertising that makes use of pictures) visual associations.

In the early years of PCs, a Swedish translator was told by an ad agency in New York that a big name in the computer business wanted to use its sales to schools to secure a foothold in the small, but lucrative Swedish market. The approach was to sell a class a set of 20 computers at a greatly reduced price, plus throw in a free machine for the teacher. The translator was then asked to render a single English
Translating Feelings: Why Good Ads Make Bad Translations Continued

sentences into Swedish.

The result was unimpeachable: perfect, idiomatically correct Swedish. Yet, when the ad appeared in the Swedish dailies, nobody had the faintest idea what it was supposed to mean. It comprised 20 identical lines of text, one above the other, each repeating the same message in Swedish: “As a teacher, I will not let this opportunity pass me by.”

This is an eloquent example of a cultural association that’s like one of those lovely rosé vins de pays you can buy by the bucketful in Provence. It’s wonderful, but it doesn’t travel. It has to be consumed on-site.

The translator had never been told that the original ad, hugely successful in the U.S., had been conceived as a light-hearted parody of the practice of hammering an important message into the heads of recalcitrant pupils by ordering them to write “lines.” Swedish schoolkids don’t have to write lines. (They’re just counselled, I guess.)

We have already seen some examples of linguistic associations in marketing: the Lypsyl and Light Brigade ads, where the words used remind us of something else that gives another dimension to what is being said. My particular favorite, however, is well over 70 years old. It comes from France, so it’s no surprise, perhaps, to learn that it is clever, elegant, sophisticated—and you’re never quite sure whether or not it will work!

A series of three drawings, placed side-by-side on the same billboard, advertise Dubonnet by showing a man pouring the aperitif from a bottle into a glass on the table before him. The first drawing shows merely a few drops of liquid in the glass, a pale-faced man, and the letters “DUBO”; the second, a little more liquid, slightly more shading in the face of the man, and, arranged on two lines, “DUBO / DUBON”; and the third, still more liquid, a man whose face is now flushed in the same shade of color as the liquid in the glass, and, for the first time, the full name of the product on the third and final line of text, “DUBO / DUBON / DUBONNET.”

If you need a little help to decipher this particular example of wordplay, imagine that delightful feeling of expectation that precedes relaxation at the end of a hard day. You sit down, uncork a bottle of wine, and hear (at least, if you’re a francophone) the delightful clucking sound that heralds the pleasures to come as you pour a drink into your glass: “DUBO, DUBON, DUBONNET ....”

What sound does alcohol make when poured from a bottle in Greece or Guatemala?

The use of shading to suggest intoxication in the Dubonnet posters introduces an iconic visual association that may well work across cultural frontiers. Other visual associations, including everything from celebrity endorsements to culturally specific visual imagery (animals, tartans, Christmas trees, etc.), are sometimes more problematic. The same may even apply to corporate logos. How many consumers realize the Nestlé logo illustrates the literal meaning (“little nest” in Swiss German) of the founder’s name?

But it’s when what you say and what you show have to make sense together that things can get really tricky. An engineering company in Sweden manufactures a little gadget that can be inserted into industrial pipework, where it then rotates to clean oil or sediment from the inside walls. The company’s Swedish copywriter thought these valve-grinders looked like tiny stars, and that gave him the idea for a marketing brochure. The entire front page was in midnight blue, except for a life-size, 3/4 inch valve-grinder in sparkling steel in the top right corner and a headline built around the Swedish word for a star, stjärna.

You can imagine the atmosphere he was endeavoring to create: the future looks as dark as night with no hope for those poor, aging, clogged-up valves. Until a heaven-sent opportunity, the advent of the ingenious new valve-grinder, lights a beacon of hope!

But a translation of the Swedish headline leaves much to be desired. “A shining star in the maintenance business” hardly conjures up the same image as the original (“En lysande stjärna i underhållsbranschen”), with its evocations of the glamour of the entertainment world (underhållningsbranschen in Swedish)—however spurious such connotations may be.

If translation doesn’t work, we need to move up a gear. A successful English version of the brochure needs to link the headline to the star-shaped design of the valve-grinder to explain why it is shown as it is on this otherwise totally featureless page. But it also requires some connection to the world of entertainment, an aspect that is developed in the subsequent body copy.

One possible solution might be “Give your valves the star treatment.” After all, don’t those perma-bronzed, face-lifted Hollywood celebs always get the “the star treatment” wherever they appear? (Even if, to my knowledge, they haven’t started to use these handy little grinders on their own tubes and valves. At least, not yet.)

Translating marketing texts is a constant balancing act between faithfulness to the well-chosen words of the original, respect for the message that lies behind these words, and awareness of the various associations that make the language of advertising shout just a little louder than all the rest of the background buzz that
bombards our ears and senses today.

In my more poetic moments I like to compare the process to the life cycle of the butterfly. First, you have the caterpillar, an efficiency machine sans pareil that has but one aim in life: to grow fat on the efforts of its labor. Then, there is the mysterious alchemy of what takes place in the chrysalis stage, when all the material that once was a caterpillar is broken down and stirred around before—hey presto!—the same creature is reborn in a totally new form: a butterfly. The raw ingredients are identical, but the appearance is totally different.

Or we can call the process the “Conjuror’s Hat Principle.” The magician cuts up squares of colored silk and throws scraps of red, white, green, yellow, gold, and blue into a hat and—abracadabra!—out come half a dozen rainbow-colored pocket handkerchiefs.

The translator reads through the ad, the brochure, the TV commercial, the annual report, the tourist leaflet, the homepage, or whatever job it is he or she has been given to do, and all the various components (words, messages, associations) get stirred around and mixed up in that extraordinary conjurer’s hat that is the translator’s head. And then—bingo! Not “translation.” Let’s call it something grander, a description that lets our clients know what we really do and reminds us that we need to do it well.

Not translation, but transcreation.

One final example may prove the point, and here, as befits a forum like the Chronicle, the problem is totally language-oriented.

A mattress manufacturer had one bed in his catalog that he was particularly eager to promote for three reasons. The bed was (for Europe, at least) extra long, in sizes from 220 to 232 centimeters. It had a 12-year guarantee, while other sizes in the same range were guaranteed for between just 5 and 10 years. And it was, centimeter for centimeter, cheaper than the other beds in the range.

The Swedish copywriter combined all three of these unique selling propositions into a single, short headline that sounds good, looks good on the page, and is simple enough and strong enough to be memorable: “Ligga längre till lägre pris.” Fortunately, the manufacturer did not ask for a translation into English. Five words at a standard rate? No problem. What you pay for is what you get: “Lie longer at a lower price.”

No, this client was alert enough to realize that a word-for-word rendition like that did not reflect the message the original copywriter wanted to give at all. For a start, “lie” is a problematical word. Any intimation of untruths in a text designed to sell something is hardly a good way to start. Then, surely, “longer” works only as an adverb of time here. Basketball professionals aren’t longer, but taller than average. So by not managing to squeeze in a reference to the length of the bed, we’ve sold the client short there as well.

Then there’s the word “lower.” Low prices are okay, but as soon as you pull apart that set phrase “low prices” and start tinkering with it, you’ll notice that there are too many negative connotations hanging around that word “low”: low quality, low class, low life, low down and dirty.

No less important, the proposed “translation” has lost much of the intrinsic linguistic value of the Swedish original. It is nowhere near as melodious or memorable. What we need is something that summarizes the most important sales benefits (longer length, longer guarantee, lower price) and sounds good, too.

If you want to get the message right, you can’t translate good marketing texts. But if you put all the ingredients into the conjurer’s hat and stir them up long enough, you may, if you’re lucky, be able to transcreate the ideas in that good marketing text into something that conveys the same message to the target audience in a different language with a different cultural mindset.

That’s what translators like you and I do every day. I only wish that our clients would understand what magic we really work. So never cease to remind them whenever you get the opportunity that when they let us do our very best for them, what we do is not translation. They can invest in software and buy fancy little gadgets that can do that for them. (Although the results will stand in proportion to the investment!) The process we employ, transcreation, usually has a better chance of producing a result that works.

In the example cited here, the translator produced a headline that helped the manufacturer sell 33% more mattresses in the U.K. than budgeted, and cemented a close working relationship between client and translation company that has extended more than 15 successful years.

The English text read simply “The long good buy.”

Notes
1. According to Josh Sens in the Industry Standard (Dec. 2000), the Spanish retranslated back into English as “It takes an aroused man to make a chicken affectionate.”

2. For a succinct, yet insightful definition of transcreation, see the website of the U.K.-based provider of multilingual adaptation and copywriting services, The Word Gym (www.wordgym.com).
Rx&D: Translating for Canada’s Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies

By Alain Côté

The purpose of this article is to give an overview of the pharmaceutical translation field in Canada, particularly within brand-name companies. It will also discuss the work of the Translation Group—Rx&D. It should be of special interest to corporate employers, translation firms, freelance translators, and present or potential university students in translation programs.

The Rx&D Companies

In Canada, about 55 brand-name pharmaceutical companies within the innovative pharmaceutical industry are members of a national association called Canada’s Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies, or Rx&D (www.canadapharma.org). These companies include large multinational organizations that have a Canadian subsidiary, like AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Merck Frosst, and Wyeth, as well as smaller Canadian companies, such as Theratechnologies. Many of these companies have their head office in Montréal or Toronto, and collectively employ more than 23,000 Canadians.

Rx&D was founded in 1914. Its mission is to “improve the quality of life and enhance the health care system by fostering the discovery, development, and availability of new medicines” (Rx&D website). The association has a number of publications, including a Code of Marketing Practices that all its members must adhere to. Many similar organizations in other countries, such as the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America in the U.S. (www.phrma.org), pursue basically the same goals as Rx&D. Over 60 of these national associations are members of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations (www.ifpma.org).

The Translation Departments

Approximately 25 of the member companies of Rx&D have their own translation department. These departments vary greatly in size, ranging from one person, who may or may not be a professional translator, to a group of 15 to 20 translators. The translation department is managed by either a coordinator, translator, manager, director, or another employee who can outsource all, part, or none of the work. Translations are usually done at a company’s Canadian head office in either the Montréal or Toronto area, sometimes both.

Although the translation department handles documents originating from all areas in the company, the department itself necessarily belongs to a specific division; however, there is currently no consensus as to which division. Consequently, you will find the translation department in any of the following: Regulatory Affairs, Sales and Marketing, Finance, Human Resources, Corporate Services, etc.

The Translators

In Canada, about 90% of the translators and other employees working in the various translation departments of Rx&D companies are women. They translate mostly English documents into French or vice versa, but they also work on translations from or into other languages. They come from various parts of the world, but especially Québec, Ontario, and other Canadian provinces. Translators who speak more than two languages have usually acquired their unofficial languages either in their home country or at various schools in Canada. In fact, some translation departments at Rx&D companies cover quite a few languages internally.

The translators of the Rx&D translation departments offer a wide range of experience, skills, and knowledge. Many of them have university degrees in translation and sometimes in another discipline. Some have previously worked as health professionals, language teachers, or in another profession. Many of them have obtained their professional accreditation from the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (www.cttic.org), and are members of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (www.ATIO.on.ca) or the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec (www.OTIAQ.org).

The in-house translators may be assisted by coordinators, terminologists, revisors, and other colleagues. The translation departments also use a number of freelance translators or translation firms, some of whom have many years of experience in the industry.

The Rx&D companies generally offer excellent working conditions for their translators, which has resulted in fairly stable and long careers. Over the years, however, mergers and acquisitions within the pharmaceutical industry have brought some changes to the various translation departments. These mergers explain the hyphenated names of many pharmaceutical companies, like Merck Frosst, AstraZeneca, and Janssen-Ortho.
Finally, as in many other sectors, the translators within these departments are inevitably aging, and there are some concerns about succession. It seems that, in Canada at least, university programs are not producing nearly enough translators to meet the increasing demand for language services in various industries, including pharmaceuticals.

The Work

The 100 or so translators working in Rx&D companies translate documents that are obviously related to their companies’ products, mostly prescription drugs and some over-the-counter products. Because these products cover a wide range of therapeutic areas, translators are expected to have a solid knowledge of medical concepts and the English and French terminology in a number of medical specialties, such as cardiology, women’s health, psychiatry, neurology, infectious disease, gastroenterology, and urology, to name just a few.

These translators handle various types of documents, from one-page internal memos to lengthy and complex product monographs, voluminous sales training materials, journal ads, slide presentations, CD-ROMs, posters, and websites. Moreover, since they offer their services to the whole company, translators also have to tackle legal, financial, administrative, and technical documents.

Throughout all of this, they must be mindful of who will read the document they are translating and adjust the style and reading level to the targeted audience. It goes without saying that a brochure on oral contraceptives for young women will have to be written differently than a summary addressed to psychiatrists concerning the latest conference of the American Psychiatric Association.

The good news about the great diversity of material to be translated is that the work is rarely repetitive, is often interesting, and is even useful for one’s personal life. Translators spend their working hours reading documents on ways to maintain good health, prevent diseases, make rational therapeutic choices, eat properly, etc., and they get paid for communicating this important information in another language. Nice work if you can do it!

Issues and Challenges

In Canada, as elsewhere, the pharmaceutical industry is highly regulated. Health Canada is the federal department “responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.” Its Therapeutic Products Directorate “regulates pharmaceutical drugs and medical devices for human use. Prior to being given market authorization, a manufacturer must present substantive scientific evidence of a product’s safety, efficacy, and quality as required by the Food and Drugs Act and Regulations” (Health Canada website, www.hc-sc.gc.ca).

Once a drug has been authorized, pharmaceutical companies that are members of Rx&D must submit all external marketing pieces to the Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board, “an independent review agency whose primary role is to ensure that the advertising of prescription drugs is accurate, balanced, and evidence-based” (PAAB website, www.paab.ca). Finally, to list a drug on provincial formularies for reimbursement by public health plans, a pharmaceutical company must present detailed submissions to each provincial Ministry of Health, a time-consuming but critical process for the success of any prescription drug.

This complex regulatory framework means significant challenges and risks for translators working in the industry. Errors can be fatal. (For example, in the erroneous warning “It is hazardous to exceed 80 tablets per day,” the extra zero could kill somebody.) Products have been recalled because of labeling mistakes, all at a huge cost to the manufacturer. The critical nature of many documents in the pharmaceutical sector requires translators to be extremely careful and to submit translations to a rigorous quality control process. The problem is compounded by the increasing complexity and variety of documents to be translated, often within very tight deadlines. Furthermore, the medical sector is constantly changing, so translators must keep up with new concepts, products, technologies, services, etc., in two languages. Just the sheer volume of translation work to be done has stretched the already limited resources available.

Considering all these risks and constraints, it is amazing that people would still want to translate documents in such an environment. And yet, in the pharmaceutical and many other sectors, one finds a solid group of highly competent language professionals dedicated to facilitating communications and relations between different linguistic groups.

The Translation Group—Rx&D

In 1982, a group of translators working in the pharmaceutical industry felt the need to meet regularly to discuss terminology, project management, and other issues. They formed a group and invited other translators to join them. Since they were working for brand-name pharmaceutical companies, they decided to limit the membership to those translators working in the translation departments of member companies of Rx&D (then called...
the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada) and of the Council for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education (formerly the Council for the Accreditation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Representatives of Canada), a not-for-profit organization that develops and administers education programs for the Canadian pharmaceutical industry.

The Translation Group—Rx&D has two sections, one in Toronto and the other in Montréal (the two cities where most major brand-name pharmaceutical companies have their head office). Each local section meets regularly and, twice a year, the whole group holds a meeting in one of the two cities. Each meeting includes an administrative part and a training component. Participants have the opportunity to hear presentations on various topics of interest to them.

Since 1990, the group has published a quarterly terminology bulletin, Pharmaterm. Each issue, which discusses terminology problems, is prepared by a specialist in the area. The publication is reviewed by the group’s Terminology Committee and is distributed to all members and interested parties. A cumulative index is published every other year. This index, as well as a sample issue, are posted on the group’s website.

Throughout the year, the group organizes training sessions, which are attended not only by member companies, but also by the freelance translators who work for them. These sessions focus on medical terminology, linguistics, or other health-related matters. Moreover, the Translation Group—Rx&D seeks to increase its links with university translation programs in order to make students aware of the area of medical/pharmaceutical translations and to help attract new translators. It maintains a website (www.groupetraduction.ca) that includes a list of its members, useful links, a job posting section, and some information about its objectives, Pharmaterm, and other matters.

The Translation Group—Rx&D also brings together in-house and freelance translators for social activities. These initiatives allow participants to network and reduce the inevitable isolation that is particular to this type of work. All members agree that such an exchange of ideas, information, and terminology benefits the whole industry and contributes to the improvement of French communications. These factors probably explain the longevity and enduring success of the group.

Conclusion

The translation sector within Canadian brand-name pharmaceutical companies is a dynamic, challenging, very interesting, and promising area for its members and other stakeholders. The Translation Group—Rx&D is proud of its modest, but nevertheless important, contribution to this field over the last quarter of a century.

Resources

The Translation Group—Rx&D
www.groupetraduction.ca

A group of translators working for about 20 member companies of the association Rx&D. Contains basic information about the group, useful links, and a sample issue and cumulative index of Pharmaterm, a quarterly bulletin on medical/pharmaceutical terminology. Includes a section containing postings of job opportunities within the translation departments of the member companies.

Rx&D (Canada’s Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies)
www.canadapharma.org

A national association representing some 55 research-based pharmaceutical companies in Canada. Contains various policies, publications, and information about the industry.

Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

The federal Canadian department responsible for helping Canadians maintain and improve their health. Contains a wealth of information about health and diseases, both in English and French.

Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board
www.paab.ca

An independent review agency whose primary role is to ensure that the advertising of prescription drugs is accurate, balanced, and evidence-based. Publishes the Code of Advertising Acceptance.

Translation Bureau
www.translationbureau.gc.ca

The Canadian federal agency handling the translation needs of the federal departments and agencies, and of both houses of Parliament (House of Commons and Senate). Produces the terminology database Termium, available by subscription on the Internet (www.termium.com) and on CD-ROM. Publishes Language Update/L’Actualité langagière, a bilingual quarterly periodical on language and terminology.

Office québécois de la langue française
www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca

The Québec government agency

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A 10-Year Retrospective on a Distance Revision Course: Most Frequent Translation Problems (Part II)

By Leandro Wolfson, Translated by Alicia Marshall

In the November/December issue of the Chronicle, we described the characteristics of the Distance Translation/Revision Workshop sponsored by TIP-Lab (Translators and Interpreters’ Practice Lab), based in Evanston, Illinois, under the leadership of Alicia Marshall. This course, for which I serve as reviewer, was first offered in 1995. In 2004, it celebrated its tenth anniversary. We thought this would be an excellent occasion to summarize some general lessons that have been learned from the experience.

The first part of this article was devoted to two of the most common translation problems encountered by workshop participants during the past 10 years: 1) anglicisms and 2) repetition and redundancy. We will now deal with two other equally frequent problems: 3) intertextuality and 4) regionalisms.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is the implicit reference in one text to another text, normally to the title or main characters of this second text. It occurs frequently in journalism and literature. It presupposes that the reader knows the text to which reference is being made, as otherwise the real meaning of the author’s innuendo would not be understood.

The translation problem involved in intertextuality is extralinguistic. The translator may readily understand all the terms and language structures in that fragment of the original text, but if he or she fails to recognize the referenced work, his or her version may greatly deviate from the author’s intentions.

Is there a “trick” or hint that may allow the translator to recognize an intertextual reference? Unfortunately, the answer is no. If the translator has never seen the title of the referenced work, I doubt he or she will notice any connection. The only help in this instance is the translator’s general knowledge, the depth of his or her reading experience, and, sometimes, a measure of insight or professional intuition.

This problem has surfaced during our course more than once. Let’s consider some examples:

“…The personal intensity of an expression must never be sacrificed in literature if, with it, the author’s intended meaning (and style) may be lost…”


The text is about adultery in the U.S., pertinent legislation in force in different states, people’s reactions, etc. Even in the title of the article, reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel The Scarlet Letter (La letra escarlata in Spanish), which was made into a movie a few years ago, is apparent. Additionally, at some point in the text a comparison is made between a present-day American woman, who is being sued by her husband for adultery, and Hester Prynne, the main character in Hawthorne’s novel. No mention is made anywhere in the article as to who Hester Prynne was.

It is very likely that U.S. readers of Time magazine may not need any clarification. Hawthorne’s book is a 19th-century American literature classic, and any educated American knows who its main character is. But when targeting an audience different from that of the original work—an audience that may be too distant from the latter in time, space, and customs—it is obvious that cultural references take on a different meaning. If the goal of a translation is to keep, as closely as possible, the content of the intended message, then an “intact” translation—one without adaptations, additions, or complementary notes—may end up being unfair, even though its purpose is not to add or remove anything that could change the original.

So, let’s see how to solve this problem by means of adaptation or explanatory additions. Listed below are some versions in Spanish of the English title of the article (followed by a literal back translation into English between brackets). In these examples, adaptation has been used with good results:

- El estigma del adulterio [The Stigma of Adultery]
- Denuncia pública del adulterio [Public Denunciation of Adultery]
- Repartiendo censuras [Handing Out Censure]
- Marcadas y condenadas por adulteras [Marked and Condemned as Adulteresses]

In other words, in these titles, reference to The Scarlet Letter has been avoided, reflecting its content as if there wasn’t intertextuality.

This solution would be perfectly valid if, later on in the text, Hester Prynne were not mentioned. There, the allusion to The Scarlet Letter is unavoidable; otherwise, an important piece of information is omitted. That reference may be made by means of a footnote. The related fragment in the English text was:

Like a modern-day Hester Prynne, Dawn was soon the talk of the town.
A possible translation with a footnote could be:

_Al igual que Hester Prynne,* Dawn pronto fue la comidilla del pueblo._

* El autor alude a la protagonista de la novela de Nathaniel Hawthorne, La letra escarlata, de 1850. (N. del T.)

This clarification can also be included in the text itself if, for editorial reasons, the use of footnotes is precluded. For example:

_Al igual que Hester Prynne (la protagonista de la novela de Nathaniel Hawthorne La letra escarlata, de 1850), Dawn pronto fue la comidilla del pueblo._

[As in the case of Hester Prynne (the main character in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s 1850 novel, _The Scarlet Letter_). (Translator’s note.)]

This phrase, for someone not quite aware, could be literally translated into Spanish as “la nueva y valiente movilidad de nuestro mundo.” However, there is here an intertextual reference that calls for more appropriate solutions.

Since Aldous Huxley published his famous book _Brave New World_ in 1932, and then its sequel, _Brave New World Revisited_, these two phrases have been replicated on countless occasions to the point that they have both become stock phrases. These two books were translated into Spanish under the titles _Un mundo feliz_ and _Nueva visita a un mundo feliz_, respectively. The reference to the first one in the expression above is unquestionable. I think that any Spanish translator of the article who understands this point will have two options to choose from, with or without a footnote:

a) _la nueva movilidad de nuestro “mundo feliz”_

Quotes are used to suggest the close relationship to Huxley’s title. Of course, those who are unaware of the translations of Huxley’s writings will be left at sea, but the meaning will not have been distorted. On the other hand, those who are aware of his works will be able to capture the author’s intended purpose when he resorted to intertextuality.

b) _la nueva y valiente movilidad de nuestro mundo *_

* El autor alude a la obra Brave New World, etc. (N. del T.)

[The author is referring to _Brave New World_, etc. (Translator’s note.)]

That is, the reference is explained in a footnote. In my opinion, the first option is more desirable, especially when there are repeated references of this sort throughout the text. Footnotes should be used only in extreme cases, as an excessive number of them make for more burdensome reading.


The title of this article alludes to the novel _Sense and Sensibility_ (1814) by English writer Jane Austen (1775-1817). The book in itself is quite famous, though as is often the case in our modern world, it has become better known in its movie version of the same title (1996).

The article’s author (or editor) has resorted to a play on words related to the subject matter of the article (marriage, divorce, love life in general) by which the second element of the title, the word _Sensibility_, is replaced by _Sensuality_.

The title _Sense and Sensuality_ could be translated into Spanish in many different ways. However, if the chosen version does not refer the reader back to Austen’s book or to the movie, the intended purpose of the author (or editor) might be lost even if the essential content of the phrase is captured.

If there were one single Spanish translation of Austen’s novel, one that could be considered correct and is accepted in the entire Spanish-speaking world, the recommendation would be straightforward. As an example, in Argentina the book was translated into Spanish as _Sensatez y sentimientos_ (Buenos Aires: Editorial A-Z, 1993, translation by Marcos Mayer), and the movie was distributed under the same title. For those who are familiar with the novel, this translation seems a very good choice. In view of this, I would have to say that the only possible correct translation of the title of the article would be _Sensatez y sensualidad_.

The issue becomes more complex due to the unfortunate variety of titles chosen for the book and the movie in Spain, where the former
The term “barbecue”: Whether barbecue is used to designate the metal device on which meat is grilled (Spanish: *parrilla*) or the party, celebration, etc., organized around that meal (Spanish: *parrillada*), almost all of the workshop participants translated it as *barbacoa*, a word that is indeed included in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (DRAE, 1992) without any regional identification, as if it were valid for all Spanish-speaking countries. This term is unknown in Argentina and Uruguay, where *parrilla* is used to express the first meaning, and *parrillada*, or very frequently *asado*, for the second. (The latter term also designates the beef itself.)

The term “hot dog”: This term is included by Andre Moskowitz in the “Food and Drink” series of his survey on regionalisms.² He records the number of people from each country who declare the different Spanish words they habitually use for designating several types of common foods. His data allows us to discriminate the variations used by the majority of respondents (“main terms”) from those used by only a minority of respondents (“secondary terms”).

The terms most used in different countries are: *hotdog* (main term in 12 countries, secondary term in 1); *perro caliente/perrocaliente/perrito caliente/perritolocaiente* (main term in 5 countries, secondary term in 10); *frankfúrt* (main term in 1 country, secondary term in 2); *pancho* (main term in 2 countries, secondary term in 1); *fránfurt* (secondary term in 1 country); *vienesa* (secondary term in 1 country). If we add up the countries in which each of these words is used, either as a main or secondary term, we have:

### Improper translation of the first term:
- **Sensibilidad y sensualidad**
- **Sentidos y sensualidad**

### Incorrect use of articles:
- **El sentido y la sensualidad**
- **El sentido común y la sensualidad**

### Regionalisms

The purpose in this section is to offer a brief overview of this huge, sometimes insurmountable difficulty in Spanish translation. The instructions for the workshop exercises usually call for a translation “designed for a Latin American magazine.” So, what terms to choose?

The importance of the problem of regionalisms can never be overestimated. Because of this reason, there are texts that may be completely untranslatable. That is, they could be translated for one country or a number of Latin American countries. However, if what is expected is a translation equally valid in Spain and all the Spanish-speaking countries, the problem might become just short of insoluble.


This article, written by an Englishman living in the U.S., humorously recounts the author’s surprise at certain American customs related to excessive cleanliness. It contains a number of terms that gave rise to a vast variety of regionalisms.
The term “toilet”: This term was also included by Moskowitz in his series on “The Home.” The terms used are: inodoro (main term in 10 countries, secondary term in 7 countries); wäter (main term in 5 countries, secondary term in 3 countries); escusado (main term in 3 countries, secondary term in 6 countries); sanitario (main term in 6 countries); servicio (secondary term in 3 countries); väter (main term in 1 country); poceta (secondary term in 1 country); retrete (secondary term in 1 country).

If Spain were to impose its main term, väter, it would have to do so against the outcry of all the other countries; only in eight of them is a similar form, wäter, recognized. It is clear that the statistics favor inodoro, recognized in 17 countries, but its adoption would compel Peru to accept a term not used by anyone there, and Venezuela to accept an almost unknown fifth term instead of the four other choices preferred by its people (poceta, wäter, sanitario, and escusado).

The term “carousel”: If I were a writer and told stories of my childhood, or of my children’s early years, there would probably be many related to that beloved object: la calesita (the carousel). I would never think of calling it by any other name, as nobody does in the everyday language of my country.

It is obvious that, as regards the word connotation, it is impossible to come up with a “generic Spanish,” as is often requested. If, as a writer, I used tiovivo, carrusel, or any other regional term instead of calesita, I would not be choosing a generic term, but a mistaken one.

Of course, it is not the same when I am translating, and the type of text I translate does not demand that I keep word connotations and associations, but simply that I give a denotative meaning. In this case, it might indeed be very useful for me to know which terms are most often used in different Spanish-speaking countries.

Going back to Moskowitz and his survey, in the 2000 ATA Annual Conference Proceedings, there is a list of the terms used for carousel or carrusel in Spanish-speaking countries.¹

The survey makes the following clear: 1) Carrusel is, by far, the term most commonly used. It is used in 19 of 20 countries, and is the main term in 11 of them. 2) It is followed by caballitos or rueda de caballitos, known in 16 countries and used by the majority of the population in 8 of them. 3) Tiovivo is used exclusively in Spain. 4) Calesita is the only term known in Uruguay, and the one used by most people in Argentina and Paraguay, where carrusel, although much less often, is also employed.

There is no way out: if I translate for an audience that is not from Argentina, Uruguay, or Paraguay, I will have to renounce my beloved old calesita.

The term “hopscotch”: Participants used the following:

- rayuela (most cases)
- pata coja (2 cases)
- tejo (1 case)

In the paper mentioned above, Moskowitz also included hopscotch.² In essence, the game is always the same, although the drawings on the ground may differ.

I remember the impression I had when I first saw the list composed by Moskowitz. As an Argentine, the child that I once was, and an avid reader of Julio Cortázar’s books from my teenage years, for me, rayuela was universal, and I could not imagine any other name for this game. None of the terms researched by Moskowitz so far offer a wider variety: there are almost 60 different words to designate “hopscotch” in Spain and Latin America. In Spain alone, there are 32. Rayuela is the main term only in Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras, and it is recognized, but much less commonly used, in Spain, Colombia, Peru, and Paraguay. It is unknown in 11 countries. There is absolutely no dominant term in all the countries. Tejo is common in Spain and Cuba, and very infrequently used in Argentina. Pata coja is also known in Spain and Cuba.

By way of conclusion, we could wonder: Is it possible to come up with a translation acceptable to all Spanish speakers? Up to what point
must the personal intensity of an expression be sacrificed by using a generic alternative that will be understood by more people? Translators currently face an enormous difficulty in this respect. I must confess I feel very skeptical. To target a translation to “all the Spanish world” seems a utopia, except for the scientific and technical fields. However, an effort must be made, for the sake of communication and even of the very possibility of translation into Spanish.

The personal intensity of an expression must never be sacrificed in literature if, with it, the author’s intended meaning (and style) may be lost. That is why there are texts that are almost untranslatable. However, since olden times, translation has been one of the main means of communication among cultures. Translation entails unavoidable loss. This does not mean that we should not try our very best to make sure that this loss is minimal. For example, by becoming aware of our respective lexical variations and by consulting works, glossaries, and people who could help us reduce the difference without losing the essence.

I believe that here, as always, the basic concept applies: translation is possible in a given communicative situation. In certain cases (certain types of speeches, target audiences, channels), it becomes necessary to favor what is particular or local at the expense of what is general or universal; in others, the opposite may be true.

**Notes**
5. Ibid., pp. 338-40.

**One Member’s Perspective on the ATA Conference Experience** Continued from page 15

chosen with care to afford attendees the opportunity to visit interesting cities, so I took some time to see a few of the sites the wonderful city of Toronto had to offer.

Time and money are, no doubt, the two largest perceived deterrents to conference attendance. As a working translator, I admit it was difficult to arrange time off from my translating and to have my NYU course assignments under control. In addition, the two weeks after my return were hectic. The conference, however, was well worth the time, effort, and expense. As a fellow NYU student and attendee reported, the experience had “a high return on investment.”

Attending an ATA conference reminds us that we are not working in a void. We are members of a network of highly trained professionals working in a field that is rapidly gaining in importance and sophistication. The conference experience enhances our work by keeping us current and technically proficient. It also allows us to network and share experiences and solutions with fellow professionals.

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Common Statistical Errors Even YOU Can Find: Part 1
By Tom Lang

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“Critical reviewers of biomedical literature have consistently found that about half the articles that used statistical methods did so incorrectly (Ref. 1).”

Hypothesis testing was first discussed in the medical literature in the 1930s, shortly after the concept was proposed (Ref. 2). Since then, researchers in several fields of medicine have found high rates of statistical errors in large numbers of scientific articles, even in the best journals (Refs. 3-6). The problem of poor statistical reporting is, in fact, long-standing, widespread, potentially serious, and almost unknown, despite the fact that most errors concern basic statistical concepts and can be easily avoided by following a few guidelines (Ref. 7).

The problem of poor statistical reporting has received more attention with the rise of the evidence-based medicine movement. Evidence-based medicine depends on the quality of published research; that is, evidence-based medicine is literature-based medicine. As a result, several groups have proposed reporting guidelines for different types of trials (Refs. 8-10), and a comprehensive set of guidelines for reporting statistics in medicine has been compiled from an extensive review of the literature (Ref. 11).

In a series of articles, I describe several of the more common statistical errors in biomedical literature, errors that can be identified even by those who know little about statistics. These guidelines are but the tip of the iceberg; readers who want to know more about the iceberg should consult more detailed texts (Ref. 11), as well as other references cited in this series.

The field of statistics can be divided into two broad areas: descriptive statistics, which is concerned with how to describe samples of data collected in a research study, and inferential statistics, which is concerned with how to estimate (or infer) from the sample the characteristics of the population from which the sample was selected. In this article, I describe errors made in defining variables, in summarizing the data collected about these variables, and in interpreting probability (P) values.

Errors in Descriptive Statistics

Error #1: Not Defining Each Variable in Measurable Terms
Science is measurement. Researchers need to tell us what they measured—the variables—and how they measured them by providing the operational definition of each variable. For example, one operational (measurable) definition of hypertension is a systolic blood pressure of 140 mm Hg or higher, and an operational definition of obesity is a body mass index above 27.3 for women and above 27.8 for men.

Variables relating to concepts or behaviors may be more difficult to measure. Depression defined as a score of more than 50 on the Zung Depression Inventory is operationally defined, but how well the Inventory actually measures depression can be debated. In one major U.S. survey, a “current smoker” is anyone who smoked one cigarette in the 30 days before the survey. Although this definition is not an obvious one, it is nevertheless an “operational” one, and we at least know who “current smokers” are in the survey, even if we disagree with the definition.

Error #2: Not Providing the Level of Measurement of Each Variable
Level of measurement refers to how much information is collected about the variable. For practical purposes, there are three levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal, and continuous. At the lowest level are nominal data, which consist of two or more nominal, or named, categories that have no inherent order. Blood type, defined as type A, B, AB, or O, is measured at the nominal level of measurement.

Ordinal data consist of categories that do have an inherent order and can be sensibly ranked. A person may be described as short, medium, or tall. We may not know the exact height of the patients studied, but we do know that a person in the tall category is taller than one in the medium category, who, in turn, is taller than one in the short category.
Continuous data consist of values along a continuous measurement scale, such as height measured in centimeters or as blood pressure measured in millimeters of mercury. Continuous data are the highest level of measurement because they tell how far each point value is from any other value on the same scale.

Researchers need to specify the level of measurement for each variable. For example, they may wish to characterize a patient’s blood pressure as a nominal variable (either elevated or not elevated), as an ordinal variable (hypotensive, normotenive, or hypertensive), or as a continuous variable (the systolic pressure in millimeters of mercury). The levels of measurement of response and explanatory variables are important because they determine the type of statistical test that can be used to analyze relationships. Different combinations of levels of measurement require different statistical tests.

**Error #3: Dividing Continuous Data into Ordinal Categories Without Explaining Why or How the Categories Were Created**

To simplify statistical analyses, continuous data, such as height measured in centimeters, are often separated into two or more ordinal categories, such as short, medium, and tall. Reducing the level of measurement in this way also reduces the precision of the measurements, however, and reduces the variability in the data. Authors should explain why they chose to lose this precision. In addition, they should explain how the boundaries of the ordinal categories were determined, to avoid the appearance of bias. In some cases, the boundaries (or cut points) that define the categories can be chosen to favor certain results.

**Error #4: Using the Mean and Standard Deviation to Describe Continuous Data That Are Not Normally Distributed**

Unlike nominal and ordinal data, which are easily summarized as the number or percent of observations in each category, continuous data can be graphed to form distributions. Distributions are usually described with a value summarizing the bulk of the data—a “measure of central tendency,” such as the mean, median, or mode—and a range of values that represent the variation of the data around the measure of central tendency—the range, interpercentile range, or standard deviation (SD).

Normal distributions are appropriately described with any of the above descriptive statistics, although the mean and SD are used most commonly. In fact, the mean and SD should be used only to describe approximately normal distributions. By definition, about 68% of the values of a normal distribution are within ±1 SD of the mean, and about 95% are within ± 2 SDs. Non-normal or skewed distributions, however, are not appropriately described with the mean and SD. The median value (the value that divides observations into an upper and a lower half) and the range (from the minimum to the maximum values) or interquartile range (the range of values that include the middle 50% of the observations) are more appropriate for describing non-normally distributed data.

Most biologic data are not normally distributed, so the median and interquartile range should be more common than the mean and SD. A useful rule of thumb is that if the SD is greater than half of the mean (and negative values are not possible), the data are not normally distributed.

**Error #5: Using the Standard Error of the Mean (SEM) As a Descriptive Statistic**

Unlike the mean and SD, which are descriptive statistics for a sample of (normally distributed) data, the standard error of the mean (SEM) is a measure of precision for an estimated characteristic of a population. (One SEM on either side of the estimate is essentially a 68% confidence interval [see later]. However, the SEM is often reported instead of the SD; that is, it is sometimes used as a descriptive statistic. The SEM is always smaller than the SD, so its use as a descriptive statistic makes measurements look more precise than they are. In addition, the preferred measure of precision for an estimate in the life sciences is the 95% confidence interval. Thus, measurements (when normally distributed) should be described with the mean and SD, not SEM, and an estimate should be accompanied by the 95% confidence interval, not the SEM.

**Errors in Interpreting Probability (P) Values**

“We think of tests of significance more as methods of reporting than for making decisions, because much more must go into making medical policy than the results of a significance test (Ref. 12).”

Probability (P) values can be thought of as the amount of evidence in favor of chance as an explanation for the difference between groups. When the probability is small, usually less than 5 times in 100, chance is rejected as the cause, and the difference is attributed to the intervention under study.

P values indicate mathematical probability, not biologic importance. Probability values are compared...
to the alpha level that defines the threshold of statistical significance. Alpha is often set at 0.05. A P value below alpha is, by definition, “statistically significant”; a P value above alpha is “not significant at the 0.05 level.” This all-or-nothing interpretation of a P value and the fact that any alpha level is arbitrary are other causes of misinterpretation.

A P value can be used to decide whether, say, two groups are significantly different. The lack of statistical significance, however, does not necessarily mean that the groups are similar. Concluding that groups are equivalent because they do not differ significantly is another common statistical error (see “statistical power” below).

Error #6: Reporting Only P Values for Results

The problems with P described above have led journals to recommend reporting the 95% confidence interval for the difference between groups (that is, for the “estimate”) instead of, or in addition to, the P value for the difference (Ref. 13). The following examples show the usefulness of confidence intervals (Ref. 11).

- “The effect of the drug on lowering diastolic blood pressure was statistically significant (P<0.05).” Here, the P value could be 0.049; statistically significant (at the 0.05 level), but so close to 0.05 that it should be interpreted similarly to a P value of, say, 0.051, which is not statistically significant. In addition, we do not know by how much the drug lowered diastolic pressure; that is, we cannot judge the clinical importance of the reduction.

- “The mean diastolic blood pressure of the treatment group dropped from 110 to 92 mm Hg (P=0.02).” This presentation is the most typical. The values before and after the test are given, but not the difference. The mean drop—the 18-mm Hg difference—is statistically significant, but it is also an estimate of the drug’s effectiveness, and without a 95% confidence interval, the precision (and, therefore, the usefulness) of the estimate cannot be determined.

- “The drug lowered diastolic blood pressure by a mean of 18 mm Hg, from 110 to 92 mm Hg (95% CI = 2 to 34 mm Hg; P=0.02).” The confidence interval indicates that, in effect, if the drug were to be tested on 100 samples similar to the one reported, the average drop in blood pressure would range between 2 and 34 mm Hg in 95 of the 100 samples. A drop of only 2 mm Hg is not clinically important, but a drop of 34 mm Hg is. So, although the mean drop in blood pressure in this particular study was statistically significant, the expected difference in blood pressures may not always be clinically important; that is, the study results are actually inconclusive. For conclusive results, more patients probably need to be studied to narrow the confidence interval until all or none of the values in it are clinically important.

Error #7: Not Confirming that the Assumptions of Statistical Tests Were Met

Statistical tests may not give accurate results if their assumptions are violated (Ref. 14). For this reason, both the name of the test and a statement that its assumptions were met by the data should be included when reporting statistical analyses. The most common errors are:

- Using parametric tests (which require data to be normally distributed) when the data are skewed. In particular, when comparing two groups, the Student t test is often used when the Wilcoxon rank sum test (or another nonparametric test that does not assume normally distributed data) is more appropriate.

- Using tests for independent samples on paired samples, which require tests for paired data. Again, the Student t test is often used when a paired t test is required.

- Using linear regression analysis without establishing that the relationship between variables is, in fact, linear. (The assumption of linearity may be tested by what is called an analysis of “residuals [Ref. 11].”)

Error #8: Interpreting Nonstatistically Significant Results as “Negative” When They Are, in fact, Inconclusive

A researcher who finds no statistically significant difference between experimental groups must decide whether the lack of difference means that the groups were, in fact, similar (the intervention made no difference), or that too few data were collected to detect a meaningful difference. This decision is usually made with a statistical power calculation, which determines how many subjects must be studied to have a given chance of detecting a given difference, if such a difference is there to be detected.

Unfortunately, many studies reporting nonstatistically significant findings are statistically “underpowered” (they did not enroll enough patients) and, therefore, do not provide conclusive answers (Ref. 15). The researchers found no difference, but
neither can they rule out the existence of a difference. “Absence of proof is not proof of absence.”

In adequately powered studies, statistically insignificant results are truly negative: the groups being compared are, in fact, similar because the difference the study was powered to find was not found, but it could have been found had it existed in the data. Adequate power is especially important in equivalence trials (or noninferiority trials), which are conducted to establish that one drug is as good as another.

**Error #9: Not Reporting Whether or How Adjustments Were Made for Multiple Hypothesis Tests**

Many studies report several P values, which increases the risk of making a type I error: concluding that the difference found is the result of an intervention when chance is a more likely explanation. For example, to compare each of 6 groups to all the others, 15 pair-wise statistical tests—15 P values—are needed. Without adjusting for these multiple tests, the chance of making a type I error rises from 5 times in 100 (the typical alpha level of 0.05) to 55 times in 100 (an alpha of 0.55).

The multiple testing problem may be encountered when:

- Performing secondary analyses of relationships observed during the study, but not identified in the original study design
- Performing subgroup analyses not planned in the original study
- Performing interim analyses of accumulating data (one or more endpoints measured at several different times)
- Comparing groups at multiple time points with a series of individual group comparisons (repeated-measures procedures)

Adjusting for multiple comparisons is sometimes optional. However, readers need to know whether or not adjustments were made and, if so, what adjustments were involved (Ref. 16). The Bonferroni correction is a common adjustment, for example.

Multiple testing is often needed to explore new relationships among data; however, exploratory analyses should be reported as exploratory. Data dredging—performing undisclosed analyses to compute many P values to find something that is statistically significant (and, therefore, worth reporting)—is poor science.

**Error #10: Confusing Statistical Significance with Biologic Importance**

Many researchers interpret a statistically significant P value as indicating a biologically important result (Ref. 17). In fact, P values have no biologic interpretation. The nature and size of the difference must be judged to determine biologic importance. Perhaps the best way to remember this most common of statistical errors, as well as to close this article, is with a quote from statistician John Yancy: “It has been said that a fellow with one leg frozen in ice and the other leg in boiling water is comfortable—on average (Ref. 18).”

**References**


8. Altman, D. G., K. F. Schulz, D. Moher, et al, for the


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**Rx&D: Translating for Canada’s Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies**

Continued from page 28


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Proverbs have been translated between languages for centuries. Even the ancient Latin proverb *Asinus ad lyram* (A donkey with a lyre), meaning “something futile,” can be traced back to a Sumerian source more than 2,000 years before the Romans. Proverbs are rich, dense, carefully crafted pieces of artistic writing, often appearing as very short poems, that are highly prized in their respective languages. Because of this and due to the fact that they are generally intended to be read by people who share the same cultural background as the author, proverbs are especially challenging to translate.

**Text Genres**

The techniques used to translate proverbs will vary according to the text genre in which the proverbs are found. This article categorizes three broad text genres where proverbs appear: proverbs embedded in the text of literary writing; collections of proverbs; and proverbs found in the anthropological/cultural explanations of academic writing. Each category requires the translator to use a different approach.

**Proverbs Embedded in Literature**

The literary genre is the area where translators will most likely find proverbs embedded in the text. Here, the author is generally more concerned with how the placement of a proverb will impact the text. In such cases, the translator is free to choose one of at least five approaches for translating the proverb: 1) literal translation; 2) artful translation; 3) substitution; 4) including a translator’s note with the translation explaining the proverb; and 5) not translating the proverb. These techniques are described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

When choosing which of these five approaches to use, the translator must be sensitive to the original proverb’s impact on the passage. In some texts, the way the proverb is structured is crucial; in others, maintaining the proverb’s original form is not as important. For example, there is a passage in the C.S. Lewis novel *The Horse and His Boy* that is laced with proverbs spoken between a king, his vizier, and the crown prince. The novel is set in the kingdom of Calormen, a foreign and exotic land, where the vizier describes the speech of the people who live there as “full of choice apophthegms and useful maxims.” The use of proverbs in speech is so common in this kingdom that the crown prince complains, “I have had maxims and verses flung at me all day.” In translating such a passage, translators must maintain the foreign flavor and density of the proverbial speech.

Translators also need to be aware that in many cases, a speaker or writer will quote only the beginning of a common proverb (“Birds of a feather...”), knowing that their intended audience will mentally fill in the rest of it. When translating a text with an incomplete proverb, it is almost always best to make sure your translation contains the complete proverb.

Now, let’s examine the five approaches you can use to successfully translate proverbs.

**Approach #1: A Literal Translation**

Using a literal translation is one of the simplest ways to render a proverb. In a text where a foreign-sounding proverb fits in with a foreign atmosphere, a literal translation may be appropriate, as long as it will be understood by the target reader. For example, a literal translation of the Ethiopian Amharic proverb “Stealing with a cough, praying with a grudge” is more likely to be understood by non-Ethiopian English speakers. However, a literal translation of the Ethiopian proverb “Fire gave birth to ashes” will not be readily understood. This type of proverb needs a short explanation: great people may have worthless children.

**Approach #2: An Artful Translation**

When translating written texts, a translator may be able to adapt the source-language proverb artfully to the receptor language. A literal translation of a proverb may communicate the adequate proposed meaning, but if the translation is phrased in an artful form, the reader is more apt to recognize it as being a proverb. For example, contrast the literal and artful translations of an Amharic proverb from Ethiopia given in Table 1.

To make a proverb sound more artful, study what literary devices...
Translating Proverbs Continued

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique Used</th>
<th>Artful Translation</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliteration</td>
<td>“When iron rests, it rusts.”</td>
<td>Dutch (de Ley, 1998:53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliteration</td>
<td>“Peace prospers, war wastes away.”</td>
<td>Dutch (de Ley, 1998:111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhyme &amp; Contrast</td>
<td>“Great boast, little roast.”</td>
<td>Dutch (de Ley, 1998:85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallelism</td>
<td>“Secret shared, secret lost.”</td>
<td>Dutch (de Ley, 1998:36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Rhyme</td>
<td>“Birds alight among their like.”</td>
<td>Arabic (Arnander and Skipwith, 1985:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliteration &amp; List</td>
<td>“You can know a man by three signs: his tips, his tippling, and his temper.”</td>
<td>Hebrew (Rosten, 1972:120)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Alternatives</td>
<td>“Greens with gladness beats beef with bitterness.”</td>
<td>Unseth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Peas with peace beats battles with beef.”</td>
<td>Unseth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Greens with harmony beats beef without ‘ny.”</td>
<td>Unseth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Better beans with loving than beef with loathing.”</td>
<td>Unseth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Better to eat a few peas with those who adore you than to feast on fine meat with those who abhor you.”</td>
<td>Vail (2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ATA Chronicle | January 2005
Approach #4: Translate a Proverb and Include a Translator’s Note to Explain It

When we translate something where the meaning is clearly embedded in another culture, particularly in literature, we often want to convey to readers the foreignness or archaic nature of the setting and characters. If we simply translate a proverb literally, it probably will convey the sense of an alien culture, but may not communicate the meaning the author intended. If we use an equivalent English proverb in our translation, we will often lose the foreign feel of the text. (Consider the dissonance if a priest in a translation of Sigrid Lavransdatter, set in 13th-century Norway, is translated as saying “Garbage in, garbage out.”) A useful technique in such cases is to preserve the foreign feeling by translating the proverb literally and then including a translator’s note explaining the original proverb.

An application of this is illustrated in the following example, using an Amharic proverb from Ethiopia: “Her father sighed and looked up from the ground, ‘My daughter, you must stop spending time with those people. As our proverb says, The heifer that spends time with a donkey learns to fart,’” gently warning her that spending time with that group of friends would corrupt her. In this case, a literal translation of the proverb is included in the text, giving the reader a sense of the culture the characters live in. The addition of the brief explanation (underlined and in brackets) conveys the meaning of the father’s warning to a person unfamiliar with the Amharic proverb and its cultural context.

Approach #5: State That a Proverb is Being Used, But Don’t Try to Translate It

There will be times when translating or interpreting a proverb is so problematic and its value to the text so low that a translator/interpreter will be justified in not rendering it at all. For instance, during simultaneous interpretation, it may be best to simply say something like, “The speaker used a colorful proverb to illustrate his point” or “She used a proverb to make her point.” In such instances, you could also simply interpret the main point without alluding to the proverb the speaker used (Visson, 1999:113).

Even in written contexts, there are still times that the proverb is so enigmatic or culturally bound, that it is not worthwhile to try to translate it. Instead, one may simply translate the passage without conveying the proverbial form, such as “He tried to persuade them with humorous and colorful language,” “She reminded her pupil of embarrassing consequences if he did not practice his violin,” or “He invoked the wisdom of the elders.”

Collections of Proverbs

In many languages, proverbs have been collected for publication, and a quick visit to almost any library will reveal several examples on the shelves. When a collection of proverbs is to be translated into another language for publication, the translator is often required to do double duty. First, the translator must produce a fairly literal translation of the original proverb. This is often fairly straightforward. For example, there is an Amharic proverb that can be easily translated into English as “Exchanging the things under the pot does not improve the flavor of the stew.” However, such a literal translation often does not communicate the true meaning of the proverb. Therefore, translators usually have to produce a second translation, one with an explanatory component. This second task is more challenging. To accomplish this, translators can either use an equivalent proverb that is known in the receptor language, or they can include a translator’s note explaining the proverb. For example, English readers will need an explanation to accompany the literal translation for the Amharic proverb about improving the flavor of the stew, such as “Trivial changes will not solve a problem.”

I have studied collections of proverbs that only provide literal translations, but these are very unsatisfactory because readers are left without a clear understanding of what the proverbs mean. I have also seen collections where the proverbs are very loosely translated, so that the serious reader is left with no clear idea of the structure of the original source-language proverb. I have found myself wondering, “Was the original Chinese really in the form of a rhetorical question?” or “Did the Navaho really refer to a tiger in the original?” In general, giving only a single-sentence translation is not a satisfactory solution. It is important that the reader not only understand the meaning of a proverb, but also appreciate something of how it was structured in the original text and its importance to the source-language culture.
Anthropological/Cultural Explanations

The third genre in which translators will encounter proverbs is in academic writing, especially where the author uses proverbs to examine or explain values and customs in another culture. For example, a scholar writing about how donkeys are seen as negative and despised in Ethiopian culture could illustrate this by quoting Amharic proverbs, such as “The heifer that spends time with a donkey learns to fart” and “When donkeys kick each other, no teeth are broken.”

In this situation, providing a fairly literal translation of the proverb is imperative. That is, if the author is writing about donkeys, it is important that the translation of the proverb actually mentions a donkey! Simply substituting a proverb with one that has a similar meaning in the receptor language (e.g., “Bad company spoils good morals”) is clearly not adequate. Rather, it is best to provide a literal translation of the proverb and include a translator’s note at the end explaining its meaning.

Conclusion

In all cases, proverbs present translators with special challenges. When grappling with proverbs, translators must use all their linguistic ingenuity. Sometimes we must strive for rigid faithfulness to the form of the original, but at other times, we must wax poetical. I will close with Leo Rosten’s defense of his creatively translated proverbs: “I defend the license of translators as strongly as that of poets.”

References


Call for Papers

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Proposals are invited on topics in all areas of translation and interpreting, including the following: Agencies, Bureaus, and Companies; Financial Translation and Interpreting; Independent Contractors; Interpreting; Language-Specific Sessions; Legal Translation and Interpreting; Literary; Medical Translation and Interpreting; Scientific and Technology; Social Sciences; Terminology; Training and Pedagogy; Translators and Computers. Suggestions for additional topics are welcome. Proposals for sessions must be submitted on the Conference Presentation Proposal Form to: Conference Organizer, ATA Headquarters, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Fax: (703) 683-6122. All proposals for sessions must be in English.

Submission deadline: March 11, 2005

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Neutral Spanish: Is it Necessary? Does it Exist?

By Guillermo Cabanellas de las Cuevas

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Spanish translators are puzzled by an increasingly common request: the client wants a translation to be in “neutral Spanish.” But the translator may wonder: Is it possible to write in neutral Spanish? And is it necessary or even appropriate?

First Encounter with the Monster

Those of us who have been in the language business long enough know that this is not the first time that “neutral Spanish” has reared its ugly head. But the reasons for its unwelcome presence have changed.

In the old days—say, 50 or 25 years ago—the concept of neutral Spanish had an ideological, or more precisely, right-wing flavor. Neutral Spanish was promoted or imposed to prevent the use of more “popular” types of Spanish, particularly local slang or parlance. Thus, in Argentina during the 1940s, several tangos were banned due to the fact that the lyrics included undesirable slang; others underwent adjustment to conform to the linguistic requirements of the authorities. More recently, during the 1980s, under yet another military government, the use of neutral Spanish was promoted in Argentine radio and television for a number of reasons. First, to “protect” the citizenry against the use of “incorrect” Spanish, which the applicable regulations prohibited or discouraged. Second, to “protect” against the “incorrect” use of foreign words in Spanish speech. Third, to “protect” against the propagation, particularly in television, of English-language programs dubbed in other Latin American countries, since the language used was non-neutral—i.e., Mexican, Venezuelan, etc.—Spanish.

During the following decades, a more tolerant attitude toward individual preferences extended to linguistic usage. Foreign (i.e., non-Argentine) accents and words were increasingly welcomed in radio and television, whose use was seen as forming part of the “big fatherland” (la patria grande) that included all of Latin America.

But recently neutral Spanish has made a comeback, for reasons very different from the earlier ones. One reason for the current emphasis on neutral Spanish translations is the need to market goods and services throughout Spanish-speaking countries without having to resort to a special construct. And there is no lack of contact with Spanish speakers from different countries. On a daily basis we have conversations with foreign clients, we read foreign books, and we watch foreign television programs. Some of our own family members may be foreign. But we never feel the need for this colorless verbal construct, neutral Spanish.

Additional suspicion arises when we notice that authorities on the Spanish language—as opposed to manufacturers of toothpaste, distributors of films, military governments, and multinational entrepreneurs—never use the expression “neutral Spanish” nor feel the need for it. The Diccionario de la Real Academia Española refers in its foreword to the Spanish language (lengua española) and sets as its goal maintaining “the unity of the language” and not the creation of some type of neutral or hybrid Spanish. In his foreword to María Moliner’s acclaimed Diccionario de Uso del Español, Manuel Seco describes the contents of the dictionary as an assemblage of “standard language” (lengua estándar). My father’s Diccionario Enciclopédico de Derecho Usual, the most widely used legal dictionary in Spanish-speaking countries (and I say that without filial partiality) notes: “Due to the idiomatic unity linking all Spanish-American republics, words originating from Spain belong now equally to all Spanish-speaking peoples.”

Even Microsoft, in the Word program I have, uses the expression “traditional Spanish” as an alternative to the “national” varieties of Spanish it lists in the language set under “tools.”

Do toothpaste manufacturers know something about Spanish that all these dictionary writers...
ignore, or is it the other way around?

To answer this question, we have to take a brief look at how Spanish is used in the different countries in which it is the national language. There is a core, common to all countries, which we may call Spanish X. In addition, each country, and many regions and even specific neighborhoods, have developed idiosyncratic varieties of Spanish, which differ to a greater or lesser extent from Spanish X; we may call these varieties Spanish Y.

Normally, every Spanish-speaking person will speak both Spanish X and Spanish Y. The novelist and essayist Mario Vargas Llosa normally writes in Spanish X, but in his autobiographical work, *El pez en el agua*, he writes certain passages in Piuran Spanish (the department of Piura is located in the north of Peru). Jorge Luis Borges wrote in Spanish X, but poems such as “Para las seis cuerdas” are written in a variation of Argentine Spanish.

This double linguistic level helps explain why, while it is possible to identify dozens and even hundreds of Spanish-language varieties, the basic unity of the language—so dear to dictionary writers—is preserved.

The neutral Spanish advocates could now say: “Okay, call it Spanish X, or standard language, or traditional Spanish (like Microsoft), or even correct Spanish (as is frequently the case). These are just different names for the same phenomenon: neutral Spanish.”

But to see why this view is not correct, we should analyze several examples. Suppose that our hypothetical client wants to market peaches in the Spanish-speaking world. What word should he use on his cans? *Melocotón* (used in Spain and other countries) or *durazno* (used in Argentina and other countries, and even in certain parts of Spain)?

There is no “neutrality” for this conundrum. We cannot mix *melocotón* and *durazno* and get a “melozno” or a “duracotón.” We might count how many Spanish-speakers use one word or the other and reach a “majority decision.” But if the relevant universe is the Spanish-speaking world, Mexican Spanish would prevail, and since Mexico is not prone to linguistic imperialism, even Mexicans would not find such a solution reasonable, desirable, or “neutral.” Similar problems arise with many other words: *acera* (Spain) and *vereda* (Argentina); *aguacate* (Spain) and *palta* (Argentina); or *cambur* (Venezuela), *banana* (Argentina), and *plátano* (Spain).

Faced with this difficulty, one may advocate for a form of Spanish devoid of national color. Indeed, this seems to be what some clients are looking for. However, such an approach has serious shortcomings. First, because of the way the Spanish language has evolved, it is impossible to avoid some degree of national color; a peach is *melocotón*, which sounds Spanish, or *durazno*, which sounds Argentine, without “colorless” alternatives. Of course, one may avoid “color” by using multiple alternatives from different countries in the same text, but this would only create confusion in the audience as to the origin of the person writing or speaking, not additional clarity. Second, “colorless” Spanish, if such a thing were possible, may be as hard or harder to understand than “national” Spanish—witness the Spanish translations of Hegel or Heidegger, where the terminology of the original forces the translator to avoid local “color” (they are among the most obscure texts ever written in the Spanish language).

Finally, most masterpieces of Spanish prose, widely read in all Spanish-speaking countries, such as the works of Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, Borges, Alfonso Reyes, or García Márquez, are written in strongly national Spanish, but this has not in any way weakened their clarity or popularity. It is hardly possible to read a page by Unamuno or Ortega y Gasset without realizing that the writer is Spanish, not Uruguayan or Cuban. Nevertheless, they are among the most widely-read and clear pieces of nonfiction in the Spanish language. They are written in standard Spanish, not neutral Spanish, and they circulate throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

Throughout the centuries, the solution Spanish speakers and writers have developed for linguistic differences has not been to seek a nonexistent neutral or middle ground. The solution—and what the toothpaste makers, international businessmen, and film distributors really need—is a form of Spanish that can be understood by all readers or listeners. Not an impossible hybrid such as neutral Spanish, but rather a form of Spanish X, standard Spanish, or traditional Spanish, which readers and listeners from all countries would recognize. This language will vary depending on the audience to which a given text is directed.

Using standard Spanish is a necessary, but not a sufficient precondition for a text to be understandable in all Spanish-speaking countries. *Andá al boliche y traé birra y puchos* (“Go to the bar and bring beer and cigarettes”) is not generally understandable outside Argentina, and its use would be inadvisable in all other countries. In addition, *sobre las piezas dentales frota reis la mercadería gelatinosa que se os expende*, while correct standard Spanish, is a highly inadvisable
translation for instructions on a toothpaste box; toothpaste users in all countries would certainly be puzzled and misled by such instructions. The problem is not solved by “neutralizing” the Spanish, whatever that may be, but rather by using traditional or standard Spanish adjusted to the needs of the audience. This is true of any language. In fact, English, facing a vast array of national and local variants, is a viable means of communication throughout the English-speaking world (and beyond), without having to resort to a “neutralization” process.

The Monster Speaks

Neutral Spanish has been advocated not only for texts, but also for speech. “We need an interpreter who will speak neutral Spanish” is the request sometimes heard at international events. However, no such interpreter exists.

Spoken Spanish has many variants. Argentines, for instance, generally pronounce c’s, s’s, and z’s as phonetically identical; while Spaniards clearly distinguish the sound of c’s and z’s from identical; while Spaniards clearly distinguish the sound of s’s, at the end of words (“bueno día” instead of “buenos días”)—are avoided, etc. One may choose to call this type of speech neutral, but it is actually a mixture of different accents and pronunciations. A Spaniard will notice that z’s are pronounced in a “foreign” way, but will not be able to identify the speaker’s origin, since other elements of speech will have different country characteristics, including some from Spain. The same will happen to an Argentine, and so forth.

I have seen this type of Spanish amalgam at work in my own house. My father was born in Spanish Morocco, raised on the Spanish mainland, lived for many years in Uruguay and Paraguay, and in Argentina for 39 years. He spoke a basic Argentine Spanish with Andalusian traits (he put z’s everywhere), mixed with some words not used in Argentina and some pronunciations not heard in Argentina (pijama instead of piyama). One virtue this type of speech has is that it’s impossible to determine where the person comes from.

What conference organizers, cartoon producers, and other users of interpreter services want is clear Spanish that will be understood by all Spanish-speaking listeners, but this will not be achieved by the colorless language sometimes identified as neutral Spanish. There is some consensus among Spanish speakers that the clearest Spanish is spoken in Andean Colombia and in coastal Peru. However, these varieties of Spanish are clear because of the way words are pronounced and sentences built, and not because of the absence of local color. Andean Colombian Spanish is Andean Colombian Spanish, not neutral Spanish.

Advocates of “neutral Spanish” should consider that the type of language they think they want would exclude from the ranks of accepted speakers Miguel de Cervantes, Miguel de Unamuno, Octavio Paz, and members of the Real Academia Española, among others. It is a strange choice, and one unlikely to produce many friends among Spanish speakers.

The Monster Avoided

The “neutral Spanish” advocate may answer: “The fact is that, as you just mentioned, there are hundreds of local and national varieties of oral and written Spanish. We don’t care what you call it, but the fact is that we still need some type of lingua franca to overcome this linguistic mess.” The fact is that such lingua franca already exists and is called “correct Spanish,” “traditional Spanish,” “standard Spanish,” or for our purposes, “Spanish X.”

Let’s follow the life of a citizen of Tierra de Fuego, the uttermost part of the Spanish-speaking empire, to see how he copes with the linguistic difficulties posed by the variants of Spanish. I choose Tierra del Fuego not only because it’s remote, but also because it was the last part of the world (except for certain neighborhoods of Chicago) in which Spanish took hold as the dominant language. Until the end of the 19th century, little Spanish was spoken there; few Europeans lived there, and a good proportion of them spoke English.\footnote{Fuegian Spanish is a mixture of different varieties of Argentine Spanish, with some Chilean undertones.}
Our Fuegian citizen doesn’t learn “Spanish Spanish” or “standard Spanish” as something different from “Argentine Spanish.” Does this mean that he lives in linguistic isolation from the rest of the world? Does he travel with Argentine-Spanish dictionaries? Does he take courses in traditional Spanish or in neutral Spanish? No. If our Fuegian goes to a bookstore in his hometown and buys a book by García Márquez, does the book include a glossary for Fuegians, since García Márquez is Colombian? No. Oddly enough, the only books with glossaries he will likely find in a bookstore are those written in archaic Spanish or in rural Argentine Spanish: *El Mío Cid* is published in “bilingual” editions (i.e., translated into contemporary Spanish); “Martín Fierro,” the Argentine national poem, contains much terminology that is beyond the grasp of modern Argentine readers. Now suppose that our Fuegian goes to the cinema in Ushuaia or in Río Grande (Tierra del Fuego’s main towns) to watch a Spanish film, say, directed by Almodóvar. Will the film be subtitled? Again, no. True, some words will be used that are never used in Tierra del Fuego, and some verbs will be conjugated differently. Of course, this is part of the attraction of Spanish films. Linguistic usage is different from what it is in Argentina, but on no account is it different enough to render it incomprehensible to Argentines.

Now our Fuegian travels to Honduras. Does he tremble in anticipation of his trip from the airport to the hotel, not knowing what to say to the taxi driver? No, he will probably have a lively chat with the driver about weather, soccer, and other favorite topics, and both of them will likely be pleased to hear a different accent from the usual.

Then our Fuegian travels to Tijuana, the other end of Spanish America, and buys the newspaper. Does he ask the locals to help him with the language? No, except for baseball terminology, about which the Fuegian hasn’t the foggiest idea. (No baseball is played in Tierra del Fuego, so he would not understand it in Argentina, either.)

Finally, the traveling Fuegian visits the city of Jaca in the Spanish Pyrenees. He wants to order lunch. Will he go hungry, or will he have a fluent chat with the waiter, where the latter will describe some of the local dishes the Fuegian is not familiar with? It is only if the Fuegian ventures 50 miles to the north that his linguistic misadventures will begin. And that’s because French will be spoken, a different language entirely.

**The Vast Empire**

How did this vast linguistic empire to which the Fuegian belongs come into being? The Spanish empire (which did not produce a single idea in three centuries, as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, former Argentine president and writer, used to say) did have some major accomplishments: linguistic unity was one of them. Unity did not, and does not, mean uniformity. It meant and still means a common core, shared by all Spanish-speaking peoples who speak standard Spanish and traditional Spanish. Around this nucleus are constantly changing national and regional variations, but the nucleus is strong enough to allow fluent communication among hundreds of millions of Spanish speakers in many parts of the globe. This is the famous unity of the Spanish language, so dear to dictionary writers and to travelers.

This unity did not result from laws. Given the disrespect toward the rule of law in Spanish America, it would have been impossible to impose such linguistic consensus by legal obligation. It is, rather, the result of a shared value for language. No law forces millions of Latin Americans to follow the Real Academia Española’s rules, although a change of rules—abolishing ch’s and ll’s as letters of the Spanish alphabet, for instance—will be obeyed without hesitation by millions of Spaniards and Latin Americans. No pressure, no coercion, and no violence is involved, only an army of teachers ready to use and teach these rules.

Thus, our Fuegian, by the blue glaciers of his remote island, can comfortably read the works of García Márquez and the story of the man who remembered the first day he met the cold.

**The Monster Dismissed**

*E pluribus unum.* I cannot think of a better description of the Spanish language’s success. If it were inflexibly uniform, sooner or later it would be rejected by its users. Many decades ago, Borges clamored for a language adapted to our needs, a language that would reflect “the power of our summers.” We probably have that language, and it arose by adaptation and by maintaining a core common to all Spanish-speaking countries that allows us to understand, and be understood by Spanish speakers with very different backgrounds and experiences.

This advantage would not be strengthened by the creation of an impossible hybrid, neutral Spanish, a hybrid that would exclude practically everyone, since nobody speaks or writes neutral Spanish. We all write and speak hyphenated Spanish, as it were, from Castillian Spanish to Patagonian Spanish.
Flouting the rules at the Edinburgh Fringe
Photo: Pierre Misson

The Onionskin  By Chris Durban

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

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe claims to be the largest arts festival in the world, selling one million tickets every year.

Held each August, it draws huge crowds to performances by avant-garde theater groups and emerging talents at smaller venues outside the main program. Local businesses join in, catering to visitors’ needs and sponsoring selected events.

One such sponsor is the Royal Bank of Scotland, which last summer generously produced giant “Please mind the traffic” banners in the name of public safety. These were hung at the bank’s gateways on pillars marking the limit of the section of the Royal Mile closed to traffic during the festival.

To underscore the international nature of the Fringe, it was decided to make the warning message multilingual. Eleven foreign-language versions were thus commissioned, with results ranging from comical to totally incomprehensible.

Bemused French tourists were treated to S’il vous plaît a des objections la circulation, roughly “Kindly / (it) objects to / the traffic.”

For Marianne Kersbergen, who lives in the Netherlands, the Dutch is shaky, too. “In beden alstublieft het verkeer, the verb ‘to mind’ is translated as to ‘think about’/’consider’,“ says Kersbergen.

The Spanish was judged downright atrocious by U.S.-based translator Rob Croese. “Tenga inconveniente en por favor el tráfico is literally ‘Have a problem/disadvantage in please the traffic’,” he told The Onionskin.

Nor are things better up north. “Behaga sinne trafiken is totally incomprehensible to a Swede,” confirms Inga-Beth Hinchliffe, who translates from English into her native Swedish. “Behaga is the infinitive of the verb ‘to please,’ meaning to attract or appeal to somebody, while sinne means ‘the mind,’ as in inclination, mentality, or disposition.”

Our contacts confirmed similar flaws in Italian and German, not to mention two other versions that appear to be default-font texts in Central European languages. Curiously (or perhaps not), no effort was made to translate the warning into the languages used by Edinburgh’s own large immigrant community from the Indian sub-continent.

So what went wrong?

Royal Bank of Scotland refused to explain or even speculate, but raw computer-generated translation seems the most likely culprit. Word-by-word dictionary look-up by an amateur linguist is another possibility. Additional errors may have been introduced during manual transfer of the texts to the banners. In any event, basic rules of best practice in producing multilingual signs were clearly not part of this performance, however well-intended.

Once again from the top, a few rules of thumb for would-be sponsors of the arts:

• Do not use translation software for signs. True, you can’t get much cheaper than free. But the results are hopelessly unreliable—proof that you get what you pay for.

• Don’t do it yourself, however tempting this may seem. (“It’s only four words and we’ve got a dictionary.”). The fewer words, the more work each one does, and the more important it is that they fit together properly.

Pedestrian Xing in Scotland—Curtain!
Neutral Spanish: Is it Necessary? Does it Exit? Continued from p. 46

Translators can write in correct Spanish and adjust the texts to the needs of their readers, as with any other language. It will be perfectly understood.

Notes
1. See Argentine Decree 286/1981, art. 1(d).
2. Dubbing of foreign programs in Argentina was promoted by Law 22.285.
4. For example, dictionaries of Argentine Spanish usage (*argentinismos*) are generally large volumes, covering 400 pages or more. There are also similarly large dictionaries for Spanish usage in specific provinces and cities (especially Buenos Aires) in Argentina.
5. In fact, the masterpiece of Fuegian literature, L. Bridge’s *Uttermost Part of the World*, was written in English.

Yet even then home-brewed translations were the rule, including marmalade made *sans préservatifs* (without condoms)—a classic mistranslation of “No preservatives.”

Times change—M&S pulled out of France in January 2002 as company finances deteriorated—but some things remain the same. Thus, a U.S. reader assures us that Original Pringles brand potato chips sold in her country are made without condoms to this day, at least in packaging produced for Spanish-speaking snackers, marked *Sin Preservativos.*

*Plus ça change.…*

With thanks to Bob Blake, Laura Kanost, Lucy Larwood, Kay McBurney, and Pierre Misson.
The Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé lies at the intersection of two collections from different media traditions. In the electronic media tradition, the Grand Bilingue belongs to an electronic dictionary collection. In the print media tradition, the contents of the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé belong to a print collection of bilingual dictionaries called Words, published by Éditions Ellipses in France. The Grand Bilingue electronic dictionary collection regroups five bilingual English↔French dictionaries: Dictionnaire des affaires; Dictionnaire juridique et économique; Dictionnaire d’informatique; Les Dictionnaires de l’Entreprise (Affaires, Juridique, Informatique); and the Dictionnaire de la santé, which is reviewed here. These otherwise separate dictionary tools constitute an electronic dictionary collection in that each may be consulted using a single Grand Bilingue platform. The contents of the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé also draw on the Words bilingual print dictionary collection, and in particular the Sciences de la santé volume, compiled by a joint team of linguists and medical professionals.

The expanded Version 3.1 of the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé contains 110,000 translations, which span a definitely modern scope, including preventive care, medical ethics, humanitarian medicine, and alternative medicine and healthcare.

The Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé is PC-based. It runs with Windows® 95, Windows® 98, Windows® Millennium, Windows® 2000, Windows® XP or Windows® NT, and requires 8 MB of RAM and 6 MB of hard drive space when you store the application on your computer. Technically, the installation is designed to be quick and easy with a standard installation Wizard. Once installed, you may call up the program from the start menu or directly from the toolbar of major applications such as Microsoft® Word, Outlook, Lotus, Word Pro, or Corel® WordPerfect.

The most innovative design feature of the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé is the single access platform to several dictionaries. Assuming that you purchase the five-volume collection of Grand Bilingue electronic dictionary tools, you then have access to any one of the dictionaries using the same window. This bypasses the extra step of calling up each of the dictionaries separately, saves time, and ultimately helps to unclutter your desktop when you are working on a document that spans several lexical domains. A second innovative feature resides in the “P” (for “Personalization”) function, which allows you to add your own entries to the dictionary. The “P” function opens as a small window with two fields, one marked with a French flag icon and the other with an American flag icon. These fields allow you to type in a word or expression that is not contained in the corpus, along with the translation, both of which you will then be able to retrieve using the search functions of the tool. Beyond these two innovative features, the design of the application is congenial and transparent, which means that once you have launched the dictionary, you will not need to invest any time to learn how it works. The interface is simple and straightforward (see Figure 1). And the one-page Quick Start User flyer included in the packaging really does contain all that you need to know to use the tool.

The Grand Bilingue offers three search modes: open [libre]; root [racine]; and string [mot]. In the open mode, you may search for any word or combination of words, regardless of their order. This is useful for locating expressions when you do not know under which word to search. For example, say you are searching for a translation of the term “cellule de Nageotte” and you do not know whether to search “cellule” or “Nageotte.” You may type either or both in any order and the tool retrieves the expression and a translation. In the root mode, you may search for any root word at least two characters long. Thus, you can type just the first two letters of any word searched, which saves time, especially with long words in medical terminology. Finally, in the string mode, you may search for any expression, with a parameter setting of up to eight words.

It is perhaps in terms of content that the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé becomes more significant. I was able to test the tool during the...
For example, among the time-saving and useful hits in the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé (unlisted in TERMIUM®), I found translations for the following French terms: *fibrino-crurique* [fibrinocruoric]; *albumino-rachie* [protein level of cerebrospinal fluid]; *pleiocytose* [pleiocytosis]; *crises convulsives subintrantes* [subintrant seizures]; *tuphos* [typhoid state]; *cellule de Nageotte* [Nageotte’s cell]; *mouvement choréique* [choreic movement]; and *ballisme* [ballism]. While the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé will supply you with neither context for the translations nor any definitions and explanations for a particular word or expression, this quick test of the tool suggested that this was definitely a useful supplement to a vastly larger corpus dictionary, such as TERMIUM®. And usage with subsequent translations in both the medical domain and with medical patents has consistently confirmed this initial experience.

In sum, for translators who do translations in the medical domain, the Grand Bilingue—Dictionnaire de la santé appears to be a useful supplement—in the manner of its excellent glossaries—to major dictionary resources such as TERMIUM®. Furthermore, if you decided to purchase the whole collection of Grand Bilingue dictionaries, you would no doubt also enjoy the single platform access.

Notes
myself, so soon! I wanted to continue
reading it. It is a practical and useful
book, and when you read about
Susana’s and George’s experiences
and advice, it makes you realize that
translators and/or interpreters really
do have many common experiences.

If you are thinking of becoming a
translator, Susana discusses the reasons
why someone may want to pursue this
profession. We learn that it is not so
easy to do, and it takes much more than
knowing how to speak another language
to be successful. In other words, it is not
the easiest way to make a living.

Susana explains that a translator
must be a well-rounded individual
with a solid educational background
and familiarity with the cultures of
the target and source languages. She
recommends that you analyze your
situation before deciding to become a
freelance translator. If you feel that
this is the profession for you, make
sure to pave the way to independence
before you jump.

Susana tells you how important it
is to keep up with recent technology,
to become familiar with the computer
and its software applications, to do
research, and to continue to educate
yourself by taking training courses
and attending workshops if you want
to improve your chances of success.
Susana says: “Knowledge does not
take up any space in your suitcase and
nobody can take it away from you.”

She tells you how important it is to
join organizations such as ATA, the
New York Circle of Translators
(www.nyctranslators.org), and to take
ATA’s certification exam for transla-
tors. Some other topics she discusses
include: mentoring; building up con-
tacts; where the jobs are; what you
should do if you decide to freelance;
what tools you will need; how to
present your image; how to maintain
relations with clients; and how much
you should charge. Her advice: “hon-
esty is the best policy.”

Susana’s co-author, George
Fletcher, tells us about his experi-
ence when he came to New York in
1979, ready to offer his services in
translation, and how difficult it was
at the beginning. He tells how much
he had to work until he became the
owner and founder of Globe
Language Services, Inc. His presenta-
tion is twofold: discussing the
applied theory and practice of trans-
lation and anecdotal observations
from an agency owner’s perspective
on what makes a good translator, and
discussing how to establish oneself
in the profession.

George talks about what translation
is and what it means to be a
translator. He discusses how one goes
about becoming a professional, the
basics of translation, and translation
as a business. There is a sample of a
Chinese into English translation and a
discussion about the situation
encountered when a translation has to
be improved before submitting a final
copy to the client. George tells how
important it is to be accurate when
you translate any document, since a
mistake could be detrimental. He
talks about the importance of gaining
clients first, and of always com-
pleting the job correctly, on time, and
to the client’s satisfaction.

*Beginning Translator’s Survival
Kit* is an excellent book which anyone
just coming into the profession
should read. However, the analysis of
translation as a profession is for all of
us in the business of translation.

Susana and George, thanks for
sharing your experiences, thoughts,
and recommendations with us!

If you want to buy the book, to
obtain the Pre-Authorized Order Form
go to: www.globelanguage.com. The
proceeds of the book will go to The
New York Circle of Translators, a non-
profit organization.

**About the Authors:**

*Susana Greiss* was born in Russia
and grew up in Brazil, France, and
Uruguay. She studied and graduated
as a bilingual secretary from the
British School in Montevideo. After
living and working as a trilingual
secretary in Uruguay, Argentina, and
Brazil, she came to the U.S. in 1960,
where her knowledge of languages
led to positions as a translator. She
has a bachelor’s and a master’s
degree in translation from the City
College of New York (CUNY). She
has been freelancing since 1980, and
is certified by ATA in five language
combinations. She founded ATA’s
Slavic Languages Division. For 20
years, until recently, she was a grader
for the English→Spanish and
Spanish→English language exam
combinations for ATA’s Certification
Program. She also serves as a mentor
in ATA’s Mentoring Program. She
was awarded ATA’s Alexander Gode
medal for her contribution to the pro-
fession in 2002, and is a lifetime
honorary member of ATA and the
New York Circle of Translators
(NYCT). Within the NYCT, she has
served as secretary, chair of its
Continuing Education Committee,
administrator, and founder of the
Russian Language Special Interest
Group, as well as of the Spanish
Language SIG, now known as
In Trades.

*George Fletcher* is from Oklahoma

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*Continued on p.54*
Recently, a faithful member of our organization sent an advertisement for a potency enhancer both to the Translation Inquirer and his counterpart at “Humor and Translation.” A phrase in it, probably from “Engrish,” “...can construct up in the trunk,” was both funny for Mark Herman and puzzling for yours truly. It reminded me of just how much unconscious humor is an indispensable staple in the funny part of our business. But does anybody recall the late comedian and raconteur Jean Shepherd (1921–1999)? One of the cornerstones of his theory was that unconscious humor is the very best kind, and it took guts for a stand-up comic to assert that. Without unconscious humor, we would have far fewer chuckles to report to each other in our profession.

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

New Queries

(E-I 1-05/1) Very interesting! A ProZer would like to know how to render a university title, Vice President for Financial Affairs, into Hebrew. The official’s name appended the words and treasurer at the end, but presumably that is not part of the problem.

(E-I 1-05/2) Three items were listed among the technical data on a refrigerator. The other two, error code and indoor unit number, were at least doable. But how about indoor unit’s refrigerant address? Was it the address at which refrigerant (i.e., a substance) could be obtained? And if so, what would be good Italian for this?

(E-Sp 1-05/3) Cross-sell and up-sell are unknown concepts in the following phrases concerning what a travel agent can do: “...shopping screen that enables the agent to see real-time rates and availability, plus additional features or products (up-sell, cross-sell, value-added, destination services). What kind of selling are travel agents doing in the above bold-print terms?

(E-Sp 1-05/4) The varsity athletic letter (B, S, etc.) is the subject of this query, the translator having some difficulty in understanding just what it is, let alone the cross-cultural difficulties involved in producing good Spanish for this very died-in-the-wool North American concept. Any ideas?

(F-E 1-05/5) A person boasted in her curriculum vitae that she completed the following project in connection with horse breeding: “Étude: Différences apportées par la récolte des étaisons à vagin ouvert.” What to make of the last two words?

(F-E 1-05/6) This query has to do with a case report from an open-label, controlled, randomized study. The words in bold print are the problem: “Nom du traitement: S’il s’agit d’un vaccin, préciser le numéro de lot et le rang vaccinal.” Can anyone supply a proper term for the latter?

(G-E 1-05/7) A patent text contained a term, “Rechtsbeständigkeit,” which a ProZ user tripped over. Here’s the context sentence: “XX, YY und ZZ sind derzeit an einem Verfahren vor dem Europäischen Patentamt beteiligt, in dem die Rechtsbeständigkeit bestimmter YY-Patente geprüft wird.” What sort of legal status might this be? Actually, it would probably be helpful to know that the original target language was Polish.

(I-E 1-05/8) Used to describe a type of car, “macchina di rappresentanza” was a puzzle for a ProZ member. What is it?

(Lack of knowledge of Italian, the Translation Inquirer cannot provide a subject area for this one, but it appears that the context sentence is great for this query about “bicchiere di alloggiamento.” The sentence reads: “L’alloggiamento tubo-raccordo non avviene infatti per pressatura o serraggio a pressione ma dalla perfetta aderenza cerata della bicchiere di alloggiamento.” Can we try?

(R-E 1-05/10) Obviously referring to a procedure that does not exist in the West, a text stated: “Необходимо предоставить свидетельство о выпуске из квартиры лиц, которые в ней не проживают.” One comment on this in Russian was: “киня гурубо российская. No doubt about that!

(Sp-E 1-05/11) In the law and patents field, what is a “condición suspensiva”? Further explanation is available in Spanish: “Es la condición que conforme con el artículo 1536 del Código Civil, se tendrá por cumplida una Acreencia se convierta en una Acreencia Admitida.”

Replies to Old Queries

(E-Sp 9-04/1) (never gets old): Though not a native Spanish speaker, Ricky Lacina tried to imagine what it might sound like if it referred to an honor or an award. Maybe, “Nunca es por demás escuchar, leer que...”

(E-Sp 10-04/5) (experience that tantalizes and stimulates...): Graciela Daichman likes “seduce,” which actually sounds very pleasing in Spanish: “…una experiencia inviolable que seduce y estimula los sentidos.”

(F-E 9-04/4.a) (fils et pinces): Kathleen Davis, a new member, suggests cutting edges and punches for this, if the machine shop departments are subdivided by the function of the machine tools used in the depart-
ments. For (4.b) (“opérateur machine à broche”), she offers broaching machine operator, the machine involved being a large one that uses a broach, or spindle, to punch holes of varying shapes into sheet metal, or possibly even thicker metal plate.

(F-E 9-04/5) (batons rumpus): This, according to Ricky Lacina, means without method, by fits and starts, rambling, desultory. If in reference to speaking, then, according to the Robert, it would be to talk about this and that. Maybe it is going too far to say that there could be anything of no holds barred in the phrase.

(F-E 9-04/6) (parcours-découverte): Ricky Lacina, understanding that the context is an exhibition in a museum, likes discovery path, trail, route, as in a walk-through exhibition in which the visitor follows arrows or a yellow line.

(G-E 10-04/7) (Mat-Konst): John Kinory explains it this way: varnishing materials for surface varnishing are costed by the manufacturer when procuring the material. K2 is probably a costing code for this particular Mat Konst, which is a synthetic varnish. Due to wastage (resulting from many factors, such as the fact that they change the color halfway through the day, and any material still in the spray gun is simply discarded, there is a deviation from this index equal to 140%. In other words, they need to overprocure by 140%. K2 probably refers to a particular column in a spreadsheet, or some such index.

(Pt-E 9-04/9) (propedēuticas): In French higher education, says Ricky Lacina, there is something called the “propedeutique” year, something like the introductory year at the university, which in medicine school would be the introductory courses. She consulted Harrap’s, which informed her that it was an intermediate year of study at the start of a degree course in arts or science. In other words, a core course, or in this case, pre-med. Gabe Bokor likes Introduction to ... or, using the classic cliche of American higher education, [topic of course] 101, as in Surgery 101.

(R-E 10-04/8) (торможение процесса): Gabe Bokor likes may slow down the process. For Rob Valliere, it could simply be the figurative use of the word торможение, in the sense of braking, slowing down. It could be translated simply as ...could slow down the process....

(Sp-E 8-04/10) (forronciar): This comes from a transcribed tape, so Sabine Michael warns that the word might not have been heard correctly. The past participle “-ado” seems incorrect, and, therefore, the verb ending may have been “-arlo” (verb with personal pronoun). This is much more likely to follow the verb “quiero,” and can easily be misheard on a tape. She is a veteran transcriber of tapes and in this instance would use a line _________ to indicate that this portion of the tape is inaudible.

(Sp-E 9-04/11) (Colombian higher education cluster): In this group, says Ricky Lacina, “nombre asignatura” probably means name of subject. (11.a) “Cátedra rosarista N” is probably a chair of something, an academic chair; the “rosarista” remains a puzzler. She believes transcript might work for (11.b) “cuadro resumen de créditos.”

(Sp-E 9-04/12) (contacto de disparo): If the context is power transformers, as initially indicated, then Ricky Lacina believes it to be contact point or just contact. Gabe Bokor suggests trip switch. Laura Bush states that it is a trip contact, a type of circuit breaker used by utility companies in transformers. When the two pieces come into contact, they trip (i.e., break) the circuit. Laura’s husband has a co-worker educated in Venezuela, and both men work for a utility company. The colleague is a good source of information when questions like this come up.

My hat is off (there, I just tipped it) to all of you who contributed.
Humor and Translation  By Mark Herman

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

Gimpel the Simple

"Who's the Fool? Isaac Bashevis Singer in America," an article by Naomi Seidman, discusses Saul Bellow’s 1953 translation of Singer’s short story “Gimpel the Fool.” The article appeared in the Summer 2004 issue of Pakn Treger (pp. 18-23), the publication of the National Yiddish Book Center. Though “Gimpel the Fool” was not the first of Singer’s works to appear in English, it was Bellow’s translation that launched Singer’s career in the English-speaking world. According to Seidman, “All agreed that Bellow’s translation was a masterpiece,” and that Bellow had succeeded in creating an English voice to mirror Singer’s Yiddish.

Yet, Seidman’s article is concerned mainly with the “measurable losses” of Bellow’s translation, which, as her explanations make plain, are not just losses, but outright distortions and falsifications.

First and most obvious is the title. Bellow translates two different Yiddish words into English as “fool.” The story opens: “I am Gimpel tam. I don’t consider myself to be a nar.” Bellow’s translation is: “I am Gimpel the fool. I don’t consider myself foolish.” But tam means “simple” or “innocent” and has positive as well as negative connotations, whereas nar is the purely negative “fool.” Another loss is Bellow’s failure to render into English the ability of Yiddish to pack both contempt and affection into a single word. This is most notable in the word Yoyzel, a diminutive of the name “Jesus,” which, as a diminutive, implies genuine affection, and, in context, also implies genuine contempt.

Indeed, all of the (mainly anti-) Christian references in the story were censored, probably by the editor Eliezer Greenberg prior to Bellow’s making the translation. But these references are essential to the story. Among other things, “Gimpel tam” is a retelling of the Jesus story, with Gimpel cast in the role of Joseph and Gimpel’s unfaithful wife Elka cast in the role of Mary. Gimpel is indeed foolish, the censored lines imply, because he is willing to believe the one absurdity that no other Jew has ever believed; that, despite the evidence, Elka (and Mary) were virgins when they married. According to Seidman, Greenberg’s censorship “does more than just skip over the anti-Christian sentiments in the story; it also contributes to the erasure of the entire (often comic) tradition of Jewish attitudes toward Christianity.”

Will a new and accurate translation of “Gimpel tam” ever appear in English, overcoming both political correctness and what is now more than 50 years of “tradition”? Will such a translation, no matter how good it is, be able to replace or even complement that of Bellow? Will traduttore traditore! ever not apply?

Dictionary Reviews Continued from page 51

and Texas. He has a bachelor’s degree in Spanish, a teaching certificate from Oklahoma University, an M.A.T. in Russian from Indiana University, and an Ed.D. in higher education (Russian and Spanish) from Oklahoma State University. He traveled and studied in the Soviet Union and Latin America. He earned his certification as a Spanish→English translator in 1987. He is the founder of Globe Language Services, Inc. in New York. He has published numerous articles, as well as education and language books on the Soviet Union/Russia and Chile. He is an adjunct associate professor of translation at New York University.

Gloria Barragán has an M.S. in banking and money management and a B.S. in management and communications from Adelphi University. She holds certificates in the Foundations of Financial Planning (College of Financial Planning) and General Translation (New York University), in addition to a translation diploma from the Colegio Mayor in Bogotá, Colombia. She was a private banker for 16 years, and currently teaches translation at New York University. Contact: gabarr@optonline.net or gbarrg@aol.com.

It’s Not Too Early To Plan!

2005 ATA Annual Conference

Seattle, Washington November 9-12
As the ATA Certification Program has grown in scope, complexity, and stature over the past decades, it has also increased in professionalism. We have come to expect more and more of graders, language chairs, committee members, and committee chairs. Twenty years ago, most graders worked in isolation; the only face-to-face grader training consisted of one session at the annual conference. Since then, the program’s volunteer leaders have placed a steadily increasing emphasis on communication within the program, standardization of grading practices, and grader training.

One change that facilitated this trend was the decision to divide the leadership responsibilities between two volunteers. In 1997, when Shuckran Kamal was appointed to chair the Certification (then Accreditation) Committee, Celia Bohannon agreed to serve as deputy chair. She remained in that position when Lilian Novas Van Vranken became chair three years later. As the program continued to grow, the responsibilities of both positions multiplied. Shuckran and Lili steered the committee, communicated with ATA leaders and members, guided policy decisions, and saw the program through significant changes. Meanwhile, Celia served as unofficial secretary to the program and the committee. She maintained program files dating to 1981, recorded the minutes of Certification Committee meetings, managed ongoing changes to the Grader Handbook (instructions and guidelines for graders), and contributed to the revision of Certification Program policies and procedures and materials for candidates.

Over time, Celia has taken on miscellaneous other tasks, from proofreading English test passages to participating in committee taskforces. A frequent contributor to the Certification Forum, she has advocated for the program elsewhere as well. But graders know her best as the person chiefly responsible for introducing them to a robust and intricate new grading system introduced in 2002. Since 1997, Celia has designed and facilitated training workshops for language chairs at their annual meeting and for all graders at the annual conference. The spring session is a day and a half long; the conference sessions have expanded from one to two, then four, then seven. This year, Celia even managed to post the conference workshops online for graders who missed the live events.

Whew! I’m getting tired just writing about all Celia has done—and I’ve only scratched the surface of her unofficial job description. But, as Lili Van Vranken announced at the ATA annual meeting in Toronto, Celia has decided that the time has come to step down from the committee and scale back her involvement with the Certification Program.

I cannot begin to calculate how many hours Celia has given to ATA and the Certification Program. She is creative, funny, intelligent, entertaining, tactful, and modest. We owe her an enormous debt of gratitude that we can never repay.

When Celia told us of her decision, she suggested with a smile that we should look for three people to replace her. Indeed, we are committed to splitting off some of the responsibilities from that job description to make it more manageable and less imposing. Also, in recognition of the importance of grader training, we intend to convert the volunteer position of grader trainer to a paid position. At the same time, we are expanding the responsibilities of the grader trainer by adding the goal of developing an online grader training component.

Here is the position we are advertising:

**Grader Trainer: Candidate should have demonstrated leadership and organizational skills, along with excellent communications and computer capabilities. Candidate should be deadline oriented and have a proven track record creating and delivering training programs. A well-grounded knowledge of the current certification program is preferred. Compensation is competitive and paid on a per-project basis. If interested, please send resume, cover letter, and compensation expectations to Terry Hanlen, Certification Program Manager, terry@atanet.org, fax: (703) 683-6122. No calls. EOE.**

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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. 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.
ATA Chapters, Affiliated Groups, and Other Groups

ATA Chapters
Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT)
P.O. Box 12172
Atlanta, GA 30355
Tel: (770) 587-4884
aaitinfo@aait.org • www.aait.org

Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI)
318 Bandock Drive
Durham, NC 27703
Tel: (919) 577-0840
catiweb@pobox.com • www.catiweb.org

Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA)
606 John Anthony Drive
West Chester, PA 19382-7191
Tel: (215) 222-0955
devinney@temple.edu
www.fortunecity.de/lindenpark/kuenstler/59/dvta.htm

Florida Chapter of ATA (FLATA)
P.O. Box 14-1057
Coral Gables, FL 33114-1057
Tel/Voice: (305) 274-3434
Fax: (305) 387-6712
info@atafl.org • www.atafl.org

Mid-America Chapter of ATA (MICATA)
6600 NW Sweetbriar Lane
Kansas City, MO 64151
Tel: (816) 741-9441 • Fax: (816) 741-9482
translate@kc.rr.com • www.ata-micata.org

Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (MATI)
542 S Dearborn Street, Suite 1060
Chicago, IL 60605
Tel: (312) 427-5450 • Fax: (312) 427-1505
moirapujols@aol.com • www.matiata.org

National Capital Area Chapter of ATA (NCATA)
P.O. Box 5757
Washington, DC 20016-5757
Tel: (703) 255-9290 • Fax (202) 234-5656
johnvaquez@msn.com • www.ncata.org

New York Circle of Translators (NYCT)
P.O. Box 4051, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051
Tel: (212) 334-3060
president@nyctranslators.org
www.nyctranslators.org

Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA)
33425 Bainbridge Road
Solon, OH 44139
Tel: (440) 519-0161
js@jill-sommer.com • www.ohiotranslators.org

Northern California Translators Association (NCTA)
P.O. Box 14015
Berkeley, CA 94712-5015
Tel: (510) 845-8712 • Fax: (510) 883-1355
ncta@ncta.org • www.ncta.org

Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS)
P.O. Box 25301
Seattle, WA 98165-2201
Tel: (206) 382-5642
info@notisnet.org • www.notisnet.org

Southern California Area Translators and Interpreters Association (SCATIA)
P.O. Box 34310
Los Angeles, CA 90034
Tel: (818) 725-3899 • Fax: (818) 340-9177
info@scatia.org • www.scatia.org

Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA)
Minnesota Translation Lab
University of Minnesota
218 Nolte Center
Minneapolis, MN 55455
mtl@tc.umn.edu • www.umtia.org

Affiliated Groups
Iowa Interpreters and Translators Association (IITA)
P.O. Box 7631
Urbandale, IA 50323
Tel: (515) 866-5738 • Fax: (515) 278-5841
info@iitanet.org • www.iitanet.org

Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA)
P.O. Box 433
Salt Lake City, UT 84110
jcallemann@aol.com
www.stampscapes.com/utia

Other Groups
This list gives contact information for translation and interpretation groups as a service to ATA members. Inclusion does not imply affiliation with or endorsement by ATA.

American Literary Translators Association (ALTA)
The University of Texas at Dallas
Box 830688 Mail Station JO51
Richardson TX 75083-0688
Tel: (972) 883-2093 • Fax: (972) 883-6303
www.literarytranslators.org

Association of Language Companies (ALC)
1911 N Fort Myer Drive, Suite 702
Arlington, VA 22209-1605
Tel: (800) 338-4155 (within North America)
(703) 812-0883 • Fax: (703) 875-0301
info@alcus.org • www.alcus.org

Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA)
P.O. Box 13331
Austin, TX 78711-3331
Tel: (512) 707-3900
president@aattia.org • www.aattia.org

California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)
345 S Hwy 101, Suite D
Encinitas, CA 92024
Tel: (760) 635-0273 • Fax: (760) 635-0276
ccia345@earthlink.net • www.ccia.org

Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)
P.O. Box 804595
Chicago, IL 60680-4107
Tel: (312) 836-0961
webmaster@chicata.org • www.chicata.org
Colorado Translators Association (CTA)
941 Cedwick Street
Lafayette, CO 80026
tel: (720) 890-7934
kathy@kdtranslations.com
www.cta-web.org

Delaware Translators Network (DTN)
2401 Pennsylvania Avenue #912
Wilmington, DE 19806
tel: (302) 655-5368
levinx@cs.com

El Paso Interpreters and Translators Association (EPITA)
1003 Alethea Place
El Paso, TX 79902
tel: (915) 532-8566 • Fax: (915) 544-8354
grdelgado@aol.com

Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA)
P.O. Box 421343
Houston, TX 77242-1343
tel: (713) 202-6169
www.hitagroup.org

The Kentucky Translators and Interpreters Association (KTIJA)
P.O. Box 7468
Louisville, KY 40257-0468
tel: (502) 548-3988
E-mail: vapues@yahoo.com

Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association (MITA)
712 Cornfield Drive
Arlington, TX 76017
tel: (817) 417-4747
www.dfw-mita.com

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)
603 Stewart Street, Suite 610
Seattle, Washington 98101
tel: 206-267-2300 • Fax: 206-626-0392

New England Translators Association (NETA)
672 Salls Road
Greensborough Bend, VT 05842
tel: (802) 533-9228
info@netaweb.org • www.netaweb.org

New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association (NMTIA)
P.O. Box 36263
Albuquerque, NM 87176
tel: (505) 352-9258 • Fax: (505) 352-9372
uweschroeter@prodigy.net
www.cybermesa.com/~nmtia

The Translators and Interpreters Guild (TTIG)
962 Wayne Avenue, Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD 20910
tel: (301) 563-6450 • (866) 563-6456
Fax: (301) 563-6020
info@ttig.org • www.ttig.org

Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society (WITS)
P.O. Box 1012
Seattle, WA 98111-1012
tel: (206) 382-5690
www.witsnet.org

International Groups
FIT
Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs/International Federation of Translators (FIT)
2021 Avenue Union, Bureau 1108
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2S9
tel: (514) 845-0413 • Fax: (514) 845-9903
secretariat@fit-ift.org
www.fit-ift.org

AUSTRALIA
Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators, Inc. (AUSIT)
PO Box 1070
Blackburn North VIC 3130 Australia
tel: +61 3 9997 9958
national@ausit.org • www.ausit.org

CANADA
Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta (ATIA)
P.O. Box 546
Main Post Office
Edmonton, AB T5J 2K8
tel: (780) 434-8384
www.atia.ab.ca

Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO)
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1202
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 7B7
tel: (613) 241-2846,
Toll-free: (800) 234-5030
Fax: (613) 241-4098
info@atio.on.ca • www.atio.on.ca

Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia (STIBC)
850 W Hastings Street, Suite 514, Box 34
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6C 1E1
tel: (604) 684-2940 • Fax: (604) 684-2947
office@stibc.org • www.stibc.org

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Institute of Translation & Interpreting (ITI)
Fortuna House
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MK9 2EU England
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info@ITI.org.uk • www.iti.org.uk

MEXICO
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Note: For more information on chapters or to start a chapter, please contact ATA Headquarters. Send updates to Mary David, ATA Chronicle, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Tel: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; Mary@atanet.org.
Upcoming Seminars and Conferences

Mid-America Chapter of ATA Annual Symposium
April 1-3, 2005
Overland Park, Kansas
www.ata-micata.org

Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI) Annual Symposium
Saturday, April 9, 2005
Charlotte, North Carolina
www.catiweb.org

ATA Financial Translation and Interpreting Conference
April 29-May 1, 2005
Jersey City, New Jersey
www.atanet.org

The Iowa Interpreters and Translators Association First Annual Conference
April 29-May 1, 2005
Des Moines, Iowa

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators 26th Annual Conference
May 13-15, 2005
Washington, DC
www.najit.org

IJET-16 Japanese-English Translation Conference
June 3-6, 2005
Chicago, Illinois
www.jat.org/ijet/ijet-16/index.htm

International Federation of Translators Statutory and General Congress
August 2-7, 2005
Tampere, Finland
www.fit-ift.org

Translating Eastern Europe: Art, Politics, and Identity in Translated Literature Conference
September 31-October 2, 2005
Kent, Ohio
Contact: Dr. Brian Baer (bbaer@kent.edu)

ATA Annual Conference
November 9-12, 2005
Seattle, Washington
www.atanet.org

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Christophe L. Réthoré
Charlottesville, VA
The ATA Chronicle | January 2005

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.

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March 26, 2005
Registration Deadline: March 11, 2005

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June 6, 2005
Registration Deadline: May 20, 2005

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February 25, 2005
Registration Deadline: February 11, 2005

Kansas
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April 3, 2005
Registration Deadline: March 18, 2005

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

North Carolina
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April 10, 2005
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Saturday and Sunday: Sessions will be presented in specific language combinations, based on languages requested by attendees, as well as in English. Don’t forget to visit the exhibits and market your skills by taking part in the Job Marketplace.

Language Combinations: Languages offered will be based on registrations received by the Early-Bird deadline, March 4. If there is insufficient registration in your primary pair, you will be offered a full refund. Attendees are asked to indicate specific language pairs, but are free to attend sessions in any language.

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