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Interpreting Bad News

Beginner’s Guide to Video Interpreting

Report on ATA’s Business Seminar

Looking Back Through Words: Frederick Ungar
The TransitNXT desktop concept supports the simultaneous execution of multiple translation and localization projects. With TransitNXT, an unlimited number of project views can be combined, allowing the selection of optimal work processes for each task based on resource availability.

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Don’t get hung out to dry
Tips for cleaning up your online profile

A listing in ATA’s online Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services or the Directory of Language Services Companies can be one of your most valuable member benefits.

Six Tips to Help You Make Contact

1. Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
2. Update your contact information, especially your e-mail address and phone numbers.
3. Use the “Additional Information” field, noting education and career experiences, unusual specialties, and any dialects you can handle. By using a “keyword” search, clients can find your services based on a set of very specific skills and experience.
4. List your areas of specialization.
5. Review your listing monthly to experiment with different wording or add new information that may set you apart from others.
6. List non-English-to-non-English language combinations, such as Portuguese into Spanish and French into Italian.

Make those updates online at www.atanet.org/onthedirectory/update_profile.php.
The ATA Chronicle

August 2009

In honor of International Translation Day 2009, the International Federation of Translators (FIT) invites translators around the world to take a fresh look at why and how it pays to join forces. Technology and changing markets have broken down barriers. Today, translators from around the globe can plug into a truly worldwide conversation that casts new light on traditional ways of working—and creates new opportunities. The official theme for this year’s celebration is “Working Together.”


The International Federation of Translators is the world federation of professional associations, bringing together translators, interpreters, and terminologists. It has 80 member bodies in over 60 countries and represents over 80,000 professionals. Please visit www.fit-ift.org.

Take Advantage of ATA’s Newest Member Benefit!

ATA’s Member-Provider Program

Who knows what products and services you need to do your job? Your peers. As a new benefit of ATA membership, ATA’s Member-Provider Program gives members the opportunity to offer their products and services to other ATA members.

Here are a few highlights:

- The program will showcase only those products and services developed by ATA members that are specific to the practice of translation and interpreting.
- Member-vendors will guarantee discounts or other favorable conditions of use to ATA members.
- Participating vendors and their products/services will be featured on ATA’s website and in The ATA Chronicle.

To learn how the program will work for you, please visit www.atanet.org/member_provider or contact ATA Member Benefits and Project Development Manager Mary David, mary@atanet.org.

International Translation Day

Working Together | September 30, 2009

In honor of International Translation Day 2009, the International Federation of Translators (FIT) invites translators around the world to take a fresh look at why and how it pays to join forces. Technology and changing markets have broken down barriers. Today, translators from around the globe can plug into a truly worldwide conversation that casts new light on traditional ways of working—and creates new opportunities. The official theme for this year’s celebration is “Working Together.”


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Two months ago we looked at crowdsourcing and how it relates to our profession. At about the same time the June issue was published, LinkedIn, a professional online network, reached out to its membership to see if its users who identified themselves as translators would be interested in localizing the LinkedIn website for free through a crowdsourcing model, similar to the one employed by Facebook. However, there is one critical distinction between Facebook and LinkedIn. Facebook is a social site, and while the often tortured translations produced by amateur volunteers look silly, the site makes no pretense of providing professional services. LinkedIn, on the other hand, is predicated on fostering professionalism.

Judging by the flurry of comments on Twitter and, paradoxically, on LinkedIn groups, to say that professional translators were not happy with LinkedIn’s outreach would be an understatement. To amplify the outcry of our members, an open letter from ATA’s president to LinkedIn’s chief executive officer was published and ATA’s Public Relations Committee drafted a press release for the media explaining why the LinkedIn effort is misguided (see www.atanet.org/pressroom/linkedIn_2009.pdf and page 9 in this issue).

Thinking about crowdsourcing in general and looking at the 10 rules of crowdsourcing identified by Jeff Howe, the crowdsourcing guru, some questions come to mind:

1. **Pick the right model.** Are you trying to create a platform for volunteers to contribute to a worthy cause or are you looking for cheap labor?

2. **Pick the right crowd.** Do you think that being bilingual qualifies a person to translate, or do you believe that professional translation requires professional translators? How would you feel about surgery done by an amateur surgeon?

3. **Offer the right incentives.** Is it right for a venture capital funded company to offer a token payment for professional services? Is there a difference between that and the same token payment offered by a charitable nonprofit organization?

4. **Keep the pink slips in the drawer.** Can you attract volunteer professionals who will deliver at the same consistently good level you are accustomed to from your paid staff or freelance translators?

5. **The benevolent dictator principle.** Can a volunteer community function without a community leader?

6. **Keep it simple and break it down.** Can you divide the work into the smallest possible components so that the crowd can divvy up the tasks? Will it work to have a collection of individual sentences translated by different people?

7. **Remember Sturgeon’s Law.** According to the science fiction writer Theodore Sturgeon, 90% of everything is crap. Can you achieve the desired quality?

8. **Remember the 10%, the antidote to Sturgeon’s Law.** Can you identify the best and brightest in the crowd to work on your project?

9. **The community is always right.** Who is in control? Is it possible to guide and control an online community?

10. **Ask not what the crowd can do for you, but what you can do for the crowd.** Does the project meet the needs of the crowd or rather the needs of the requestor of services? Will the crowd participate if its needs are not met?

Does all this mean that translation and crowdsourcing are incompatible? No. Crowdsourcing works if certain conditions are met. The most important of these is that the initiator of the crowdsourcing effort gives the crowd something that it wants. In the June issue we mentioned the successful crowdsourcing effort by Kiva Microfunds—this organization gives the crowd the opportunity to participate in a worthwhile effort to lift entrepreneurs in third world countries from poverty. People are drawn to participate if their specific needs are being met, be they emotional or economical. LinkedIn would surely attract a crowd of professional translators in exchange for fair compensation.

Like many others, LinkedIn—otherwise a fine organization with a thriving ATA group using it—failed to recognize the value that professional translators (and interpreters) provide. As an association, we have a voice. It is up to us to reach out, both to the public and within our own ranks, to make sure that the public appreciates our services and that we are providing good reason for these services to be appreciated.

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As an association, we have a voice.
June 30, 2009

Mr. Jeff Weiner
Chief Executive Officer
LinkedIn Corporation
2029 Sterling Court
Mountain View, CA 94043

VIA FACSIMILE

Dear Mr. Weiner,

LinkedIn recently contacted the professional translators on its books with a “customer survey” ostensibly seeking feedback to improve its service to them.

From the survey’s second question it was clear that the “survey” was in fact a disingenuous attempt to identify the lure that would land translators prepared to localize LinkedIn texts for free (“for fun”) or for a token payment (“a badge”).

On behalf of the largest association of professional translators in North America, the American Translators Association (ATA), I object to your initiative on two grounds.

1. Many of our members are happy to donate time and expertise to charities and not-for-profit institutions, and the ATA actively promotes contributions to deserving pro bono projects.

   But there is a difference between helping a charitable organization and providing a free service to a for-profit business like LinkedIn. Since we assume you employ professional programmers, marketers, accountants, legal advisers and copywriters, and pay them professional rates, your appeal for “translation volunteers” is incongruous to say the least. That a professional social networking site would use the profiles of its own clients to solicit free translations from career linguists is both disappointing and thoroughly unprofessional.

2. The crowdsourcing model cannot work unless volunteers are competent. Companies seeking global reach regularly lose face and money by relying on amateurs to translate key materials, and the embarrassing results are generally set right by professional translators.

Regardless of the area – law, IT, accounting, or translation – the safe bet for a global business is to work with a qualified professional. We urge you to practice the professionalism you preach and support your member translators rather than exploiting them.

Sincerely,

Jiri Stejskal, PhD
President of the American Translators Association
The ATA Board of Directors met July 25-26 in Chicago, Illinois. Here are some highlights:

**Budget:** The Board approved the July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010 budget. The budget forecasts $2.8 million in revenues, which is similar to the 2008-2009 budget.

**Proposed Bylaws Revisions:** The Board approved a motion to present to the membership proposed revisions to Article XII, Chapters and Divisions, of the Bylaws, to be voted on by the membership in this year’s elections. The proposed revisions create separate Articles for Chapters and Divisions to address their unique characteristics. While both chapters and divisions are components of ATA, chapters are separate entities. The proposed changes reflect the different relationships and attempt to streamline overall division governance and incorporate current practice.

In a related proposal, the Board approved a motion to present to the membership proposed revisions to Article VII, Other Committees, of the Bylaws. Specifically, this motion requests changing the name of the Finance Committee to the Finance and Audit Committee to underscore the importance the Board places on the annual independent audit of the Association’s finances, records, and financial controls.

**2014 Annual Conference Site:** The Board selected the Chicago Sheraton Hotel and Towers as the tentative site of the 2014 Annual Conference, pending final negotiations. The last ATA Annual Conference held in Chicago was in 1974.

**Divisions Task Force:** ATA President-elect and Governance and Communications Committee Chair (GCC) Nicholas Hartmann announced the formation of a GCC task force to examine the nature and role of special interest groups within the Association. Areas to be covered include: their function within the Association; finances; governance; mid-year conferences; and conference-related presentations.

**Guidelines for ATA Board Members:** The Board approved updating and revising the Guidelines for ATA Board Members. These guidelines, by which Board members must agree to abide, outline the commitments, responsibilities, and policies for ATA Board members.

**TBX Resolution:** The Board passed a resolution, based on a request from the Translation and Computers Committee and Standards Committee, urging translation technology vendors to...
Dealing with Metaphors

The May 2009 issue is very good. I especially appreciated John B. Jensen’s article, “On Becoming a Literary Translator,” but I can’t resist taking exception to one point about images and metaphors in that article. Mr. Jensen writes, “...we are often challenged to come up with such equivalences when nothing quite like the original will work.” My question is: why not use the original if that is at all possible?

I teach a college course entitled “Decoding Russian (and Russia).” After a few introductory sessions, I use aphorisms as decoding material; these usually involve metaphors. The students find that the Russian metaphors give them insight as to differences between thinking as they do and thinking as the Russians do. Converting metaphors found in a foreign language text into run-of-the-mill, everyday English metaphors is not doing readers a favor.

Marie J. Hall
Bar Harbor, ME

Dear Ms. Hall,

Thank you very much for your observations. I largely agree with you: I did say “when nothing quite like the original will work.” My first inclination in dealing with images and metaphors is to try to use a (nearly) literal translation, but it must transmit the meaning intended by the author and not lead the text too far from its required naturalness. I fully recognize that to rely on the “trite” and true from the native target-language stock of idioms, metaphors, and images could fail utterly to maintain the original work’s voice, texture, and creativity.

The role of the translator in the historical enrichment of the world’s languages is tremendous. Thousands of expressions pass linguistic and culture barriers constantly through the literal translation of metaphors and calquing of idioms (think biblical translation). As purveyors of such enrichment, we must be careful in deciding what actually “works” while respecting both languages and cultures.

John B. Jensen
Miami, FL

From the Executive Director Continued from p. 10

implement TBX (Term Base eXchange) as an import/export format. TBX is an open standard for exchanging structured terminological data that has been approved by the International Standards Organization and the Localization Industry Standards Association. For more information, please see www.lisa.org/Term-Base-eXchange.32.0.html.

The minutes of the meeting will be posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php. Past meeting minutes are also posted on the site. The next Board meeting will be October 31-November 1 in New York City. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.

American Translators Association
50th Annual Conference
New York City October 28-31, 2009 New York Marriott Marquis

For complete information and registration forms:
www.atanet.org/conf2009
Interpreting Bad News: What Interpreters Might Learn from Medical Training and Research

By Laura Espondaburu

If you feel uncomfortable interpreting bad news for a patient, you are not alone. Doctors, medical students, and other health professionals agree that delivering bad news is one of the hardest tasks of the profession. Bad news can take many forms and is not limited to emergency room visits. Interpreters can be called upon to deliver bad news at an oncology clinic, at a patient’s bedside, or during a genetic counseling interview, a fetal ultrasound, or even an eye exam.

As varied as the settings are for such news, there are just as many definitions of what constitutes “bad news.” For example, writing for American Family Physician, Gregg Vandekieft calls bad news “any news that drastically and negatively alters the patient’s view of his or her future.” Another article in Western Journal of Medicine states that “bad news results in a cognitive, behavioral, or emotional deficit in the person receiving the news that persists for some time after the news is received.” Although these definitions vary according to individual perception, the self-evident commonality among them is the fact is that you, as the interpreter, are going to be dealing with a highly emotionally charged situation. You need to be prepared for what will be encountered during these sessions so that you can adjust your delivery according to the situation.

Although there are no significant data available on the specific impact of these sessions on interpreters, a qualitative study among 43 professional medical interpreters identified some of the challenges for the interpreter, including:

• Dealing with tension associated with being torn between providing a strict interpretation and acting as an advocate or cultural broker.
Doctors, medical students, and other health professionals agree that delivering bad news is one of the hardest tasks of the profession.

- Overcoming personal difficulty interpreting bad news.
- Feeling abandoned or abused by clinicians.
- Experiencing difficulty striking a balance between focusing on the patient and focusing on the family.3

The purpose of this article is to review the literature on communication techniques practiced by doctors when delivering bad news, particularly the Project to Educate Physicians on End-of-Life Care (EPEC) guidelines, to see what interpreters might learn from these techniques. This literature seems to be a good starting point for a conversation among interpreters on best practices to interpret the delivery of bad news, and on how to train to do the best job possible under difficult circumstances.

We will focus on EPEC because it is the most widely used model to educate doctors on how to deliver bad news to patients.4 This model has six steps based on the SPIKES protocol (Setting, Perception, Invitation, Knowledge, Emotions, and Strategy and Summary) developed by a group of oncologists from Canada and the U.S.5

**Step 1: Setting Up the Interview**

During this stage, the doctor should plan what will be discussed with the patient during the interview, review the medical facts of the case, and make sure all of the necessary information is available. If they have limited experience with this type of interview, doctors are encouraged to rehearse what they will say. Doctors should also consider practical details, such as having a box of tissues available, preventing interruptions (holding calls and turning off pagers), and allotting adequate time. They should verify who needs to be present (e.g., other staff, family members, or people who are part of the patient’s support network). If it is a pediatric case, the doctor should talk with the parents first. If the patient or any of the family members do not speak the same language as the clinician, a trained medical interpreter should be scheduled to come in and assist. In these cases, EPEC-trained doctors may choose a triangular seating arrangement where both patient and interpreter are within view. It is up to them to create the right environment.

Although the EPEC recommendation includes briefing the interpreter, interpreters often arrive at a consult or patient’s bedside without prior knowledge of the situation they are entering. Despite this, there are some basic steps you can take to remain in control of the situation and establish a professional protocol:

- Whenever possible, ask the doctor to give you a few minutes before meeting the patient to tell you the words he or she will use to start the conversation, as well as the medical terms related to diagnosis and treatment. Write these down.

- If you are unfamiliar with a term, ask the doctor to explain, or to consider using a different approach to delivery so you can interpret adequately. Be frank about your level of comfort with either the medical information or the process of giving bad news. This will help the doctor decide the best way to approach the conversation.

- Explain the importance of avoiding medical jargon, euphemisms, and idioms.

- Remind providers to speak in short segments and to pause.

- Since these meetings might involve doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, hospice personnel, etc., it would be a good idea to write the names and titles of the individuals involved in advance. If not, write their names as they introduce themselves. These names will be very important for the patient and for family members in the days to follow.

**Step 2: Patient’s Perception**

During this portion of the interview the doctor will try to determine if the patient and his or her family know enough about the patient’s health to comprehend the bad news they will hear. Although these questions might seem to “beat around the bush,” the patient’s answers will determine how much information the doctor provides initially. As the interpreter, it is important that you not only interpret the questions accurately, but also make a special effort to render the register adequately to help the doctor get a feel for how much detail is appropriate. Typical questions asked by the doctor include:
• “What do you understand about your illness?”
• “How would you describe your medical situation?”
• “Have you been worried about your illness or symptoms?”
• “What did other doctors tell you about your condition or any procedures that you have had?”
• “When you first had symptom X, what did you think it might be?”
• “What did Doctor X tell you when he sent you here?”
• “Did you think something serious was going on when…”?

A critical piece of information for the doctor is whether the patient is in denial of his or her illness, or perhaps has unrealistic expectations regarding treatment. Thus, it is also important for you to “listen” for any signs of wishful thinking on the patient’s part, and to render these statements faithfully (e.g., “I’ll be better in a few days.”). Also keep in mind that silence might be a normal response when a patient anticipates bad news.

**Step 3: Obtaining the Patient’s Invitation**

The amount of information a patient wants to hear will vary greatly depending on such factors as personality, socioeconomic status, previous experiences with the health care system, and ethnicity. The role of the doctor at this point of the conversation is to assess how much the patient and family want to know. Some possible questions you might hear include:

• “If this condition turns out to be something serious, do you want to know?”
• “Would you like me to tell you the full details of your condition? If not, is there somebody else you would like me to talk to?”
• “Some people really do not want to be told what is wrong, but want their families to know. What do you prefer?”
• “Do you want me to explain exactly what I think is going wrong?”
• “To whom should I talk to about these issues?”

In addition to preparing accurate equivalents of these questions in the target language, you might find it helpful at this point in the interview to prepare for the possibility of conflict. Research indicates that the amount of information desired varies greatly among individuals, even within a small group. As such, it is important for the integrity of the communication that you look neutral if there are different opinions within the family group. Remember that being neutral is not enough—you also have to look it!

**Step 4: Giving Knowledge and Information to the Patient**

Doctors are trained to convey information to patients in a straightforward and compassionate manner. As previously mentioned, they also need to avoid monologues, jargon, and euphemisms. Doctors are taught to stop frequently, to check for understanding, and to use silence and body language as tools to facilitate the discussion. Special care must be taken to ensure that the message is not softened with vagueness. Here are some phrases a doctor might use:

• “I feel badly to have to tell you this, but the growth turned out to be cancer.”
• “I’m afraid the news is not good. The biopsy showed that you have uterine cancer.”

**The importance of our tone of voice, our pace, and our nonverbal communication should not be overlooked.**

• “Unfortunately there is no question about the test results: it’s cancer.”
• “The report of the amniocentesis is back, and it’s not what I had hoped. It showed that the baby has Down syndrome.”
• “I’m afraid I have bad news. The bone marrow biopsy shows your daughter has leukemia.”
Note that the phrase “I’m sorry” may be misconstrued by the patient or family to imply that the physician is responsible for the situation. It may also be misunderstood as pity. If you use this phrase when interpreting, adjust the wording to convey empathy (e.g., “I’m sorry to have to tell you this…”).

The phrases above might be some of the most difficult a person hears regarding the state of his or her health or the health of a loved one. It is your job as the interpreter to make sure that you have understood the doctor. If the words used are unfamiliar to you or have more than one meaning, ask for clarification. To the extent possible, mimic the speaker’s body language and tone. Wait a few extra seconds before jumping in to interpret. Do not rush your words.

As a way to start building skills in this area, translate the bulleted phrases in this section into your target language and practice saying them aloud. Consult books, native speakers, or any other resources you have access to until you know you have a clear yet compassionate vocabulary. Are these words simple? Are the expressions easy to understand, unambiguous, and devoid of jargon and euphemisms? How do you say “I’m sorry” in your target language? Can you say it with compassion without implying fault? Record yourself and listen. Write down possible translations until you are satisfied with at least one or two expressions.

**Step 5: Emotions and Responding to Feelings**

The response to bad news varies from patient to patient and within the same family. Common emotions are anger, sadness, love, anxiety, and relief. Individuals might also experience denial, blame, guilt, disbelief, fear, or a sense of loss. They might also feel the need to intellectualize reasons for the situation (“This happened because…”). Some people may try to leave the room or withdraw into themselves.

What happens when the patient is a child? This is a situation where it might be particularly difficult for the doctor to explain a diagnosis. These are some of the comments a doctor might make:

- “I imagine this is difficult news…”
- “You appear to be angry. Can you tell me what you are feeling?”
- “Does this news frighten you?”
- “Tell me more about how you are feeling about what I just said.”
- “What worries you most?”
- “I wish the news were different.”
- “I’ll try to help you.”
- “Is there anyone you would like for me to call?”
- “I’ll help you tell your son.”
- “Your Mom and Dad are sad now. They’ll feel better when you feel better.”

The doctor should allow time for the patient to express his or her immediate feelings, without rushing the patient or the family. The doctor may also remind families that their reactions are normal, may offer water or some other refreshment, or touch the patient’s shoulder or offer other reassurances. Be aware of intended silences designed to give the patient and family members time to process information. If being in a room full of silent people makes you uncomfortable, practice techniques to look relaxed and calm. Your demeanor should show respect and compassion. Restlessness may convey a sense of rush.

Avoid passing judgment on the patient’s or the family’s reaction, as this will interfere with your interpreting and will not add value to the communication. It is particularly important for interpreters to understand that each patient or family is unique and cannot be viewed as faithful representatives of an immutable culture. As the National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care explains: “Knowledge about a particular cultural norm does not translate directly into knowledge about a particular person or family system. Whether or not a particular individual or family system adheres to certain norms is something that needs to be confirmed.” Share any cultural information that you think might be relevant to help the doctor understand a particular reaction, and remind him or her that the most important thing is to ask the patient and his or her family how they are feeling.

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**Remember that being neutral is not enough—you also have to look it!**

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The ATA Chronicle ■ August 2009
Be frank about your level of comfort with either the medical information or the process of giving bad news. This will help the doctor decide the best way to approach the conversation.

Step 6: Strategy and Summary

The most significant goal of this step is to reassure the patient and family of the continuation of care. A study published in *Journal of Palliative Medicine* indicated that more than one meeting might provide better long-term results in the care of the terminally ill patient. Research data also suggest that providing an audiotape of the interview might be very useful to the patient, as well as giving written information or directing the patient to reliable online resources.

The importance of communicating information about a prognosis also varies for different patients. Before talking about a prognosis with a patient, a medical provider will ask some of these questions:

- “What are you expecting to happen?”
- “How specific do you want me to be?”
- “What experiences have you had with others with a similar illness?”
- “What experiences have you had with others who have died?”
- “What do you hope/dream will happen?”
- “What is your nightmare about what will happen?”

Some possible responses to a patient’s questions might include:

- “You have hours to days.”
- “You have days to weeks.”
- “You have weeks to months.”
- “You have months to years.”

A doctor might also be less specific:

- “One-third of people will do well a year from now and half will live about six months. Exactly what will happen for you, I don’t know”
- “We need to hope for the best while we plan for the worst.”

Again, as the interpreter, it is important to convey these messages accurately. To be successful, it helps to research equivalent phrases in the target language long before you are called upon to use them. Just as doctors are prone to euphemism and vague responses, your own attempt to soften the bluntness of the message may lead you to less specific expressions. You might also be tempted to distance yourself from the emotions by interpreting literally. To avoid this scenario, you would do well to study the following types of statements doctors can use to express compassion or to further gauge a patient’s emotional state and level of comprehension:

**Empathic Statements** (used while the patient and relatives regain composure, or to acknowledge the clinician’s own sadness):

- “I also wish the news were better.”
- “I can see how upsetting this is to you.”
- “I can tell you weren’t expecting to hear this.”
- “I know this is not good news for you.”
- “I am sorry to have to tell you this.”
- “This is very difficult for me also.”
- “I was hoping for a better result.”

**Exploratory Questions** (when the emotions are not clearly expressed):

- “How do you mean.”
- “Tell me more about it.”
- “Could you explain what you mean?”
- “You said it frightened you?”
- “Could you tell me what you’re worried about?”
- “You said you were concerned about your children. Tell me more.”

**Validating Responses** (lets the patient know that their feelings are legitimate):

- “I can understand why you felt that way.”
• “I guess anyone might have the same reaction.”

• “You were perfectly correct to think that way.”

• “Yes, your understanding of the reason for the tests is very good.”

• “It appears that you thought things through very well.”

• “Many other patients have had a similar experience.”

Epilogue

Having confidence in your ability to interpret bad news will help lower your anxiety level when working in a clinical environment. There are many ways to prepare for this type of situation. Start practicing now by translating the statements and questions included in this article into your target language. Once you have them written down, practice saying them aloud. Make an audio file of your rendition so you can play it back and evaluate tone and content. Continue to practice to acquire and preserve your skills. It would also be a good idea to consult books or articles in medical magazines written on grief and loss within your target language. The Internet also offers new possibilities for obtaining materials. Just be sure to use good judgment to determine if what you are reading is one person’s opinion or a well-researched study. Talk to as many members of your target language community as possible and ask them how they feel about this topic. Pay attention to the language they use and the expectations they have from providers. Ask them what words they feel are caring or uncaring, cold, or disrespectful.

One possible source for additional information is a study that was conducted to identify “caring behaviors” in doctors.12 Within the communication area, the researchers identified six practices that I find quite useful for interpreters:

• Listen, ask questions, and look for clues using your intuition.

• Inform as needed.

• Choose words carefully and check for meaning.

• Be direct and straightforward, but not abrupt.

• Be consistent in your verbal and nonverbal communication.

• Use a soft but confident tone.

• Let your pace be dictated by the patient.

• Maintain a comfortable appearance.

Although we, as interpreters, do not have control over the amount of listening a physician does or how much information is provided, we are responsible for choosing our words very carefully and checking for understanding. The importance of our tone of voice, our pace, and our nonverbal communication should not be overlooked. Imagine yourself as an actor dubbing dialogue in a movie: how you say things is just as important as what you say. Your position, your tone, and your body language are your means to create a compassionate environment. If you know beforehand that you will be interpreting in this type of situation, allow plenty of time for the session. Make sure to avoid all interruptions, as nothing is more important than communicating with the patient.

Finally, there is a very impor-
tant aspect of delivering bad news that I will not explore in this article, but I encourage interpreters to take into account. Keep in mind that delivering bad news can be traumatic for the interpreter. If you are part of a large organization, seek the support of employee programs through human resources. Large health institutions hold meetings you can attend or have counselors available to help you process what is known as secondary/vicarious trauma. If you are an independent contractor, you may need to read up on the topic and follow the advice of experts to stay emotionally healthy and to prevent what institutes like the American Academy of Family Physicians call compassion fatigue.13

By better understanding the dynamics of these types of sessions and learning more about delivering bad news, you, as an interpreter, can contribute to making the experience a little easier for the patients you serve.

Notes


6. Eggly, Susan; Louis Penner; Terrance Albrecht; Rebecca Cline; Tanina Foster, Michael Naughton; Amy Peterson; and John Ruckdeschel. “Discussing Bad News in the Outpatient Oncology Clinic: Rethinking Current Communication Guidelines.” Journal of Clinical Oncology (February 2006), 716-719.


The need to provide interpreting services is a pressing one in many countries. As technology evolves, the number of methods available for accessing interpreters is expanding as well. Video interpreting services have long been used for sign language interpreters to communicate with individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. On the spoken language side, the adoption of video interpreting for the mainstream remains somewhat slow, but is growing steadily.

How it Works

For most video interpreting settings, the interpreter is located in a remote location, while the two parties wishing to communicate are in the same room. A two-way videoconference enables the interpreter to see the individuals and vice versa. Figure 1 on page 20 shows the basic setup.

While it is possible to deliver video interpreting using a simple computer and a webcam, other equipment, such as videophones and televisions, can also be used. Video interpreting equipment can be purchased from manufacturers such as Polycom, Tandberg, and Sony. For spoken languages, the quality of the video image is less important than the quality of the audio, but for sign language, clear visual images are an absolute must.

Several equipment options exist:

- **Computer workstation with a webcam:** Using videoconferencing software, interpreters can use any computer (including a laptop) with a webcam (either internal or external) and a microphone or headset. This is one of the most cost-effective options. However, quality may vary significantly depending on the combination of computer, peripherals, and software employed.

- **Videoconferencing equipment:** These products come in a variety of options, such as PC-based, portable, mobile (roll-about), or installed systems, and a network can use an array of the different systems. In general, installed systems are meant for large groups or audiences, while the other types of systems are used for smaller groups, or for individuals. A single unit can cost thousands of dollars.

- **Videophones:** A videophone (also sometimes called a “picturephone”) is essentially a phone with a video screen. Videophones are meant for use by individuals, not by groups. These devices usually cost around $100-$200. One major...
disadvantage to videophones is that the screen size is quite small.

In addition to the equipment, video interpreting requires a high-quality connection to ensure that the video and audio data can be transferred in real time with minimal interference or interruption. A poor connection can ruin an interpreter’s ability to hear or see properly, and can have a detrimental effect on quality. For this reason, the majority of video interpreters actually work, not from home, but from specific sites where the connections have been fully tested and the quality can be guaranteed. Many interpreters already use free or low-cost videoconferencing services for personal use, such as Skype. However, these services are not usually adequate to perform video interpreting, since the connection requirements are stringent to provide the necessary quality.

**Video Interpreting Protocols**

For the most part, video interpreters can follow many of the same standards of practice they use when performing on-site or telephone interpreting, but there are a few differences related to the equipment. For example, some videoconferencing tools enable the interpreter to control the camera in order to zoom in or out and move the camera to keep individuals in the line of sight. Other types of equipment do not allow this, so interpreters using video-based communication must be prepared to rely on additional skills in order to focus on other elements when individuals disappear from view (e.g., auditory cues in the case of spoken languages).

Sign language interpreters often take great care to ensure that their background—what others will see behind them—is free of distractions and visual clutter, so as not to detract from the signing. Spoken language interpreters, on the other hand, rely somewhat less on visual information, and therefore do not necessarily need to take the same precautions. For example, spoken language video medical interpreters at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center place items such as flags, cultural objects, maps, or photos of countries where the languages are spoken in the background. This is done to make the patient feel that he or she is in a more familiar cultural environment. (See Figure 2 on page 21.)

Video interpreters also need to master their equipment in order to allow for proper positioning, both on-screen to ensure a clear view for those viewing the monitor, and to facilitate the interpreter’s work. If an interpreter wishes to take notes without distracting the other parties, he or she will need to ensure that the camera is set up in such a way that any hand

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**Figure 1:** To see court interpreters performing video interpreting at a district court in Florida, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cmt8yRsOBg.
movements will not be visible and that there is enough distance from the microphone so that the noise of scribbling will not be heard.

Where to Find Work

Work opportunities abound for prospective video interpreters of sign language. A large number of interpreting agencies bring sign language interpreters in-house to interpret via video for clients, especially hospitals, courts, and educational institutions.

On the spoken language side, those interpreters who work in high-demand languages, such as Spanish in the U.S., can also obtain work through some agencies offering video-based services. Some courts and hospitals have full-time in-house video interpreting positions. Interpreters of languages for which there is not a large demand are unlikely to find work as video interpreters, because the number of requests for less commonly spoken languages is usually small and does not warrant staffing an interpreter in front of a computer. However, several initiatives are rapidly changing this reality. One company, Paras and Associates, is paving the way for organizations in diverse locations by setting up networks to enable public hospitals to share their interpreting resources. These initiatives—including the Health Care Interpreter Network in California and the All Language Video Interpreter Network in Illinois—enable one hospital to request an interpreter from another hospital that might have more interpreters on staff for that particular language.

Some traditional telephonic providers are also getting into the act. Companies like CyraCom, Language Line Services, and Language Services Associates are now making video interpreting available to their customers. However, many companies actually provide video interpreting indirectly through partnerships with smaller firms that specialize in video interpreting. (See Figure 3 for a partial list of on-demand interpreting suppliers.)

A New Opportunity

To get started with video interpreting, talk with your existing base of interpreting clients to see if they already use video-based services. If they provide them in-house, inquire as to whether or not you can receive

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**Table:** Partial List of On-Demand Video Interpreting Suppliers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorenson</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sorenson.com">www.sorenson.com</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Communications</td>
<td><a href="http://www.purple.us">www.purple.us</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WeInterpretLinked</td>
<td><a href="http://www.weinterpretlinked.com">www.weinterpretlinked.com</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InDemand Interpreting</td>
<td><a href="http://www.systematechinc.com">www.systematechinc.com</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language, Spanish, Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT Interpreting</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dtiinterpreting.com">www.dtiinterpreting.com</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Line</td>
<td><a href="http://www.languageline.com">www.languageline.com</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language, Mexican Sign Language, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifeLinks</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lifelinks.net">www.lifelinks.net</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language, plus 25 spoken languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SignOn ASL</td>
<td><a href="http://www.signonasl.com">www.signonasl.com</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Access Network</td>
<td><a href="http://www.languageaccessnetwork.com">www.languageaccessnetwork.com</a></td>
<td>American Sign Language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
training in this modality to work as a video interpreter. If they purchase video interpreting services from an agency, ask for the name and see if you can work directly with the agency. If none of your clients use video services, you may need to do some additional research. Call agencies in your area to see if they offer video interpreting services, and ask if you can be considered as a potential contractor.

Freelance interpreters in all industry settings should become familiar with video interpreting equipment in order to understand how it works, and would be well-served by gaining experience with this emerging market segment. As the need for interpreting services continues to grow while the pool of available interpreters is slow to increase in size, technology will continue to play an important role in ensuring language access for all. Video interpreting for community interpreting is here to stay, and will no doubt have an even more prominent place in the future.

Related Links

- **All Language Video Interpreter Network**
  WebCode=ivin_m-p&Site=mchc

- **American Sign Language Interpreter Network**
  www.aslnetwork.com

- **Health Care Interpreter Network in California**
  www.hcin.org

- **Polycom**
  www.polycom.com

- **Tandberg**
  www.tandberg.com

- **Video Interpreters Connect Patients and Doctors**
  www.cisco.com/web/strategy/docs/
  health-care/HCN.pdf
I AM BILINGUAL. I AM THE BRIDGE TO MY COMMUNITY.

Your language skills are valuable.

You can help your community in times of need by volunteering for the National Language Service Corps.

Are you fluent in English and at least one of the NLSC languages: Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Hindi, Thai, Hausa, Indonesian, Marshallese, Swahili, or Somali?

The NLSC is a national initiative to bring together bilingual people like you for the greater good of our country. This is your opportunity to help your community while supporting government efforts in times of crisis.

Find out more by visiting NLSCORPS.ORG/ATA or calling 1-888-SAY-NLSC (729-6572).

S. Edmund Berger Prize in Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation

ATA and the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation invite nominations for the annual S. Edmund Berger Prize. The $1,000 prize is offered to recognize excellence in scientific and technical translation by an ATA member.

Nominations: Individual translators or translation companies wishing to nominate a translator for this award may obtain a nomination form from AFTI's website (www.afti.org) or from ATA at the address listed below.

Nominations will be judged by a three-member national jury. The recipient of the award will be announced during ATA's 50th Annual Conference in New York, NY (October 28-31, 2009).

Deadline: September 18, 2009

Please send nominations to:
Lois Feuerle, Chair, ATA Honors & Awards Committee
American Translators Association
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590  |  Alexandria VA 22314
Phone: (703) 683-6100  |  Fax: (703) 683-6122
Email: ata@atanet.org
Belkacem Hacene-Djaballah is nothing if not pragmatic: “I tell my students upfront that they’ll be able to speak a few words of French or Arabic before they leave the first class,” he says. “It’s practical skills that count.” The ATA member and college French professor brought the same results-oriented approach to a School Outreach presentation at Stuart M. Beville Middle School in Woodbridge, Virginia, where he spoke to two classes of seventh- and eighth-grade students.

From Liability to Asset
Once he had identified native French and Spanish speakers in the class, he involved them in a role-playing exercise to illustrate the mechanics of interpreting. “I would say something and ask them to interpret for the other students. Some of them did a good job. They were so proud: normally people judge them because they speak with an accent, but by the end of the class, their language skills had become a strength—an unexpected way to make a living.”

“And I avoided lecturing them,” he adds. “It’s important to make it fun.”

Hacene-Djaballah made his presentations on translation and interpreting as part of Beville’s Career Day. “The reception was good. The students were very involved and asked interesting questions about languages, translation, and interpretation.” And there were other benefits. “They gave us a very good breakfast—all kinds of goodies!”

Getting a Great Shot
Hacene-Djaballah’s participation in Beville’s Career Day also produced a Vermeer-like photograph (see page 25) that he entered in ATA’s 2008 School Outreach Contest, impressing the judges and giving last year’s winning shot a run for its money. What is his secret for getting a great photo? “I took my son with me, and he took the pictures,” he says. “If the school doesn’t have a photographer, you really have to bring your own. It’s impossible to concentrate on your presentation and get a good photo at the same time.”

And his memories of the experience are powerful. “I’ve thought back to it so many times. I love the contact, I love talking to people.” Since his School Outreach presentation at Beville, Hacene-Djaballah has spoken at another Career Day in Fredericksburg, Virginia. “Most of the students were unfamiliar with languages, but there were some African kids who had come from war zones. They were very happy to hear French again. People really open up when they hear even a few words of their own language.”

A native of Algeria, Hacene-Djaballah works as both translator and interpreter, working in various combinations of English, Arabic, and French. He also owns The School of Languages and Communication, a small corporation that provides translation and interpreting, consulting, and foreign-language instruction to the World Bank and other clients. And he teaches French at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, where he is pushing for the curriculum to include a broader range of foreign language courses.

On a Mission
“It’s become a mission for me,” he says. “America is handicapped when it comes to languages. We have to overcome that. Kids start out afraid of for-
eign languages, but they learn so quickly. By the end of the first session they realize they can do it. And once you eliminate the fear of foreign languages, you overcome the fear of other cultures. Then it’s natural to travel, to meet people who speak the language.”

Hacene-Djaballah has seen this principle at work in his own family. His three children all speak at least three languages, and he has made foreign travel a priority for his family. “My son had studied French for five years in school, but he didn’t believe how valuable it was until we traveled to France and he saw it in action,” he recalls. “After that, he was really convinced of the usefulness of the language.”

A Better Bottom Line

It all comes back to pragmatism. “Americans believe in business,” says Hacene-Djaballah, “and that’s the way to convince them of the importance of languages. When you’re doing business with a foreign partner, speaking the language gets people to open up and wins their trust. Language skills give you more effective business interactions and a better bottom line.”
On May 16-17, an enthusiastic group of primarily freelance translators and interpreters, some of whom are just entering the field, met for ATA’s Building Your Business Seminar in Washington, DC. The three-hour presentations were offered over Saturday and Sunday.

Marian S. Greenfield: Building Your Freelance Translation Business

Saturday morning was spent learning the ins and outs of résumé preparation for translators. ATA Past President Marian S. Greenfield, whose long years of involvement in language services include 13 years as manager of translation services at JP Morgan in New York, spoke about what translation companies want to see on a prospective vendor’s résumé.

Language Pair: The language pair goes right at the top, below the contact information (which should include the words “freelancer” and “translator”...
Greenfield cautioned against listing too many language pairs in order to preserve credibility. Translators should choose only target languages in which they write like a native. (However, interpreters need to specify an A and B language). Translators who work from more than three source languages and want to indicate this must be able to back up their claim somewhere on the résumé.

**Fields of Specialization:** Next, prospective clients need to know the translator’s fields of specialization. If the client is looking for someone to translate the specifications for a power plant, for example, someone who specializes in economic reports may not be the best choice. Looking at it from the translator’s standpoint, Greenfield observed that generalists never reach the top of the market, but will work way too many hours at too low a rate. Translators should ask themselves what they are interested in and have a talent for, based not only on study and work experience, but also on their hobbies.

**Recent Projects:** Under the “recent projects” heading, translators should describe completed translation projects in very general terms. They should never name the client without the client’s permission. It is not necessary, or even useful, to submit samples of their work.

**Personal Information:** An interesting point that Greenfield made was that résumés intended for U.S. use should not provide photos or mention age or marital status. Prospective American clients are barred by law from using this information, whereas European clients may require it.

**Education:** Under the “education” heading, only specifically relevant degrees should be emphasized. In general, translation/interpreting experience is more important to a prospective client than education.

**Tools Information:** Hardware and software information should be given near the end of the résumé, and be restricted to the most relevant and distinctive items. (Do not list your printers and scanners.) Computer-assisted translation tools, of course, are of special interest. It is assumed that you will have a broadband high-speed Internet connection. The professional version of Adobe Acrobat is a plus. MS Office 2003 is a minimum requirement.

**Working for Direct Clients:** Greenfield reminded freelancers that working for direct clients involves more work for the translator. There is a reason that translation companies sell the translation at a markup. They handle the marketing, as well as the sometimes lengthy negotiations concerning what the client needs, wants, and will pay for. They also take care of the collection process. Freelancers will need to take care of these duties themselves if they choose to work with a client directly.

**Websites:** Asked about websites, Greenfield said she did not think that they are very useful for a freelancer. In her own case, she wants to avoid the “nuisance” calls that a website can generate.

**Multiple Clients:** Finally, Greenfield warned against becoming complacent and relying on a single client. This is because the company’s workload may change, the assigning personnel you dealt with on previous assignments may leave, or the company can be taken over by another firm. It is essential to continue to make new contacts.

**Michael Cárdenas: A Translation Company Tells All**

The second speaker, Michael Cárdenas, is the owner of Local Concept in San Diego. In a dynamic and energetic talk, he gave participants an inside view of the current market from an agency’s perspective. Cárdenas said that never before have price and timing been as important as they are now. Clients who hire a language services provider (LSP) want the company to give them freelancer prices. The prices an LSP in the U.S. can charge have declined dramatically in recent years. China is grabbing huge shares of the market because providers there need a much lower profit margin to cover their costs. Moreover, clients expect 24/7 service. They cannot wait until the next day to arrange for a translation, as they
often need the translated documents immediately. (This is why Local Concept decided to establish an Asian office that opens for business as soon as the U.S. employees go home.) Not only have prices declined, but volume is sagging as companies start practicing “content management.” They use sophisticated software to identify only those segments of the English text that have never been translated.

The business atmosphere at an LSP can be tense. Therefore, when deciding which freelancers to use for a specific job, an LSP gives preference to those who will solve its problems, rather than create more. Translators can put themselves on the top of the list by responding promptly when approached, asking questions about format or terminology rather than making assumptions, following instructions (their failure to do so is one of Cárdenas’ pet peeves), and delivering work on time. A translator’s willingness to negotiate fees is also valued. Interestingly, the quality of the work is assumed. “It only matters when you mess up,” Cárdenas explained. Most of the time, a translator gets the job because he or she helped the LSP.

It is a good idea to keep the relationship with your client alive by checking in with the project manager at least once a month. Cater to them! On the other hand, Cárdenas acknowledged that LSPs do not always give this highly educated group of freelancers the respect it is due. They may fail to acknowledge receipt of submitted files, and they may call on freelancers at odd hours or on days when they have already said they would be unavailable.

Cárdenas urged freelancers to have a master contract in place that they ask each of their LSP clients to sign. It should be worded in general terms (e.g., “for all projects that are assigned by LSP “X” to freelancer “Y”). The jurisdiction clause should give the translator’s city as the venue for dispute resolution. A provision should also be added requiring the LSP to pay the translator attorneys’ fees if it loses the claim.

Cárdenas explained that translators who work into U.S. English from European languages would do well to focus on Europe, since there seems to be a shortage of American translators working in Europe or focusing on European clients. Growth fields in translation work, in Cárdenas’s opinion, include product manuals, financial documents, medical instrumentation, mobile technology (other than telephone), and advertising materials (including text adaptation).

Leah Ruggiero: Project Management Workshop

On Sunday, Leah Ruggiero, who worked for many years as a project manager at a translation company in New York and currently works as a project manager consultant, gave an eye-opening presentation on the complex tasks involved in project management. Despite the challenges, she suggested that someone who is interested in getting into the language services field might do well to start out as a project manager.

Project management is not, of course, limited to the language services field. The skill can be used in almost every area of business. Ruggiero explained that there is a professional association and a specific set of certifications that attest to advancement and achievement in the field. For example, the Project Management Institute (www.pmi.org) issues the following credentials:

- CAPM (Certified Associate in Project Management)
- PMI-SP (PMI Scheduling Professional)
- PMI-RMP (PMI Risk Management Professional)
- PMP (Project Management Professional)
- PgMP (Program Management Professional).

Project management involves five key processes: initiating, planning, executing, controlling and monitoring, and closing. Each of these processes includes a series of tasks. Ultimately, a project manager must be able to answer, convincingly and with certainty, the following questions:

- What will you deliver (content and quality)?
• When will you deliver it?

• How much will it cost?

Attendees were invited to discuss questions that a project manager would need to ask a prospective client. They also brainstormed on how to handle other situations that could arise. For example, what is the target audience for the translation? If the deadline is “Monday,” does that mean 9:00 a.m. or close of business, and is it an absolute deadline?

Ruggiero gave participants a handout about a tool known as a Work Breakdown Structure. Conceptually simple, it is a formal process that helps manage complexity. Particularly essential with localization projects, this process replaces an informal “to do” list and can be adapted to translation project management.

Participants departed Sunday afternoon with a new appreciation for the complexity of the tasks involved in project management and, hopefully, a greater respect for the managers they deal with as freelancers.

Training and Marketing All in One
In addition to the sessions, the Networking Session provided attendees with the opportunity to meet company owners, seasoned professionals, and newcomers in a relaxed atmosphere. Attendees were also able to market their services to colleagues and potential employers at the Job Marketplace. On the whole, ATA’s Building Your Business Seminar offered a unique venue to enhance skills and market individual services.

Recommended Resources

Online

ATA Business Smarts Column Archive
www.atanet.org/business_practices/index.php

Freelance Translators From Scratch
http://workingwithwords.wordpress.com

Global Watchtower
www.globalwatchtower.com

Local Concept
www.locallconcept.com

Localization Industry Standards Association
Globalization Insider
www.lisa.org/globalizationinsider

Marketing Week
www.marketingweek.co.uk

Marketing Translation
www.marketingtranslationblog.com

Max’s Project Management Wisdom
www.maxwideman.com

Project Management Institute
Project Management Certification Training
www.4pm.com

ProjectSmart
www.projectsmart.co.uk

Translation: Standards for Buying a Non-Commodity
www.atanet.org/docs/translation_buying_guide.pdf

Print


McKay, Corinne. How to Succeed as a Freelance Translator (Lulu, 2006).


Sommer, Jill R. “E-mail Marketing for Translators.” The ATA Chronicle (American Translators Association, June 2009), 12.
The Gode medalist for 1975 has had a unique opportunity to be in touch with two literary worlds. As a native of Vienna and as a young publisher there, as well as the founder of Phaidon Verlag, which is now Phaidon Press of London, he knows the language and literature of the German-speaking countries from the inside. Born in Vienna on September 5, 1898, he became a publisher in 1922, and printed many liberal and anti-Nazi books before he was forced to turn his company over to a non-Jewish employee in 1938. He left Austria for Prague, then traveled to Zurich and London before settling in New York. He arrived in the U.S. in 1939, carrying with him just a few of the books he had been able to salvage from his publishing years in Austria. 1939 was not an auspicious year to set up as a publisher in a new country, but he accomplished that goal and started anew under his own name. The company he founded is still very much in existence, and one of the few independent publishing houses to remain unmerged and undivided in the corporate shuffle that is so evident in the publishing world today. Fittingly, 1975 is his 35th anniversary as a publisher in the U.S.

But it is not for his survival in a field strewn with the corpses of corporate takeover that we honor him this evening, but as a publisher dedicated both to high literary standards and to the exacting standards of fine translation. He founded the Frederick Ungar Publishing Company in New York in 1940, declaring that he wanted “to publish books that are contributions either to knowledge, esthetic enjoyment, or the affirmation of life.” He has assiduously dedicated himself to that ephemeral audience, the cultivated American reader and student, publishing translations from the best of foreign literatures, especially from German. His is one of the largest lists of such translations, many of which have been commissioned directly by him. As an active editor, he has devoted endless hours to the delicate and time-consuming labor of checking and grooming these translations and, in many instances, in consulting personally with his translators on sense, style, and format. He has edited or co-edited many books, including an anthology of German poetry through the 19th century, an anthology of Friedrich Schiller, and a collection of Goethe’s reflections and maxims. He has also contributed articles concerning standards for literary translation to such publications as the London Times Literary Supplement and Publishers Weekly.

Our medalist has long been associated with the aims and goals of ATA. It is becoming, then, that the man whom we honor with the medal named for our first president has the same high regard for the best in translation that was Alexander Gode’s hallmark. His company publishes both criticism and literary reference texts, many of which are standard indespensables on university library shelves, but translations continue to be the cornerstone of his catalog. Many of these translations were undertaken out of his personal interest in furthering the cause of world literature and international communication. Many of these have failed to pay their way commercially, but that has never been his primary consideration. If students today find themselves reluctant to study a second language in depth, they can at least learn something of other cultures and other eras by reading translations—good translations. And our award recipient tonight has been for more than a third of a century in the forefront of the long struggle to bring the best in foreign literature to the American public. It is an endeavor that we here can only applaud.
Upcoming Events

September 12, 2009
Midwest Association of Translators & Interpreters
Annual Conference
Indianapolis, IN
www.matiata.org

September 12-13, 2009
Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators
Annual Conference
Nashville, TN
www.tapit.org

October 3-4, 2009
Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators
Third Annual Conference
Atlanta, GA
http://aait.org/3rdAnnualConf_oct2009.htm

October 8-10, 2009
Asociación ibérica de estudios de traducción e interpretación
Fourth Congress Vigo 2009: Borderline Translation
Vigo, Spain
http://webs.uvigo.es/aietivigoinfo

October 9-11, 2009
California Federation of Interpreters
7th Annual Continuing Education Conference
San Francisco, CA
www.calinterpreters.org

October 9-11, 2009
International Medical Interpreters Association
Annual Conference
Boston, MA
www.imiaweb.org

October 28-31, 2009
American Translators Association 50th Annual Conference
New York, NY
www.atanet.org/conf/2009

November 9-13, 2009
Nebraska Interpreters & Translators Association
Connecting Worlds: Training for Health Care Interpreters
Reno, NV
www.nitaonline.org

November 11-14, 2009
American Literary Translators Association
Annual Conference
Pasadena, CA
www.utdallas.edu/alta

November 20-22, 2009
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Convention and World Languages Expo
San Diego, CA
www.actfl.org

December 27-30, 2009
Modern Language Association
125th Annual Convention
Philadelphia, PA
www.mla.org

January 30, 2010
Miami Dade College
Translation and Interpretation Program
Fifth Immigration Terminology Conference
Miami, FL
www.mdc.edu/iac/_asp_root/forms/esl/register

Visit the ATA Calendar Online
www.atanet.org/calendar/
for a more comprehensive look at upcoming events.
Independent contractors have to be creative and persistent in order to resolve payment problems with clients. In this column, a reader shares how she found the “Achilles heel” of a reluctant payer.

Dear Business Smarts,

In early January, I received an inquiry from a U.S. law firm asking me if I was willing to work on a very large rush translation from German (an estate matter). At the request of the firm, I sent a contract in which I stipulated that payment was due within four weeks. This contract was approved by the client.

Six weeks after completing the translation, I e-mailed the law firm and asked about payment. No reply. I called and left messages—no reply. Then, in mid-March, I received a call from the attorney’s secretary. She told me that they were waiting for funds to be released. She assured me that I would get paid half of the money the following week and the rest the week after. She also asked if I would be kind enough to do another very small translation. I agreed.

No check arrived the following week or the week after. I e-mailed and called again and either got no answer or a very brief “We are still waiting for our client to pay us.”

In early May, I sent another e-mail to the delinquent attorney in which I simply stated that I would bring the matter to the attention of my state’s Bar Association by Monday. On Monday, I received a lengthy reply with a long-winded explanation (allegedly, he had been unable to sell the estate’s stocks to free up some funds, etc.) and, indeed, that Wednesday a FedEx envelope arrived with a check for the amount that was owed!

Dear GR,

Congratulations on resolving this matter so successfully. Following up on overdue payments can be very frustrating and time-consuming. The best way to ensure success in collecting overdue accounts receivable is to be prepared, which means keeping complete and accurate records. The key to this is to track your invoices in a software or paper system. Make a note of when an invoice is due, and decide in advance when you will carry out the following two collection steps:

1. Payment is Overdue by X Days:
   Determine what the value of X will be for you and stick to it. While a certain amount of tolerance is customary, granting your clients generous extensions for their payment deadlines will not work in favor of your cash flow. On day X, write a polite letter—or better yet, use a template saved on your computer for this purpose. Restate the facts of the invoice and include all identifying information about the job, including purchase order number, dates, amount due, agreed payment terms, etc.

2. Payment Has Significantly Exceeded X Days and You Have Not Received the Response You Requested:
   At this point, it is time to escalate the matter to the next level. Turn to the executive manager, senior partner, top accountant, or any other supervisor of the employee who originally ordered the work from you. Politely explain your expectation to be paid immediately, and describe the steps you will take if the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction. These should not be idle threats. Be prepared to follow through on the measures you announced to the delinquent client in the letter, and make it clear you will post to online boards or contact a professional association, as in the case above. The mention of the state’s Bar Association obviously was the client’s “Achilles heel,” and convinced him to pay up finally. As difficult as it may be, do not let anger and frustration get the better of you. Take the high road and keep your communications as professional and courteous as you can.

Specify your expectations and courteously ask for a response by a specific date. Unfortunately, if your original invoice did not include explicit language requiring payment of late fees or interest, you have no claim to such penalties now. It is best to send a physical letter by registered mail to underscore the importance of the matter.

Comments?
ATA members can discuss business issues online at the following Yahoo! group:
http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ata_business_practices. You will need to register with Yahoo! (at no charge) if you have not already done so, and provide your full name and ATA member number in order to join the group.

The information in this column was compiled by members of ATA’s Business Practices Education Committee for the benefit of ATA members. This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Send your questions about the business of translation and interpreting to The ATA Chronicle—BPEC Q&A, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA; Fax: +1-703-683-6122; E-mail: businesspractices@atanet.org. Questions must be accompanied by a complete name and address, but will be published anonymously or pseudonymously upon request.
Sometimes it is difficult to find the right words to express our thoughts, so we use a set phrase or word that conveys an idea that is unique to native speakers of a particular language and culture. According to Wikipedia, “an idiom is a phrase whose meaning cannot be determined by the literal definition of the phrase itself, but refers instead to a figurative meaning that is known only through context.” 1 Idioms often use an image or symbol to describe something as clearly as possible, so that we can make our point as effectively as possible. For example, “in a nutshell” suggests the idea of conveying a lot of information within very few words. (A Spanish equivalent would be en pocas palabras.) Idioms tend to be informal and are best used in spoken language, rather than written.

Idioms pose a particular challenge for translators/interpreters working into their B-languages. For example, if a translator is unfamiliar with the expression “to kick the bucket,” he or she might incorrectly offer a literal target-language rendition. In the English expression “to kick the bucket,” a non-native speaker who is familiar only with the meaning of kick and bucket would be unable to determine the expression’s actual meaning (“to die”). Although the expression can refer literally to the act of striking a bucket with a foot, native speakers rarely use it that way because of its culturally accepted figurative meaning. Ideally, an interpreter/translator should find an idiomatic expression in the target language that equivalently conveys the same message as the source idiomatic expression. For example, if translating this phrase for a primarily Mexican readership, two possible Spanish equivalents of “to kick the bucket” include petatear or estirar la pata.

Using idioms effectively generally requires the translator/interpreter to have some localized foundational knowledge or experience regarding the culture where they are used. Idioms are not so much part of a language as they are a part of a culture. Since idioms are typically used as colloquial metaphors within a particular culture, they are often difficult to decipher outside of that local context. Some idioms can be more universal than others, however, and can be easily translated so that the metaphorical meaning can be more easily determined.

It is especially important to be aware of the context in which a phrase is used. According to Holly Mikkelson, a seemingly simple idiom like “make out” could mean: to decipher (as in “I can’t make out his handwriting”); to pretend (“She is making herself out to be much more important than she really is”); to fare (“How did you make out?”); to prepare (“I am making out my will”); or to fondle (“They were making out in the back seat”). 2 The same English phrase can be interpreted in multiple ways based on the context in which it is used. Context sets the stage for the words we use, so we must pay particular attention to it if we intend to find an idiom that is of true semantic equivalence.

Idioms can be very difficult to translate, yet they are a vital and dynamic part of language and culture. Interpreters/ translators should never omit an idiomatic expression when it is used in the source language. Instead, they should be prepared to conduct linguistic and cultural research until they find an appropriate equivalent in the target language. The best way to learn idioms is to select and actively incorporate them into your speech. Select idioms that are useful to you. Write them in a relevant and practical sentence so that you will be able to remember their meaning easily. Every time you encounter a new idiom, enter it in a file, along with other words and idioms that have

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Related Blogs and Links

**Dictionary of British Slang**
www.pavish.co.uk/slang/a.htm

**Idiom Connection**
www.idiomconnection.com

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(Note: This is intended for informational purposes only, not as an endorsement of an individual or company.)
When SDL released the new version of Trados (Trados Studio 2009) there was no shortage of excitement among translators. The newsgroups were full of raging complaints about SDL: the license policy was condemned (SDL completely changed it in response to those criticisms); some very vocal early adapters had problems installing the program or importing files (giving many the impression that this was what we should all expect, when in reality this was the exception rather than the norm); while only a very few brave souls stood up for SDL to defend their moves and products. I had a chance to talk to a number of SDL representatives during those days and, boy, those voices sounded tired.

I would like to now switch industries to draw a parallel. I live in the Pacific Northwest and my wife went to college in Seattle during Microsoft’s infancy, so naturally many of her classmates were hired by Microsoft. Many of those who were hired right after they graduated have long since retired as millionaires and are now mostly doing philanthropic work, but a few started to work for “The Company” years later and are still hanging in there. They are among some of our very best friends. We love to hang out with them and their kids. They come down to Oregon to play with us at the ocean, and when we go to Seattle we stay in their posh houses.

There is only one thing we rarely discuss: “The Company.” These folks are so tired of the criticism heaped on them because of their association with Microsoft that they have developed defense mechanisms that tend to make discussions sort of fruitless.

The translation community has long elevated the owners of Trados (now SDL, earlier the TRADOS GmbH) to a nearly Microsoft-status Evil Empire—overlooking the fact that we are talking about humongous differences in size and ambition—and its representatives often get to feel the brunt of that. And I feel for them. Really, I do.

Now, I know that there are valid complaints against the owners of Trados. Before there was paid Trados support, its support reputation was not particularly good; since we have had access to paid Trados support, it is, well, paid. Trados also does not have the agility of smaller contenders, who are often willing and able to implement bug fixes or new feature requests literally overnight (though its response to the licensing policy was almost immediate). Plus, in the minds of many translators, Trados is still (unfairly?) charged with introducing the scheme for the weighted perfect, fuzzy, and no-matches payments per word.

However, I would argue that with the release of this new version of Trados, SDL has proven many critics wrong. Let me illustrate this with an example from Microsoft’s product history. As we all know, Microsoft virtually owns the desktop office application market. Still, it was a gutsy move when it released Office 2007.

Most of the new Office programs had a radically different interface design, and many of its users did not like the idea that they had to completely relearn some of their old ways of doing things. But once the new system was installed, only the most stubborn users failed to see that the new logic of the system was quite easily transferrable to the old. And there was no need to spend much time in “training.”

But if Microsoft’s move was gutsy, how much gutsier was SDL’s move to release a software that has truly been redesigned? True, SDL is the market leader, but they certainly have some very strong competitors in the translation environment tool market. So SDL by no means had the same assurance that Microsoft had of staying at the top of the market when they released Office 2007. And unlike with Office 2007, I would argue that there is some training necessary (whether through training-by-doing or with an external course is beside the point) when switching to the new Trados system.

So why did SDL go that route? There are several reasons. Immediately after Trados was bought, SDL announced a “road map” according to which SDL’s home-grown product SDLX and Trados would be separately maintained for several releases but then merged into a single product. This is what happened in the Studio 2009 product. But more importantly, Trados was stuck in a legacy format—ironically Microsoft Word—that was originally used to translate all file formats through RTF conversions. At a certain point this was considered too inefficient and was replaced with the TagEditor interface (and for a short while the T- Windows fiasco), an interface that was sufficient in some areas but too slow and tedious in others, and as such was never completely embraced by the translation community as a whole. So rather than beating a dead horse with either MS Word or TagEditor, SDL went the smart way by creating a whole new interface—an interface that certainly contains some elements of the SDLX interface, but which also has many elements that are simply new or that can be found in other competing tools, such as Across, MemoQ, or Déjà Vu.

The move to the new product was a necessary but nevertheless gutsy move, because for the first time in a long while it opens up the translation tool market and pegs the new (and much improved) Trados against its many competitors. Since the Trados update
feels more like a switch in products than just an update, many old Trados users will feel that it might be prudent to look at other products (again). Plus, with data exchange formats such as TMX, TBX, and XLIFF finally becoming a reality in most translation environment tools (TEnTs), the data is at the forefront and tools can increasingly vary in a production chain between translation buyer, translation agency, and translator.

In an upcoming issue of this magazine, I will publish a review of the new version of Trados focusing primarily on these areas:

- The new interface: How effective is it in comparison with earlier Trados interface(s) and those of competitors?
- The new exchange formats and translation file formats supported by Trados Studio.
- Trados’ new subsegment-matching feature.
- The new underlying translation memory format and the newly designed terminology maintenance program.

Until then (and beyond that as well), let’s give the guys from SDL a break and try to look at products on the basis of their merits and shortcomings rather than our emotional attachments (or detachments).

Blog Trekker Continued from p. 33

similar meanings, and have it handy on your computer for easy reference.

For a searchable compilation of idioms, visit The Free Dictionary by Farlex (www.thefreedictionary.com).

Notes

Visit www.atanet.org/divisions/division_admin.php to join any or all ATA divisions without additional fees.
Member News

Send your news to Jeff Sanfacon at jeff@atanet.org or American Translators Association, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314.

• **Lisa Carter**’s translation of *The Book of Destiny: Unlocking the Secrets of the Ancient Mayans and the Prophecy of 2012*, by Carlos Barrios, was published by HarperCollins.

• **STAR Group**’s corporate technical communication platform, GRIPS, was awarded the Swiss Innovation Award for 2009 by the Schaffhausen Regional Association of Industry and Commerce.

• **Alina Mugford**, owner of **The Translation Link, LLC**, announced that the company has won the 2009 New Small Business of The Year Award, presented by Florida’s Longboat Key-Lido Key-St. Armands Key Chamber of Commerce.

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ATA Certification Exam Information

Upcoming Exams

California
San Francisco
September 26, 2009
Registration Deadline: September 11, 2009

Utah
Salt Lake City
September 26, 2009
Registration Deadline: September 11, 2009

New York
New York City
October 31, 2009
Registration Deadline: October 16, 2009

Active and Corresponding Membership Review

Congratulations! The Active Membership Review Committee is pleased to grant active status to:

Active
Jose A. Figueras
Sarasota, FL

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 +1-703-683-6100. 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 ATA’s website or from Headquarters.

New Certified Members

Congratulations! The following people have successfully passed ATA's certification exam:

Russian into English
Patricia A. Heffernan
St. Petersburg, Russia

Spanish into English
Daniel E. DeCoursey
Los Angeles, CA
Jennifer L. De La Cruz
Moreno Valley, CA
Carlos V. Uribe
Altadena, CA

English into Spanish
Andrés R. Enjuto
Rosario, Argentina
Alicia E. Magurno
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Jesús Rivera
Sherman Oaks, CA
Karina R. Tabacinic
Buenos Aires, Argentina

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 +1-703-683-6100. 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 ATA’s website or from Headquarters.
Founded in 2002, the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) is an international nonprofit association promoting local communication as an indispensable component of a global strategy. The association welcomes all companies providing translation, localization, internationalization, or globalization products or services. GALA gives members a common forum to discuss issues, create innovative solutions, promote the industry, and present a joint—and more powerful—voice within the industry and to the outside community.

**Mission**

GALA’s mission is to promote collaboration among all companies providing products and services in the translation, localization, internationalization, and globalization industry. It provides members with opportunities to help them meet their market needs through increasing industry knowledge, fostering collaborative efforts, and reducing costs. The association’s formal objectives include:

- To increase knowledge by means of information exchange.
- To create market opportunities for its members.

**Benefits and Activities**

- **GALA 2009 Conference:** September 14-16, 2009 in Cancun, Mexico (www.gala-global.org/conference).
- Maintains GALA Blog (www.gala-global.org/blog).
- Publishes GALAxy, a quarterly newsletter (www.gala-global.org/GALAxy-newsletter.html).
- Promotes member services on its website and in its Language Technology & Services Directory.
- Free member participation in GALA Webinar Series.
- Special pricing on tools, products, and events.
- Discounted job posting rates on GALA’s online career center (www.localizationcareers.net).
- Networking and exchange opportunities with other member companies.

**Additional Information**

For more information, please visit www.gala-global.org.

ATA’s chapters and its affiliates, along with other groups, serve translators and interpreters, providing them with industry information, networking opportunities, and support services. This column is designed to serve as a quick resource highlighting the valuable contributions these organizations are making to the profession.
The ATA Annual Conference is the essential event for translators and interpreters, providing professional development and networking opportunities specific to your needs.

- Choose from 150 educational sessions covering more than a dozen languages and a variety of specializations. Speakers from all over the world will share their experience and expertise.

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- Reunite with friends and colleagues, enjoy food and drink, listen to music and dance. Spend time socializing at the many special events and activities offered.

Conference Registration
Registration begins in July. You will receive the Preliminary Program and Registration Form with the July issue of The ATA Chronicle.

Hotel Reservations
New York Marriott Marquis
1535 Broadway, New York, NY 10036
Special ATA Room Rates
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Visit www.atanet.org/conf/2009 to learn more.
**Hippocrene Standard Polish-English/English-Polish Dictionary**

**Author:**
Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski

**Publisher:**
Hippocrene Books, Inc.

**Publication date:**
2007

**Number of pages and entries:**
754 pages; over 32,000 entries

**ISBN:**
0-7818-0282-2

**Price:**
$24.95

**Available from:**
www.hippocrenebooks.com

**Specialty/field:**
General dictionary with a glossary of menu terms and appendix of business terms

**Reviewed by:**
Katarzyna Jankowski

**Writing a** bilingual dictionary is a difficult and tedious endeavor. The process should follow a number of rules so that the end result is a reliable and logical linguistic resource. The author must decide which words to include, which to leave out, and determine what variants of the same word should go under the same entry or why a variant should be a separate entry. Then there is the “other language” part to figure out: a word can mean different things, depending on the context. And what about those words that do not have their counterparts in the other language, at least not yet—how does one address those? What format does one choose to present all of the relevant information in a way that will be clear and easy for the reader to follow? By the time the author answers all of these questions and his work seems to be complete, languages produce new words, so there is always the issue of keeping the dictionary current.

**Organization**
The Hippocrene Standard Polish-English/English-Polish Dictionary consists of the following parts:

- A Polish-English section, followed by the author’s own phonetic notation describing how to pronounce Polish vowels and consonants, written in English, and an explanation of English sounds, written in Polish.

- An English-Polish section.

- A chapter entitled “How to Use This Dictionary,” written in English, followed by a Przedmowa (Preface) in Polish.

- A glossary of menu terms.

- Two lists of cardinal and ordinal numbers.

- An appendix of business terms.

The cover mentions that this is a revised edition of the dictionary, “now with larger type.” Almost every section has a different font type and size. The Polish-English and English-Polish sections and the appendix of business terms appear to use the same font type and size, which is large enough and easy to read. In the Polish-English and English-Polish sections, however, the print seems thick, as if there were too much ink, making “a” and “s” or “e” and “c” indistinguishable at times. The same font is used in the appendix of business terms, where it is crisp and legible. The phonetic notation section uses two different font sizes, one of which is a little too large. The font size in the chapter on how to use the dictionary and the preface gets smaller and smaller. The glossary of menu terms, except for its introduction, uses a really tiny and hard to read font. The introduction also omits Polish diacritical marks in words such as śniadanie and polczernej (śniadanie; pólczarnej). In addition, while writing this review, the binding on this softcover edition did not hold up well under continuous use and loosened quite a bit.

**Content**
The reviewer did not find any information about an editor, or errata for the dictionary. Some examples of misspelled/incorrectly used words include: vocal chords; badyl (steam); acute (przyznikliwy); alkoholowe; murzyn (negro); izraelita (Israelite); and (mayonnaise).

Comparison of the respective entries between the Polish-English and English-Polish sections shows
some inconsistencies. For example, we can find bakterie in the Polish-English section, in plural only, translated as “bacteria, germs; microbes,” but the English-Polish section has both bacterium (singular), rendered as bakteria, mikroorganizm, as well as bacteria (plural), rendered as bakterie.

The list of abbreviations given at the very beginning includes, among others, parts of speech (e.g., “v” for verb; “adj.” for adjective; “s.” for substantive [noun]) and gender and number references, as well as some field categories (poetry, politics, chemistry, construction). The parts of speech and gender and number references are consistently used in the dictionary entries. The field categories, although helpful in figuring out the contextually distinct meanings of a term, hardly ever appear.

Another way of distinguishing the different meanings can be accomplished through numbering. The English-Polish section contains entries like:

- DE: “wyciąg – extract, elevator, hoist, winch, excerpt”
  - SA: [wyciąg (1) excerpt, copy; (2) (chem.) extract, essence; (3) (fin.) bank statement; (4) (sport) ski lift…]

Occasionally a word is followed by a string of synonyms and related terms that semantically go beyond the exact equivalents. For example:

- DE: “brzydki – ugly, unsightly, hideous, foul”
  - SA: [brzydki – ugly (picture), bad (weather/smell); unsightly is more like szpetny; hideous – ohydny; foul – wstrętny]

In other instances, just one, usually older, meaning is provided:

- DE: “kobierzec – carpet, anything like a carpet”
  - SA: [kobierzec – arch. carpet]

There are some entries that simply provide a wrong equivalent altogether:

- DE: “wizytówka – calling card, visiting card”
  - SA: [wizytówka – business card]

The dictionary includes a number of old words that are hardly ever used in contemporary Polish. For example:

- obstalunek (order/made to order)
- hufnal (horseshoe nail)
- gunno (barn yard)
- chędogi (neat)
- garbarnia (tannery)
- laciarz (patcher)

(DE = actual dictionary entry)
[SA = suggested alternative]

- DE: “związek – alliance, connection, bond, compound, tie, trade union”
  - SA: [związek – (1) connection, relationship, association; (2) (chem.) compound; (3) zawodowy – trade union]

Also, there are numerous terms that are explained with a definition, rather than/besides an English equivalent. For example:

- DE: “abażur – lamp shade, a device to screen light”
  - SA: [abażur – lamp shade]

- DE: “alimenty – alimony for separated wife”
  - SA: [alimenty – usually spousal/child support payments]

- DE: “kobierzec – carpet, anything like a carpet”
  - SA: [kobierzec – arch. carpet]

There are some entries that simply provide a wrong equivalent altogether:

- DE: “jeż – porcupine”
  - SA: [jeż – hedgehog]
The dictionary lacks commonly used words like:

- *aktywny* (active)
- *dane* (data)
- *kablówka* (cable television)
- *polisa* (policy)

**Glossary and Appendix**

The glossary of menu items and appendix of business terms are the dictionary’s add-ons. The glossary is Polish-English and uses a very small font, with some Polish diacritical marks missing (e.g., *paczki* – *pàczki*). Its introduction, in large type, praises Polish cuisine, points out the times Poles eat their meals during the day, and names the types of places where food products can be purchased. The entries are divided into sections, similar to those found in a restaurant menu: appetizers, soups, meat/poultry dishes, etc. Again, some entries are misspelled—e.g., spring chi(c)ken; chicken bre(a)st. Some English terms referring to the same menu item are used inconsistently—e.g., both *barsch* and *barscz* are used for a beetroot [red] or rye [white] soup, which in English is usually called *borscht*. One entry uses the description of “sour soup,” which does not sound very appealing. Very common dishes that the glossary misses are: *pierogi*, *schabowe* (breaded pork chops); *mielone* (meatloaf patties); *mizeria* (sliced cucumbers with sour cream); and southern Poland’s regional specialty *oscypki* (smoked sheep-milk cheese).

The appendix of business terms is English-Polish, and while it has the nicest font, there are a lot of entries not related to business, including: bale, ballast, ball-bearing, cardboard box, taxi, taxi driver, and taxi meter. Unnecessarily lengthy descriptions are used for terms that are very common and have Polish equivalents:

- **Area code**: trzy cyfrowy przedrostek numeru telefonicznego oznaczający region geograficzny w celu rozmów zamiejscowych; [numer kierunkowy]
- **ZIP code**: numeracja pocztowa miejskowosci; [kod pocztowy]
- **Bid bond**: kaucja wymagana od przedsiębiorcy, który zaoferował najniższą cenę wykonania projektu; [wadium]

As for keeping the dictionary current, there is: telephone, telephone booth, telephone call, telephone exchange, telephone kiosk, but no cell phone. Together with the examples from other sections cited above, the dictionary counters the claim on the first page of the “How to Use This Dictionary” chapter that: “word choice and translation are updated for current usage in America and Poland.”

**Overall Evaluation**

To sum up, the Hippocrene Standard Polish-English/English-Polish Dictionary would greatly benefit from a thorough revision and updating. The improved content would go nicely with a better binding. Only then could it be a keeper.

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Admit it now, at least once in your career you have absentmindedly typed in www.ata.org instead of our correct Web address, atanet.org. The former will lead you to the American Tinnitus Association of Portland, Oregon. It is a volunteer group devoted to helping people with a medical condition most typified by annoying subjective ringing or hissing in one’s ears. I guess the tinnitus group grabbed first priority and obtained the most logical-sounding Web address before we did. Yours truly is interested in both ATA organizations, being a decades-long sufferer from tinnitus, and wears a new electronic tinnitus masker as he is writing this column. Its fountain-like or waterfall-like sound is more soothing than you can imagine!

New Queries

(E-I 8-09.1) In the world of mechanical engineering, “split-duration cam” needs an Italian equivalent. Here is plenty of context to help: “With the help of xxx’s split-duration cam and xxx heads, this xxx 351C is a great engine with strong throttle response and added torque, and makes this xxx 351C crate engine by xxx the best choice for that added power.” Incidentally, the effort to conceal the manufacturer with the letters xxx is quite futile, since a search engine leads you directly to that company by typing in “351C.” Nonetheless, I will not reveal the firm’s name.

(E-Po 8-09.2) The technical term “short arc gap” was the sticking point in a text going from English into Polish. Here is a bit more to aid in the task: “These products offer a very short arc gap, which allows for higher beam intensity. This enables good system performance, color, stability, and superior lumen maintenance over life.”

(E-Po 8-09.3) It is difficult to understand how the following sentence fragment fits into the cardiology field, but in any case, good Russian is needed for the words in bold print: “XXX also induced a neurological defect in a mouse traction (or suspension) model.”

(E-Sp 8-09.4) This slangy query should yield some interesting replies. We have been inundated in recent years with the English phrase “cast in concrete” being used metaphorically. Now try for a definitive Spanish version: “The facilitator needs to remember that it is of the utmost importance that this facilitator guide is used as such, as a guide only; it is not cast in concrete.”

(E-U 8-09.5) Never on my watch has Urdu appeared in this column, but a need exists to express “biodiversity” in that language. Here is the English text: “This relates to the construction of a biomass plant as well as improving the biodiversity of the area.” How many ATA members know Urdu?

(F-G [E] 8-09.6) Nebengeleis simply did not work for the translator who was dealing with the following French sentence about traffic rules on the property of an airport. The troublesome words in French are in bold: en règle générale vaut la règle de circulation de la priorité à droite, que ce soit sur les voies de service ou sur les aires de traffic. What are they? English is acceptable.

(I-E 8-09.7) Civilita Veneta posed a problem when trying to render into English the award received by Lino Danese. That award was called the Premio Masi per la Civilita Veneta. Anyone want to try?

(N-E 8-09.8) Okay, it is a Norwegian business text, and støtlokasjonene was the problem word. Here is all of the context we are going to get: Viser oversikt over når en vare er kommet inn på de forskjellige støtlokasjonene.

(Sp-E 8-09.9) Libros visuales was the problem term in this printing and publishing query: En materia de libros visuales, se especializa en moda y diseño de indumentaria, sin quedar por esto excluidos de fotografía, pintura, escultura y paisajismo. What are they?

(Sp-Po [E] 8-09.10) Do you like Mexican history? If so, this one is for you. English may be substituted for the Polish that was originally wanted for the bold-print problem words in this quotation: En su lugar, Palafox fue nombrado Virrey interino, con los máximos poderes: gobernador de Nueva España, Capitán General,
Presidente de la Real Audiencia de México, además de visitador y Obispo de Puebla.

**Replies to Old Queries**  

**(E-I 6-09.1) (shale inhibitor):** Lorraine puts us on the right track by first giving us *inibitore di scistosità* as the Italian, and then explaining that shale interacts with fluids when wells are drilled. To stabilize the bores, stabilizing agents are used, and these agents are being made increasingly environmentally friendly.

**(E-R 6-09.2) (TdP):** Having to do with heart arrhythmias, this is really a French abbreviation, *Torsade de Pointes*, first described in 1966. Combining well informed but heavily overlapping responses from Thor Kottelin, Undine Calmbach, Bruce Popp, Paul Sadur, John McIntosh, and Andrene Everson, in English it is a dangerous “ventricular tachycardia.” It involves a long Q-T interval, usually caused by medications, and a “short-long-short” sequence in the beat preceding its onset. The QRS amplitude varies, and the QRS complexes appear to twist around the baseline. The Russian expansion of it, says Alek Lukoff, is *трепетание-мерцание* (желудочковое) или *иригуетное* нарушение сердечного ритма. John McIntosh says that in Russian the original abbreviation can be used as is, or else rendered as *Torsade de Pointes*. Vadim Khazin says it is *иригуетное желудочковое тахикардия*, and Michael Immerman offers *трепетание-мерцание желудочков*.

**(I-E 6-09.6) (emanando):** Lorraine explains that the text evidently involves a legal requirement that a notice be published, and that it be made [or issued – *emanato*] within a certain number of days of its publication (sua pubblicazione). The word does not refer to the notice but to the provision for publication. Here is Lorraine’s offering for the entire sentence from page 42 of the June issue: “to publish the *forthcoming* provision within x days of its newspaper appearance…once only, two columns wide in a type size that is double the normal size.” Lorraine is still not fully satisfied with the above, commenting that it “still doesn’t work.”

Meanwhile, Paul Sadur comments that, in his experience with literary Italian, these “-endo” or “-endo” gerunds, rather than expressing an action in progress, are sometimes used in written Italian the same way they would be used in Latin. Consequently, this could be something like “to issue,” “to promulgate,” or “to enact the upcoming measure [or the measure to be issued or promulgated or enacted] within X days.”

**(I-E 6-09.7) (con ogni consequenziale pronuncia):** Again from Lorraine, for this legal phrase, the following is offered: “on these merits, the motion, and any resulting decision, is rejected as unfounded in fact and in law.”

**(I-G [E] 1-09.10) (premio di proroga):** Claudio Cambon did too much work on this to let the English of the context paragraph he found pass unnoticed. It appeared in the July issue, and sheds light on the matter: “Further guarantees will not be issued to those companies that…have not paid the *premio di proroga* relative to prior unreleased guarantees, or that have not yet procured a release of the guarantees relative to expired contracts.”

**(Sp-E 11-08.11) (adoctrinamiento del MGMT):** Apologies to Jarl Roberto Hellemalm-Ashfield for delaying his response. For the noun, he says, use “training” if MGMT turns out to be an abbreviation for Master Group Multiplexer, and “instruction” if it means Material Group Manager.

**(Sp-E 6-09.8) (licenza livana):** This, says Gonzalo Ordóñez, is likely to be a noncommercial driver’s license or the equivalent, that is, a license to drive only small vehicles.

John McIntosh provided an aside in his reply above under E-R 6-09.2. It relates to the opening paragraph of the June column on page 42. When one of his friends would take his poodle for a walk in the park and then strike up a conversation—in Russian, of course—the pooch would just sit placidly. If by chance the speakers were to switch to English, the poodle would start to complain vociferously. What to make of that?

This column is solely intended as a means of facilitating a general discussion regarding terminology choices. For feedback regarding pressing terminology questions, please try one of these online forums: Lantra-L ([www.geocities.com/athens/7110/lantra.htm]), ProZ.com ([www.proz.com]), or Translators Café ([http://translatorscafe.com]).

Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmoor Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail address: jdecker@uplink.net. Please make your submissions by the first of each month to be included in the next issue. Generous assistance from Per Dohler, proofreader, is gratefully acknowledged.
Arthur Graham, whose contributions have appeared many times in these columns, recently sent me “Punctured Egos: A Baker’s Dozen of Put-Downs + More.” He writes:

I attended the Juilliard School of Music, sang in opera professionally, and later taught music at the university level. I was a participant in most of the incidents described below—on the giving or receiving end.

What follows are four of the anecdotes from his collection that are concerned with language, some slightly edited by me.

1. I sang the marriage broker in Madama Butterfly dozens of times. In Milwaukee, I was warned by the lead tenor that the soprano playing Butterfly, an American, would instruct me in the proper pronunciation of Omara, a section of Nagasaki mentioned in the Act I wedding ceremony. The Italian score says Omara, but she pulled me aside and informed me that Omura is the actual place name and that I should sing it correctly. I responded that I had been stationed near Nagasaki in the army of occupation after World War II and that the proper pronunciation was with the open U sound of “put” or “foot” rather than the closed U sound she recommended. She looked at me askance and said nothing.

2. I gave my first recital in Town Hall (with the Zilberts Choral Society) at age 22, in the days before Jewish names were acceptable for a career in opera. My father and I worked out a nom de guerre by taking most of Abraham and the G of Greenberg to make the last name, and Arthur from one of my father’s Jewish patients. Years later, while I was working as an investigator in the Emergency Office of the New York City Department of Welfare, the police brought in a well-dressed middle-aged woman, more than a little confused. In a Jewish accent, she told me that her name was Mary Ryan. I asked her to sign an application, but she got stuck in the middle of the last name. I asked what the problem might be, and she answered that she did not know where to put the W in Ryan. Then she asked me my name. I answered, “Dr. Arthur Graham.” “That’s a nice Jewish name,” she said.

3. In 1975 I took my first sabbatical from teaching and the family went to Rome, where I studied Neapolitan and Neapolitan songs. (We were afraid to live in Naples.) On the way, we spent a few days in Paris. I really was not very good in French in those days; I didn’t read Maigret until a few years later. Going into a store, fortunately together with my seven-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter, I tried to ask the cost of a newspaper. I had forgotten combien and, perhaps remembering the first syllable, perhaps making up a word from Italian quanto, stuck out a fistful of coins and asked “Con?” I got strange looks! But I also got the paper.


French-born professor to American-born professor of French: “When I am in Paris, no one tells me how well I speak French.”
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