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There is a lot going on north of the border!

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In an age of instant and ubiquitous communication, why are so many of us planning to take time away from work, run the gauntlet of the air transport system, and spend a substantial amount of money just so we can be in one place together for a few days? If you have already attended many ATA conferences you already know why; if Denver will be your first, here are a few reasons to get you started.

For one thing, people behave quite differently in one another’s actual presence than they do when interacting remotely. The keyboard and screen are numbing and protective, a barrier that can muffle and distort what is being said. But at gatherings of physical human beings—especially at events that bring together people who already have a great deal in common—interaction can and must become real. You will find that your fellow mailing list participants have faces and voices and expressions as well as signature files. Conversations will take place not sequentially in a digest file but in real space and time, with all the subtle dynamics and gestures that have shaped the human mind for millions of years. Your ears and eyes, and above all your understanding of your colleagues, will be opened.

This authentic communication is also extraordinarily dense in many dimensions. An ATA conference is unique: nowhere else in the world do so many practicing and prospective translators and interpreters, with such a depth and breadth of linguistic and subject-related expertise, come together in one place. They will be joined by potential employers, suppliers of tools and reference materials and educational opportunities, and media representatives who want to hear what we are saying to each other and to the world. Representatives of sister organizations from dozens of other countries come to our conferences to talk to us and to one another, and business of many kinds is done at an enormous variety of levels.

The conference has also traditionally been a place where we look at new trends in our industry. One such trend that is becoming increasingly significant is “machine translation” (MT), and this year the scheduling of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas conference right after ours offers a unique opportunity to interact with experts in that field and to determine how translators and interpreters can most effectively use this new technology.

What you are about to experience is therefore something quite amazing: an annual opportunity to get away from your desk and immerse yourself for a while in an exhilarating maelstrom of real people, talking to each other in real time and in real languages (including the inimitable tone and body language that no electronic communication can convey) about things that matter to all of us. You will be able to put a face to a name you keep seeing on a mailing list; attend presentations that give you new and valuable insights; find new reference sources or even a new client; and perhaps even get talked into serving on a committee, or writing an article or a blog post, or joining your local chapter. ATA is all of that and all of us, and many of us will come to Denver to continue what this Association has been doing for 51 years: defining and improving what we do and telling the world about ourselves. Please join us.

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Remember:
ATA Members Can Access
The ATA Chronicle Online

All ATA members have access to complete issues of The ATA Chronicle, from 2000 to the present, on ATA’s website. Each issue is posted there as a PDF. Just log onto the Members Only section today and start reading!
Once the conference is over, you may feel quite exhausted. For several very intense days, you have attended sessions, shaken hands, exchanged cards, taken notes, and distributed your marketing materials. When the exhibits close and the last session ends, it is time to say goodbye to friends and head back to your workplace, where you most likely will find a long list of tasks needing your attention. At the same time, the many good ideas and suggestions you heard also are a source of energy and enthusiasm for the months to come. Before you allow yourself to return to the normal routine of your daily work, it may be helpful to use the end of your stay and your return trip to make the most of this “conference energy.”

Sort through the materials you received. If you are like most conference attendees, you used your conference bag to store handouts, notes, and brochures. In addition, you probably received a number of business cards. While the impressions of the conference are still fresh in your mind, review the materials and organize them into several categories, such as “useful right now,” “possibly useful later,” and “probably not very useful.” Use a highlighter or pen to mark relevant handout sections, website or software recommendations, and other items you want to remember. You can also write notes on the back of business cards to refresh your memory later. Not only will this step help you process your many conference impressions, it will also reduce clutter once you get back to your office.

Prioritize. The review, marking, and sorting of the conference materials you received may point out certain priorities. The “useful right now” materials represent steps that should be taken as soon as possible. For example, if you resolved never to get behind with your invoicing again or to change your résumé, do it right away.

Strategize. On your way back from the conference or shortly after getting back, take a little time to reflect on what you heard and saw. Which sessions were particularly helpful to you, and why? Did you hear specific recommendations to improve your practice or your business? What would you need to do to follow these recommendations, and does that seem easy or difficult? Are there any steps you can take right away without major effort? Which were your original goals for attending the conference, and did you meet them? Did you miss any sessions you would have liked to attend and should you follow up on them? Based on what you learned, what are your strategic business goals for the next year?

Follow up. With electronic communication and social media, it is easier than ever to follow up on contacts you made at the conference. Be sure to send a professional e-mail to potential new clients as soon as possible after the conference and add colleagues you met to your electronic address book or LinkedIn network. If you made promises to send out any materials or information, do so without delay. Finally, find some way of jotting down the strategic ideas for your business you gathered on your way back.

ATA eCONFERENCE

Can’t be in two rooms at the same time at ATA’s Annual Conference? You don’t have to be! Sessions at ATA’s 51st Annual Conference will be audiotaped, synchronized with supporting slides, and integrated with handouts to create an online multimedia experience. Discount available for conference attendees who pre-order. Look for this unique eConference on the conference registration form. To learn more, visit www.atanet.org/conf/2010/dvdrom.htm.
ATA membership helps you become a better translator and interpreter. ATA provides knowledge and experience not just through The ATA Chronicle but through hands-on learning. As technology has evolved, the Association has expanded the professional development opportunities it offers.

For 51 years, the ATA Annual Conference, or Annual Convention as it used to be called, has been the professional development focal point for the profession. This year’s meeting in Denver features over 150 sessions—nowhere else can you get the face-to-face time with so many experts.

To bring the conference to those who could not attend, missed a session, or just wanted to re-listen to a session, ATA now offers selected recorded sessions on DVD. While we have been doing this for the past five years, this will be the first conference where these recorded sessions and their PowerPoint presentations will also be available online through our new eConference program. (For more information, please check out www.atanet.org/conf/2010/dvdom.htm.)

As part of a move to offer more specialized continuing education opportunities over the past decade, ATA started providing professional development seminars and division mid-year conferences. These events delve deeper into specific areas of specialization or individual languages. In a typical year, in addition to the Annual Conference there have been four to five regional professional development seminars and two or three division mid-year conferences. These events are spread around the country, but typically are held where there are a substantial number of ATA members to support them.

New this year, ATA is bringing online learning to you through webinars. These webinars—the first one in September sold out with 100 participants—make it easier than ever for you to build your skills and enhance your practice without leaving home. The webinars will also be recorded and made available online following the live events. (For more information, please check out www.atanet.org/webinars.)

To be clear, there is no overlap in the content: these various learning opportunities are complementary. Plus, they have their own benefits. For example, a professional development seminar offers in-depth content and local face-to-face networking, while a webinar’s greatest benefit is ease of access.

Members have told us time and again that the information, resources, and techniques they learned through professional development events—not to mention the connections they made with new clients—more than paid the cost of their membership and meeting expenses.

With this wide range of learning opportunities, your professional development has never been easier. Be sure to take advantage of all your Association has to offer.

Send a Complimentary Copy

If you enjoyed reading this issue of The ATA Chronicle and think a colleague or organization would enjoy it too, we’ll send a free copy.

Simply e-mail the recipient’s name and address to Maggie Rowe at ATA Headquarters—maggie@atanet.org—and she will send the magazine with a note indicating that the copy is being sent with your compliments. Help spread the word about ATA!
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In many ways, Canada looks and feels like America. It has big, sprawling cities, sports stadiums, shopping malls, and the same unmistakable sense of space and newness found throughout the U.S. But when it comes to translation, it is a whole different world. The reason is simple: Canada has two official languages, English and French.

Why does that make a difference? Imagine for a second if Spanish were the main language of the six New England states, plus New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, the District of Columbia, and both Virginia and West Virginia. Imagine further if English remained the main language in all other states. That would make the U.S. about as Spanish as Canada is French. If this were the case, do you think U.S. businesses would continue to operate in English only? Would restaurants in Boston translate their menus for tourists from the southern and western states? What about the federal government?

When one-quarter of the entire population speaks a minority language and is geographically concentrated in a single area, everything must be translated: government documents, public signs, court decisions, product packaging, advertising—everything!

A Bilingual Country Full of Unilingual People

Surprisingly few Canadians actually speak both English and French. In fact, 7 of the 10 provinces are so massively English, you could go days or weeks without hearing a word of French.

Consider this: Canada’s easternmost province, Newfoundland and Labrador, is home to about half a million people. In the 2006 census, 494,345 of them claimed to speak only English at home, versus 650 who claimed to speak only French. About 4.7% of the province’s residents said they were fluent in French. In Canada’s westernmost province, British Columbia, 3,341,285 listed English as their home language versus only 15,325 who listed French. In fact, for every person who spoke French at home, more than 41 spoke a nonofficial language such as Cantonese or Punjabi. About 5.2% of British Columbians claimed to be fluent in French.

The picture is completely different in Canada’s only majority French province, Quebec. There, slightly more than 6 million people out of a total population of about 7.5 million speak French at home, compared to some 745,000 who use English and 520,000 who speak a third language.

English, as the language of money, power, and international trade, is widely spoken by francophone Quebecers, who have the advantage of living in close proximity to English Canada and the U.S. In cosmopolitan Montreal, home to a huge immigrant population, many people are in fact trilingual, speaking Portuguese, Chinese, or other languages at home, and English and French in public and at work. Even so, over four million Quebecers speak no English whatsoever.

In Quebec City, where I live, 95.3% of residents are native French speakers and two-thirds are unilingual. Native English speakers represent less than 1.5% of the total population and are actually outnumbered by third language groups, who represent 2.8% of the population. The remaining 0.4% claim both English and French as mother tongues. Overall, only 18% of Canadians claim to be fluent in both English and French, most of them francophones.
A Land of Translation

These demographic realities have made Canada a worldwide leader in translation. Although it has only 0.5% of the world population, it occupies fully 10% of the global translation market.2

The biggest employer of translators is the federal government. Its Translation Bureau has 1,200 salaried translators, interpreters, terminologists, and localization specialists. Not only do these professionals translate reams of documents, mostly from English into French, but they also provide an array of other language services, such as Termium, the Canadian government’s free trilingual (English, French, Spanish) terminology database covering virtually all areas of human activity. The Translation Bureau is also a regular source of work for hundreds of freelancers.

The provincial governments also translate, but to widely varying extents. Only one province, New Brunswick, is officially bilingual, a political decision subsequently entrenched in the constitution. It now has a legal obligation to translate everything it does for the benefit of its one-third French-speaking population. Manitoba must also translate all laws into French and provide guaranteed levels of French-language education according to a 1985 Supreme Court ruling.5

The most populous province, Ontario, although not officially bilingual, makes extensive use of translation. Its French Language Services Act requires it to provide government services in French in 25 designated areas (non-urban areas where francophones represent at least 10% of the population and urban centers with at least 5,000 francophones).4 Ontario has nearly 500,000 native French speakers out of a total population of about 12 million, most clustered in the federal capital of Ottawa or close to the Quebec border.

Quebec is the only province that is officially unilingual (in its case, unilingual French). Its Charter of the French Language, intended as a bulwark against the encroachment of English, requires businesses to operate in French and deal with the government in French, and requires non-Canadian citizens (such as immigrants from the U.S.) to send their children to French-language schools.4 The designation does not, however, apply to the courts or to individual citizens in their private dealings with the government.

What It Means for Translators

The most glaring difference between the translation industry in the U.S. and Canada is the opportunity for salaried employment. In addition to the thousands on the Canadian government’s payroll, many thousands more work for private employers. Big banks like the Royal Bank or the Bank of Montreal have substantial in-house translation departments. Translators work for chartered accountancies, airlines, grocery store chains, big retailers, telecoms, law firms, and many other employers. In fact, students graduating from translation programs are three times more likely to start their careers in salaried positions than as freelancers.6

This pays huge dividends in terms of professional development. Most young translators get daily feedback on their work from senior editors (often called revisers in Canada), who are themselves translators. This ongoing interaction boosts their self-confidence and the quality of their work. According to studies, salaried translators in Canada earn more on average than freelance translators, and among freelance translators, those who worked first as salaried translators earn more on average than those who did not.7

Another difference—of particular benefit to freelancers—is the general need for translation in Canada. Since everybody who does business in the country is a potential client, most freelancers can cultivate business contacts and direct clients among people in their families and social circles. It is also easier for them to cold-call potential clients or grow their clientele by attending local business functions. Many freelancers never work for agencies. There are estimated to be 15,000 translators, interpreters, terminologists, and localization specialists in Canada.

What It Means for Translation Agencies

A striking difference among Canadian translation agencies is their use of in-house translators. When every day brings guaranteed work in a single language pair, it is more cost-effective and better for quality control to have an in-house team. My
own agency has 20 in-house translators, and some of the bigger names have hundreds. Many large translation companies in the U.S. have none at all.

In addition, the quality control step tends to be more codified. For example, all editing work at Canadian agencies is performed by senior translators. It is not considered acceptable to use non-translators for the task, even if they are native speakers of the target language. A big reason for this is the intense competition on the basis of quality. The Canadian translation market is mature and has many savvy buyers who expect, demand, and recognize high quality. Subpar work is not tolerated. Even “acceptable” quality work is a difficult sell when clients expect outstanding.

Professional Organizations

There is no single translators association in Canada similar to ATA. A national organization exists for agencies and language schools called AILIA. It is a voice for the business interests of the Canadian language industry. A second national body, the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC), is a federation of nine provincial and territorial organizations. One of CTTIC’s main activities has been to implement standard certification procedures, in accordance with its objective to provide uniform standards for the profession and to ensure the competence of the members of the organizations it represents. CTTIC handles translator certification in all parts of the country except Quebec. It has also recently received government funding to improve professional training for translators across the country. In addition to AILIA and CTTIC, translators and interpreters have individual associations in each province. These associations are similar to ATA, but without corporate members. They hold regular conferences and provide training opportunities.

The Quebec association, the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec (OTTIAQ), is unique in that it is a recognized professional order whose primary mission is to protect the public against bad translations. It is similar in many ways to associations of registered nurses or chartered accountants or engineers. It has the right to inspect a translator’s professional practice and can order a translator to take remedial training if it deems this necessary. Only certified translators may belong to OTTIAQ, and only OTTIAQ members may call themselves certified. There is no certification exam per se, but rather a rigorous process designed to recognize proven ability and experience. To be an OTTIAQ member, you must have a university degree in translation and, depending on how many years of work experience you possess, perform a mentorship under the supervision of a certified translator or submit a corpus of translations for evaluation by a committee. If you do not have a university degree, you may also request certification by proving that you have worked for five years or more as a full-time translator and by submitting a corpus of translations. All told, there are more than 2,000 members of OTTIAQ.

When one-quarter of the entire population speaks a minority language and is geographically concentrated in a single area, everything must be translated.

Can You Work for Canadian Clients?

Of course you can! If you are a talented translator who works between English and French, there are probably opportunities for you in Canada. The greatest volume of work is into French, which for some texts requires familiarity with Canadian French. If you want to investigate this option, I would suggest teaming up with a Canadian freelance partner so that your work is edited and you get feedback; this is a particularly good arrangement if you wish to bypass agencies and work for direct clients. Work is also available into English, mostly in Quebec.

With globalization, there is also considerable new demand for translation into Spanish. You may be able to generate work in this area by having a network of translator colleagues in Canada who can refer their Spanish jobs to you, or by courting work from boutique agencies. I know from my own experience that it is not always easy to find French-Spanish translators for the Quebec market.

Whatever you do, bear in mind that Canada is a very demanding market. It expects quality and will go out of its way to obtain it. Offer quality, and clients will be beating a path to your door, wherever it may be.
Notes
1. All figures are drawn from Canada’s 2006 Census, www.statcan.gc.ca.

2. These figures come from two sources: Common Sense Advisory’s estimated size of the global translation market and Statistics Canada’s figures on population and the domestic translation industry. About a decade ago, the global market was estimated to be $12 billion and Canada’s domestic industry $1.2 billion. Indications are that the global market has doubled in size since then to $25 billion, but it is conceivable that the domestic Canadian market has also doubled. Canada is a prosperous first world country where the demand for translation has skyrocketed with the advent of globalization.


Recently, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to speak with ATA Director Lois Feuerle about her professional journey. Lois was very generous with her advice to those just entering the field.

For those of you who have never met Lois, here is a quick rundown of her many accomplishments. In addition to serving on ATA’s Board of Directors, Lois currently chairs the Association’s Honors and Awards Committee. She has been a practicing legal translator and interpreter since 1988. She holds a law degree from the New York University School of Law and a Ph.D. in German and linguistics from the University of Kansas. She has been an ATA-certified German→English translator since 1991. From 1996-2000, she was the coordinator of Court Interpreting Services for the State of New York, and from 2000-2008, she was the coordinator of court interpreting certification, testing, and training for the Oregon Judicial Department. Prior to that, she spent five years administering the Translation and Interpreting Studies Program at the New York University School of Continuing Education and teaching German→English translation classes in that program and at Montclair State University and Portland Community College. She has served on the board of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators and on the Oregon Governor’s Commission on Healthcare Interpreters.

Asked how her earlier experiences shaped her career path, Lois explained, “I was always translating in addition to whatever else it was I was doing. Even when I was a hippie jeweler, I was translating an 800-page book on the history of Poland.”

Getting Started

Evelyn: Did you grow up speaking German or did you learn that in school?

Lois: No. I didn’t grow up speaking German, although it’s true when I was very little someone taught me to count to 10 in German.

Actually, the pivotal event for moving into translation probably happened when I was in graduate school.

You can never know too much; continuing education is a lifetime activity.
I was given a job translating a series of scholarly articles written by a Jesuit missionary who spent time in Africa observing the symbiotic relationship of plants that oozed sticky substances and the ants that licked these substances, thereby ridding these plants of noxious pests. The professor at the university who gave me the translation job had apparently received a grant to research these ants and found these articles in German that he needed translated into English.

I found the job quite fascinating. I love the idea of learning new things that you never would have even thought of knowing. I also found it a wonderful challenge to translate the words and concepts from one language to another. So that was probably the first time I ever really translated. Ironically, I had already interpreted once for an elderly German woman experiencing a medical emergency, back in New Jersey when I was still in high school and working at a hospital as a nurse’s aide.

I’ve always been interested in languages. In fact, when I was still a little girl I used to read with great interest about the American Indians. I would collect the Native American words mentioned in the text. When I was in the third grade, I even made my own little dictionaries of Blackfoot and Lenni-Lenapi terms.

**Evelyn:** Did you always know that you wanted to be an interpreter and translator?

**Lois:** No, I never knew it. I probably didn’t even realize that translation existed as a profession, certainly not in those early days, not even as a graduate student. I must have been vaguely aware that people were translators and interpreters. But it was not anything that I was purposefully headed toward, and certainly it was nothing that any professor or guidance counselor or department chair ever suggested as a profession.

**Evelyn:** What profession were you pursuing in graduate school?

**Lois:** I thought I would become a professor of German, teach in a university happily ever after, retire, and become a professor emerita. For a start, I completed my Ph.D. when there were very few jobs available at universities. If you wanted to work, you had to think of something where you could earn money immediately. Going back and forth, living in Germany and the U.S., it is very easy to slip into teaching English. So I taught English both in the U.S. and Germany. Certainly, foreign languages have always been something that got me jobs. At one point, I worked in the Historical Sound Recording Collection at the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University when my husband was in law school. I got the job because I could read texts in two European languages in addition to English. I also had to read music in score. Believe it or not, 50 people applied for that minimum wage job!

**Things That Helped**

**Evelyn:** After you started translating and interpreting, you also taught and did administrative work, correct?

**Lois:** Yes. I administered the Translation Studies Program at New York University while I was teaching German-English translation and German-English theory and practice within that program.

**Evelyn:** Do you think the teaching experience helped you work as a translator and interpreter?

**Lois:** Oh, yes. Basically, if you’re a translator or interpreter, everything you’ve ever done, are doing at the moment, or ever will do will certainly help you as a translator and/or interpreter. I think it was the late Charles Stern, a long-time member of the New York Circle of Translators and ATA and the 1985 Gode Medal winner, who said that translation is what you should do last in life, because everything else is a preparation for it.

**Evelyn:** How do you view administrative work?

**Lois:** There is a certain routine aspect to administrative work that one might find challenging to keep interesting for a period of time. I don’t know about administrative work in other professions, but I will say that administering a translation studies program basically meant that I got to develop curricula, hire faculty, think of new classes, and do a variety of practical things that would basically enhance the program. In enhancing the program, of course, you are enhancing the profession, so I don’t regard the administrative work I did as extraneous.

The same holds true for the administrative work I’ve done for state court systems. Basically, you have an overarching goal of improving access.
to justice through the provision of court interpreters; at the same time, you have the practical challenges of figuring out how you can go about doing this. You have to be involved with recruiting, continuing education, and the training that will help people pass the certification exam. Fortunately, I worked for two state court systems that were very committed to having certified interpreters provide the language services needed in court, rather than depending on self-identified people who might be excellent, but who also might be much less than excellent.

One of the things I did when I was in Oregon was to create the Indigenous Language Project. It is probably surprising to most people to learn that at the time when I was still working for the State of Oregon, we had roughly 50,000 or so immigrants from Mexico who did not speak Spanish or did not speak Spanish well, which meant that we needed interpreters of indigenous Mexican languages, such as Mixteco, Zapoteco, Nahuaatl, Tzotzil, or Trique. In Mexico, they speak approximately 290 or so different indigenous languages. If you have a litigant or witness in court who speaks one language only, you have to find someone who speaks that language in addition to English or perhaps Spanish. In many cases, you are more likely to find someone who is bilingual in Zapoteco and Spanish than you are to find someone who speaks Zapoteco and English.

We put together a multi-pronged program where we provided training to people who were native speakers of those languages to help prepare them to interpret in court. We had training to prepare certified Spanish interpreters to work as relay interpreters for those times when we needed someone to go from Mixteco into Spanish and then work into English. We also had training for attorneys who worked with members of these indigenous groups as their clients. We put together a comprehensive package, so to speak, basically with the all-encompassing goal of enhancing access to justice. At the time we did it, this type of program was extremely unusual in the U.S.

Although administrative work might sound very boring, if you come up with interesting and creative ideas, it is a very challenging and rewarding position.

How to Find More Work?

**Evelyn:** How has the volume of your work changed over time?

**Lois:** I personally have had very little interpreting work in the courts. In Germany, people tend to start learning English when they are 10 or so, so many people don’t need interpreters. I’ve gotten interpreting assignments related to very small inheritances, and I’ve also had a number of assignments involving consensual intercepts or body wires. I’ve also had divorce cases, particularly for high net worth clients.

**Evelyn:** How about translation?

**Lois:** In the courts, very frequently contract matters or patent infringement, that type of thing.

**Evelyn:** Do you have any advice for a newcomer trying to find more work?

**Lois:** The most important thing for newcomers looking to market themselves is to join professional organizations. I think the work gained through membership in groups like ATA and the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators really gave me a tremendous jumpstart. I’ve been told by people that the more unusual your language, the more work you’ll probably get from being listed in ATA’s online Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services. But I have to say that even though German is very common—it is one of ATA’s larger divisions—I certainly get solicitations saying “I saw your profile on ATA’s website…” So I think having your credentials listed on an organization’s website is very important. There is also the Job Marketplace at ATA’s Annual Conference where you can leave résumés, which I think is also very valuable.

Above all, you need to be active within the organizations to which you belong, not just a passive member. You can still get some work just by being a member, but certainly I think being an active participant is something that will bring you double what you’ll get from just being a passive member. I think it is critical to make a contribution.
Networking: How and Why?

Evelyn: What are some of the good ways to network if you are new to the profession?

Lois: Another reason why you might want to attend conferences is that such events allow you to confer with your peers about all sorts of things. For example, you can get feedback on whether a computer program or dictionary is worth the money, or if an invoicing system is advisable. All of this is information that you can gather best from those who have actually used these products and either found them desirable or undesirable. Getting feedback is also a very useful aspect of networking. Most people might think of networking for job offers, but you can also learn an awful lot of other things every bit as important in the long run. Certainly, being known to colleagues who work in languages that are different from the language you work in is a good source of referrals.

Keeping Up

Evelyn: How do you keep your knowledge up to date and skills honed?

Lois: Well, I translate almost every day, holidays and Sundays included. I make sure that I get back to Germany as much as possible, or to other places where German is spoken. I usually get to Germany once or twice a year, and spent about a month there this past summer. I also read a lot: German newspapers, magazines, trash and high literature, and even cereal boxes. I speak German whenever I have the opportunity and attend conferences and workshops and take classes. Basically, you can never know too much; continuing education is a lifetime activity.

I love the idea of learning new things that you never would have even thought of knowing.

Future of the Profession

Evelyn: What do you think of the future of the translation and interpreting professions?

Lois: Well, I suppose there are certain “dangers” that are current. Not too long ago I gave a presentation entitled “The Future of Interpreting: Trends, Projections, and Visions” in Toronto at the Translation World Conference. The major trends I see are budget constraints, the increasing use of technology to support translators and interpreters in their work, global outsourcing, and the growing number of languages that are needed, both in industry and in the courts. The other thing I see is an increasing recognition of the importance of qualifications. It used to be that anyone who wandered into court could interpret, but this is no longer the case. Another trend I see is consolidation in the marketplace. Certain companies are swallowing up other companies, so you have much larger entities. Finally, I see the growing strength of professional translation and interpreting associations, which is something very positive.

Certainly, I do not foresee the need for translation and interpreting diminishing. Of course, I don’t see everything because I sit at just one little place in the whole realm of translating and interpreting.
Anyone who has ever taken the Trans-Siberian Railway between China and Moscow understands the importance of standards. Right at the border between China and Russia, the trains have to go through a “break-of-gauge” where carriages to or from China have to be lifted to have their “bogies” changed. (Bogies are structures underneath trains to which axles and wheels are attached.) The change of bogies certainly adds to the adventure of the long train ride; however, it is also a compelling illustration of the problems that arise from unaligned standards. Permit us to explain.

To address the problem of differences in railway gauges, the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed a law over 160 years ago (Gauge Act 1846) that defined the standard rail gauge as 1,435 millimeters.1 This U.K. standard is used by over half the railway lines of the world, allowing rail travel nationally and internationally with a minimum of tedious bogie changes, but this standard is not universal. China uses 762 millimeters, New Zealand uses a gauge of 1,067 millimeters, and Finland uses 1,524 millimeters, the same as the former Soviet Union.2

Translators and Standards
How do railway standards relate to data standards in the translation industry? There are at least three ways. First, a similarity: standards are necessary to allow for smooth exchangeability between countries (or translation tools). Second, a difference: exchangeability within the language industry is not important enough for an authority like a government to step in and institute standards (and it is entirely possible that we would strongly object if one did!). Third, an observation: standards need not be completely universal before becoming highly useful.

Language industry veteran Kirti Vashee recently posted an entry on his machine translation blog about data standards in the translation industry. While some of the points in his blog entry need further discussion, we agree entirely with his vision of fully interoperable translation tools:

I [should be able to] edit a document downstream with an application [translation tool] that did not create the original data and send it on to others who can continue the editing in other preferred applications [tools]. I think this is a big deal. I think this is the future, as data flows more freely in and out of organizations.3

Setting aside for the moment the problem of compatibility between the many different authoring environments in which documents are created, which is very important but...
much bigger than the translation industry, let’s look at a translation-specific problem to illustrate the importance of standards in translation when using translation tools.

**Text Alignment: Segmentation**

The issue: how do you keep a source text and its “aligned” translation together from the starting point, where there is only a draft translation, to the end point, where the translation has been edited and proofed and is ready for publication? Just to be clear, we are talking about a bi-text, that is, a text and its translation that have been segmented and aligned so that each segment of source text is linked to the corresponding segment of target text.

Figure 1 provides an example of a very short bi-text.

Segments in a bi-text are typically sentences. True, they are sometimes paragraphs, but in this article we will focus on segments as sentences. We need not be aware of it, but most translation memory tools automatically create a bi-text while a translator produces a translation, working a segment at a time.

One way of making Vashee’s vision into reality would be to have a standard format for representing a bi-text. Before a translation project begins, the project manager could make the source text into a bi-text file and send it to a translator. The translator would be able to choose from a variety of TEnTs (Translation Environment Tools), since they would all support the standard bi-text format.

There are many types of translations where segmentation is not as relevant and segment boundaries are often not retained. However, much translation work done by professional translators involves segment-oriented translation, with the occasional sentence being split into two sentences in the translation or two source sentences being combined in the translation.

As mentioned above, many translation tools already represent a text and its translation internally as a bi-text. The problem is that they also need to support a bi-text standard. In Vashee’s vision, a translator can save a bi-text and pass it back to the project manager, who does not care which tool was used to produce it. Then the project manager can put the bi-text into some kind of quality assurance tool, such as one used for terminology consistency checking, and then pass it on to a bilingual editor (called a reviser in Europe), who can compare the source text and translation in a different tool than the one used by the translator and make changes as needed.

The source text and its translation would ideally remain in bi-text format all the way through to final proofing, although this would require support for the bi-text standard by word processing and desktop publishing software vendors.

The good news is that there is already a standard that can represent a bi-text. It is called XLIFF, and it is becoming more widely used. XLIFF is an XML-based standard that was originally developed for the bi-text representation of software files (XLIFF stands for XML Localisation Interchange File Format), but today it is used for virtually all file formats that can be processed by TEnTs.

While XLIFF represents the translation files, there is also the translation memory that contains translation units (pairs of translated segments) of previous and ongoing projects. The translator should be able to receive a relevant translation memory along with the source text and be able to read it in any tool and use it to identify segments that have been translated previously. Many translators will recognize that there is a standard that provides a degree of interoperability for translation memories: TMX (Translation Memory Exchange). Just like XLIFF, the TMX standard is also XML-based and is used to store, maintain, and exchange translation units between different TEnTs.

The reader may be wondering what
XML is all about. Fortunately, when everything is running smoothly, a translator does not need to see any XML. It is used primarily for components of a computer system to talk with each other in computerese.

Together, XLIFF and TMX seem to be the basis for building Vashee’s vision of the future. So why are we not yet there? Two obstacles: 1) more data standards are needed and 2) more tool vendors need to implement these standards. The need and a solution are discussed below.

Consistency in Segmentation

Just as with railway gauge standards, users do not notice departures from standards until there is a “break” of some kind. A huge break in data occurs if two tools need to be used together in a translation project involving translation memory but they do not both support XLIFF and TMX. However, a more subtle break can occur between XLIFF and TMX when segments are not defined consistently.

At first, it may seem that segmentation is a non issue. Isn’t it obvious how to divide a text up into sentences? Generally, for a human, it is obvious. However, there are even cases where sentence boundaries are ambiguous for a human. Consider the following sentence (based on a sentence provided by Arle Lommel, the chair of OSCAR, the Localization Industry Standards Association’s committee for the development of open standards).

Bill was forced to complete all the scraping, finishing, etc., and so on, that Bob was supposed to finish by Tuesday.

A two-sentence interpretation could be paraphrased:

Bill was forced to complete all the scraping, finishing, and so on. Bob was supposed to finish a different project by Tuesday.

Such ambiguities are relatively rare, but there are many segmentation issues that occur frequently.

Translation technology developers Rodolfo Raya (Maxprograms) and David Pooley (SDL) were kind enough to share some of the segmentation issues they encounter in everyday work with XLIFF and TMX:

1. Should a semicolon be considered a signal of a boundary between two segments?

2. How about a colon? Sometimes a colon is followed by a list of nouns, but other times it is followed by another sentence. The difference is easy for a human to detect but not for a computer.

3. Does a tab indicate a new segment? At one point, two well-known translation tools differed on this question.

4. What should be done with “white space” (blanks, tabs, and new-line characters) that appear after periods? Should that white space be part of the segment or not? If one segmentation system retains the white space and the other deletes it, logically identical segments in a translation memory may not get “perfect match” scores in translation memory lookup.

5. The most obvious question has been saved for last: When is a period not the end of a sentence? To answer this question, the computer has to have a complete list of abbreviations. Of course, this list and other segmentation rules differ from language to language.

Suppose a text is segmented with one set of rules, translated, and put into a translation memory and exported as a TMX file. Further suppose that a slightly revised version of the same source text is segmented into an XLIFF file using a different tool and thus a different set of rules, and the TMX file from the earlier translation is then accessed. During translation memory lookup, some segments that remain unchanged that were previously translated will not be found in the translation memory due to segmentation differences. They will then have to be retranslated needlessly. In response to that scenario, an additional data standard, SRX (Segmentation Rules Exchange), was developed initially for use with TMX, but has been found to be applicable to all segmentation tasks.

An SRX file contains a formal set of rules for segmenting text. There may not exist one true set of segmentation rules for each language that everyone should use, but at least a translation memory (in TMX) can be accompanied by an SRX file that documents how it was segmented. Then, when a source text is segmented with the intent of leveraging TMX files against it, that source text can be segmented the same way the translation memory was segmented. However, this only works if all the tools involved in the project can export and import XLIFF, TMX, and SRX files.
Implementation of Segment-Related Standards

The Translation Tool Forum at last year’s ATA Annual Conference included a document prepared by ATA’s Translation and Computers (TAC) Committee with the cooperation of TEnT vendors that were exhibiting at the conference (Across, Atril, JiveFusion, Kilgray, Multiling, SDL, STAR, Terminotox, TotalRecall, and Wordfast). As of October 2009, all but one vendor had implemented TMX, a mere 4 out of 10 had fully implemented XLIFF, and only one had implemented SRX. Nevertheless, nearly all of these vendors indicated that they were planning to implement XLIFF and some were planning to implement SRX.

Clearly, the tool vendors are in a period of transition and this is where we, their customers, fit in. Would you like to encourage tool vendors to move ahead with an implementation of XLIFF and SRX? Then please send a message of support to datastandards@atanet.org. These messages will be compiled by the TAC Committee and given to the vendors.

The Future

We do not need to live with the equivalent of incompatible railroad gauges. Your influence on tool vendors—do not forget to send an e-mail supporting the implementation of XLIFF and SRX—can make the vision of interoperable tools a reality much sooner and avoid unnecessary loss of translation data.

References


Recently, there have been more online scams targeting translators and interpreters. Although these online scams are nothing new, they are becoming more sophisticated. The story might be familiar to many of you, but it bears repeating, especially for those just entering the profession. The plot remains pretty much the same: a fake client sends a check and intentionally overpays the translator, who is then asked to deposit the complete amount and send back the difference through Western Union or another method. A few days later, the translator receives a call from the bank saying that the check never cleared, while the wire transfer was completed and the so-called “difference” has already left the translator’s account.

Scams of this caliber target beginners and experienced freelancers and companies alike. Daniel Shamebo, with Languages Translation Services, once fell victim to this kind of online deception and had to pay his translators and record a loss in his company books. “The business was good for our Japanese and Chinese translators and we paid them [the translators] in full from our own pocket.”

Lisa Siegel, with Alisa International Spanish Translations, has over 15 years of experience as a Spanish translator. She was once scammed by a certain “Jane Spencer” and reported her to the Internet Fraud Complaint Center. “There’s also this guy called Jack Brown who sends you AIDS-related material and tells you he pretty much wants to educate kids and that your translation is going to save the world,” she says of another scammer who contacted her. “Once you mention that you’re waiting for his deposit to clear before you get started, you never hear from him again.”

More recently, Lisa and Daniel were part of a group of about 45 translators whom “Mr. Hanks Martins” tried to scam around Christmas 2009. They were among those contacted by Michele Lemieux-Madison, a freelance translator since 2002, who found their e-mail address on one of Hanks’ messages to her. “I got all these names because Hanks inadvertently attached the e-mail addresses to the message he...
sent me with the file he needed translated,” Michele explains. She contacted those on the list to discuss the issue and to try to track down the fake client. “I already warned one of my translation groups,” she adds.

**Surviving the Financial Crisis**

“Hanks” requested an English-Spanish translation for a slide presentation entitled “Surviving the Financial Crisis,” to be used for a lecture he would be giving in early 2010 during a conference in Romania. Even though Spanish is not an official language in that European country, the discrepancy at first was not evident enough to raise any suspicion.

“I guess he [Hanks] found a way to make it through the economic crisis by cheating other people!” jokes Dahlia Ferrer, a translator who majored in international security and conflict resolution.

The price for the completed assignment ranged between $300 and $1,500, with most translators contacted asking for a 50% advance to start working on the job. Hanks said his associate “Isaac Hunter” would make the payment, but a few weeks later the project deadline was approaching and there was no check in sight. Some translators even took the initiative of contacting the client to ask what was going on. Always polite, Hanks apologized and said that “Mr. Hunter” had been unable to make the payment because his secretary had family issues (a sick child at the hospital), but the promised advance payment should soon be on its way.

That was when most of the translators on the list received a $4,000 check, an amount well above the average quote. There was no return address and when asked about the overpayment, Hanks explained that the secretary must have made a mistake, since Isaac was supposed to send one check to the translator and another one to the travel agent responsible for making arrangements for his trip to Romania.

For most translators based on the West Coast, the travel agent’s name was “Sandra Evans” and the fake address to her office was in the middle of a highway in Boulevard, California. Other translators received an address for “Robert Donald” in Gordon, Georgia. Clara Fernández, a translator since 1985, received a North Carolina address for the supposed travel agency.

**Off the Script**

The translators noticed that Hanks changed his tone once they started asking questions. Apparently, he had some sort of a script he was following, since the details of the story were identical for all those involved. When Hanks received some unexpected inquiries, though, his writing skills in English got worse.

“He isn’t the brightest bulb on the block, because the check was visually questionable,” explains Peonia Kempenich, a freelance translator and medical interpreter. “Upon further scrutiny, it was immediately apparent to me that this was a fraudulent check. Although it claimed to be drawn on Indymac Bank, it used Wells Fargo as some sort of affiliate bank, but they failed to capitalize the ‘W’ in the bank name.”

Some of the translators investigated the matter a little further and verified that Indymac had been seized by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in 2008 and was later bought out by OneWest.

“I was having a funny feeling, too,” Nicholas Pino agrees. “When I took the check to the bank, I was advised to let them look it over and they confirmed almost instantly that it was not real.”

Nicholas had actually started working on the translation. “I didn’t want to believe it because I was trying to break into the translation market, and I even asked Hanks if he had found me through a website I was using to try to get translation jobs...I don’t know, I want this guy brought to justice. Who knows how many people he may have taken already.”

“I’m in the Hole by $4,000!”

Ana, a beginning translator, was indeed a victim of the scam orchestrated by Hanks. She followed the instructions and wired the money back to a Robert Donald.

“I am embarrassed to admit it, but Hanks took $4,000 from me. I paid someone so that I could translate a 20- something page document into Spanish—which I’m sure Hanks deleted as soon as I sent it to him. I put so much work into it!” says Ana. “I do not translate full-time. I have very little experience doing this professionally, and have no plans to ever accept any jobs again unless they are for local schools or organizations. This experience has left such a
bad taste in my mouth.”

According to Ana, she sent the funds back to the fake travel agent because her bank initially told her the check had cleared. “My sister let me use her account because I do not currently have a checking account. They [the bank] made us wait a week, but then cleared the deposit and let us make the withdrawal for the funds that we wired to Hanks. About a week later, the check had been returned and I was in the hole by $4,000.”

Ana filed a police report, but she does not believe the investigation will go any further. “A police officer told me once this starts happening around the country, it becomes an issue for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.”

“I told the authorities that someone is sending the checks here in the States, but local police still said there was nothing they could do,” Shannon Cooper, a literary translator, adds. “Translators are important and it’s not fair that someone is targeting us like this!”

Why Target Translators and Interpreters?

Fake check scammers hunt for victims. They scan newspaper and online advertisements for people listing items for sale and check postings on online job sites from people seeking employment. They place their own ads with phone numbers or e-mail addresses for people to contact. And they call or send e-mail or faxes to people randomly, knowing that some will take the bait.

There are several reasons why translators and interpreters make ideal targets for online scammers—the main reason being that they are accessible. Freelance translators and interpreters typically have websites where they list their professional qualifications and contact information. Also, nowadays business transactions for freelance language services take place mostly online. The prospective client e-mails a job description, the freelancer e-mails back a quote, and if the client agrees, the document to be translated or the schedule for the interpreting assignment is e-mailed. The final translated document is sent back by e-mail with a copy of the invoice for services rendered, and payment usually follows 15 to 45 days later.

Advance payment in full is not often requested by professional translators and interpreters, but sometimes such payments are accepted for small assignments from freelance clients who, for example, need a personal document translated. This practice is generally not followed by large companies, which have the accounting resources to track language-related service requests and make payments on a monthly basis. Therefore, freelancers are at the greatest risk and must be especially vigilant if a client requests a payment arrangement that seems unusual. No one wants to work for free.

“I sensed Hanks was a scammer right away, especially because he did not seem to be worried about the translation; he was only worried about the way I should deposit the check in my account and send him the difference,” Isabel Galvez, with IG Global Solutions, recalls. “I continued acting as if I believed him. It was almost funny, because I gave him a hard time. The first thing I did was try to call Indymac Bank, and that’s when I found out that it was now operating under a new name.”

If someone you do not know wants to pay you by check, but wants you to wire some of the money back, beware! It is a scam that could cost you thousands of dollars. The checks are fake, even though they look real. In fact, they look so real that even bank tellers may be fooled. (See Figure 1 for an example.) Some are phony cashier’s checks; others look like they are from legitimate business accounts. The
companies whose names appear on these checks may be real, but someone has dummed up the checks without their knowledge.

You do not have to wait long to use the money, but that does not mean the check is good. Under federal law, banks have to make the funds you deposit available quickly—usually within one to five days, depending on the type of check. But just because you can withdraw the money does not mean the check is good, even if it is a cashier’s check. It can take weeks for the forgery to be discovered and the check to bounce.

You are responsible for the checks you deposit. That is because you are in the best position to determine the risk, since you are the one dealing directly with the person who is arranging for the check to be sent to you. When a check bounces, the bank deducts the amount that was originally credited to your account. If there is not enough to cover it, the bank may be able to take money from other accounts you have at that institution, or sue you to recover the funds. In some cases, law enforcement authorities could bring charges against the victims because it may look like they were involved in the scam and knew the check was counterfeit.

Red Flags

Before you accept an assignment, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Check the client’s address and phone number. Try to talk to someone on the phone and request more information about the assignment.
- While researching terminology online or trying to become familiar with the subject, if you find the exact text you received from a...
client—or worse, the translation you were supposed to be working on—contact the client and ask whether they are responsible for publishing the material on the Internet.

- Advance payment is not necessarily a red flag. In many cases, you should feel happy to have been paid already for your work so you can focus on the job without worrying about collecting afterward. However, make sure funds are completely cleared before you start working on the project.

- Never agree to return any paid amount due to overpayment. Instead, always ask for a new check with the correct amount. There is no legitimate reason for someone who is giving you money to ask you to wire money back. If a stranger wants to pay you for something, insist on a cashier’s check for the exact amount, preferably from a local bank or a bank that has a branch in your area.

- Do not deposit any checks you suspect are fraudulent—report it! Report fake check scams to the National Fraud Information Center/Internet Fraud Watch, a service provided by the nonprofit National Consumers League, at www.fraud.org or (800) 876-7060. That information will be transmitted to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Look Out!

Here are some names to watch for in your in-box. Hanks Martins/Hanks Blake (hanksmartins@gmail.com) and Rick Taylor (global-finance-solutions@gmx.com) were the false identities used by the scam artist on the Romania project. Their so-called associates were Isaac Hunter, Sandra Evans, and Robert Donald. Jack Brown and Dr. Dean Murray were names reportedly used by scammers seeking translations related to an effort to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS.

There is a reason why these perpetrators keep sending messages: folks are biting—and losing money. Stay vigilant. If it is too good to be true, it is probably a scam. If you have any doubt about an offer, ask for more information. Please see the links in the box on page 27 for more information on how to protect yourself and your business.

In 1959, a small group of individuals in the translation business sat down at lunch and began a professional organization called the American Translators Association. It was a promising start. Two years earlier, the launch of Sputnik I had sparked an unprecedented demand for translation, especially in technical and scientific fields. Finally, the little understood work of translators and interpreters was gaining recognition in the U.S. The time was right to promote and advocate for the profession. What happened next? Find out that and more in the Association’s 50th anniversary commemorative book, American Translators Association: A Professional Journey. To order: www.atanet.org/publications.
There is no doubt that Christmas is my favorite week of the year on a personal level. On a professional level, my favorite week of the year takes place during ATA’s Annual Conference. This year the conference takes place in Denver, Colorado, October 27-30. Even though I do a significant amount of professional development activities all year, there is no better week to learn, mingle, form bonds and friendships, share meals, and have a drink or two with friends old and new at the conference hotel bar.

If you have not yet been to an ATA conference, then you are in for a treat. If you have been going for years, then you know what to expect: a well-organized conference with dozens of sessions for all languages and specializations, plus networking and social events, an always-active Exhibit Hall, and much more. I have been excited about going to Denver since the Colorado Translators Association, this year’s host chapter, stuffed a memorable tchotchke in each attendee’s conference bag in New York City last November.

It has been quite some time since I attended my first ATA conference. I’ll admit it: I was a bit intimidated. I did not know a soul when I landed in Toronto in 2004, but my experience was so fantastic that I have not missed a conference since. If you are a first-time attendee, consider the following:

- Plan your sessions before the conference. Choose which sessions you would like to attend by referring to the online schedule on ATA’s website: www.atanet.org/conf/2010.
- Catch up on sleep before the conference, as your days (and nights!) will be busy.
- Read the daily conference bulletin for any important announcements (copies will be available every morning at the registration desk and will be posted on the announcement board).
- Attend the “Orientation for First-Time Attendees,” Thursday, October 28, from 11:30am-12:30pm. It will give you a great overview of how to use your time effectively.
- If you can, resist the urge to bring your significant other. As much as I like traveling with my hubby, I caught myself going to dinner with him instead of networking at the Toronto conference. Consider scheduling some couple time after the conference—maybe some skiing?
- Attach the color-coded stickers for your language pairs (available on a table near the registration desk) to your badge. These will help colleagues identify your working languages and are great conversation starters.
- Just say hello. Even though walking into a roomful of strangers is difficult, take a deep breath, approach a small group of colleagues, and introduce yourself. You will find that most everyone is very friendly.
- Attach your “first-time attendee” ribbon to your badge and watch people come up to you! I felt a bit silly with my pink ribbon in 2004, but it worked like a charm.
- Plan lunches and coffee breaks ahead of time. Make virtual contact in advance so you do not have to waste time looking for colleagues.
- If you do not have a texting service on your cell phone, you might want to add it for the month of the conference, as cell phone reception can be spotty in hotels.
- Visit the Exhibit Hall early and often. Also, do not miss the massage station for a 10-minute chair massage.
- Bring twice as many business cards as you think you will need. You do not want to be the person who has to run to Kinko’s in the middle of the night.

I hope to see you all in Denver! I will look for badges with those first-time ribbons.

Yahoo! Business Discussion Group
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.

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. Ideas and questions should be directed to judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com.
Finding something that works—whether it is a process, methodology, or system—can be a defining moment. It means we have succeeded in our hard work to develop an approach that is in alignment with our core beliefs. If the quality of output increases because of a tried-and-true process, who wouldn’t be happy?

But project management does not stop there. Never settle for what seems to work. Instead, put yourself on the back, and then get back to work at refining.

Good project management processes, methodologies, and systems maintain an expected level of quality, but the excellent ones—the ones no one can match—strive continually for new levels of quality.

Achieving excellence is obviously no easy feat, but the path is there, and the only way to begin traveling down that path is by adapting what I call the three pillars of learning.

Learn from Your Mistakes

So you made a mistake on a project. Maybe it was a small slip up, or maybe your mistake had dire consequences. Excellence does not equate to perfection. Rather, mistakes are an ingredient of excellence. If you never know what is wrong or improper, or what does not work, how can you know what will work? Mistakes give us the clarity to see better processes, methodologies, and systems—and once you reach a better way, you will discover more mistakes, which will allow you to jump to an even better approach.

You should never be afraid to make mistakes. How can you apply this to your current project load?

- Notate things that went wrong or did not turn out as you anticipated: keep a log.
- Break the mold. Do not be afraid to make mistakes or try new methods. Trial and error is a type of learning you can only gain through experience.
- Develop a response plan to your mistakes. If you make an error that affects your client, know in advance what to do.
- Have fun. If you feel your mind is engaged in this process of trying new things out, you have the capacity to achieve excellence; otherwise, you are just straining yourself and probably working a tad too hard.

Learn from Clients

While learning from yourself is a great avenue toward advancement, it is not entirely objective or conclusive. For that, you need a feedback mechanism—the client. As the end user of your project management style, clients can give you valuable input and feedback on your processes, methodologies, and systems. Ultimately, they are the ones who decide to give you money, so what they say should be of the utmost importance.

Project management does not take place in a vacuum. Learn from your clients. How can you apply this to your current project load?

- At the end of a project, conduct “exit” surveys to gather some quick feedback on what your client thought of the experience.
- During the project, casually ask the client for feedback on particular parts of the project, and perhaps whether or not it met their expectations.
- Establish metrics to help quantify client experience. Tools such as time trackers and surveys can give you statistical feedback on how things are going.

Learn from Others

Left alone, you can probably come up with some great ideas, which—when bounced off clients—can further be refined. However, ideas generated from isolation do not have the benefit of real world experience. For this, you will need to turn to others—people who have practiced new and different processes, methodologies, and systems, and have written or spoken about it, either in a book, article, blog post, podcast, or presentation. The ideas of others can spark a new flame of creativity within you that will fuel even more refinement of your original inspiration.

The outside world has done much of the hard work for you. How can you apply this to your current project load?

- Subscribe to RSS feeds and read blogs of not only project management and Web professionals, but from a variety of fields, such as technology, business, self-management, and productivity.
- Read books: business books, project management books, technical books, philosophy books, etc.
- Network with other people. Find meet-ups, conferences, and workshops taking place in your area.
- Start a blog and talk about your project management methods. This can help generate conversation with others, leading to the sharing of ideas.
MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November 19-21, 2010
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Convention and World Languages Expo
Boston, Massachusetts

www.actfl.org

Take Advantage of
ATA’s Member-Provider Program

Who knows what products and services you need to do your job?
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• Member-vendors will guarantee discounts or other favorable
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  — The Tool Kit
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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.

• The following ATA members are among those elected to the board of directors of the Argentine Translators and Interpreters Association:
  - Alejandra M. Jorge (president)
  - Karina R. Tabacinic (director)
  - Marita C. Propato (director)

• Alina R. Mugford, owner of The Translation Link LLC, has been named the winner of the 2010 National SCORE Award for Outstanding Small Business Launch. The SCORE Awards honor unique vision, innovation, and achievement in small business in the U.S. For more information, visit www.scorefoundation.org.

• Syntes Language Group has been named one of Denver’s top minority-owned businesses by the Denver Business Journal.

• The following language services providers have been named among the 5,000 fastest growing private companies in the U.S. by Inc. magazine:
  - adaQuest
    Bellevue, WA
  - Certified Languages International
    Portland, OR
  - CETRA, Inc.
    Elkins Park, PA
  - CyraCom International, Inc.
    Tucson, AZ
  - Dynamic Language Center
    Seattle, WA
  - Eriksen Translations Inc.
    Brooklyn, NY
  - Fluent Language Solutions
    Charlotte, NC
  - Language Line Services
    Monterey, CA
  - Language Services Associates
    Horsham, PA
  - Para-Plus Translations, Inc.
    Barrington, NJ
  - ProTranslating
    Coral Gables, FL
  - Sajan
    River Falls, WI
  - TransPerfect Translations International, Ltd.
    New York, NY
  - U.S. Translation Company
    South Ogden, UT
  - Welocalize
    Frederick, MD

The Inc. 5000 list represents companies that have had significant revenue growth over three consecutive years, are independent and privately held, and are based in the United States.

**ITA**

ATA’s Online Events Calendar
www.atanet.org/calendar

Are you a nonprofit translation or interpreting organization with an upcoming event? Let us know about it by sending an e-mail to ATA Headquarters with the event name, organizing group, and contact or website information. And don’t forget to use ATA’s online calendar to check out other events.
The European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST) is a nonprofit association for those interested in the field of audiovisual translation. Established in 1995 by a group of academics and professionals with an interest in audiovisual translation, ESIST is dedicated to facilitating the exchange of information about the field and promoting professional standards in the teaching and practice of screen translation.

Mission

• To serve as a contact for the exchange of information about screen translation.

• To encourage curriculum development in the field of screen translation within higher education institutions in Europe.

• To facilitate cooperative projects, including the exchange of staff and students.

• To initiate other forms of collaboration and research in screen translation.

• To develop a dialogue between higher education teachers who offer courses in screen translation and persons involved with the profession of screen translation in the television and film industries.

Events

ESIST is currently supporting the following event:

June 29–July 1, 2011
4th International Conference Media for All “Audiovisual Translation: Taking Stock”
London, England
www.imperial.ac.uk/humanities/translationgroup/mediaforall4/index.html

Quick Facts

• Established: 1995
• Website: www.esist.org
• E-mail: j.diaz-cintas@imperial.ac.uk

Additional Information

For complete information, please visit www.esist.org.

Success by Association

The ATA Association for Studies in Screen Translation provides valuable contributions to the profession through its chapters and affiliates. This column highlights the organizations and resources they offer to translators and interpreters. The column aims to serve as a quick resource, providing valuable information and networking opportunities.

Scam Alert Websites

Federal Bureau of Investigation/National White Collar Crime Center
The Internet Crime Complaint Center
www.ic3.gov

National White Collar Crime Center
www.nw3c.org

Check out The ATA Compass
www.atanet.org/compass

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.
Upcoming Events

October 27-30, 2010
ATA 51st Annual Conference
Denver, Colorado
www.atanet.org/conf/2010

October 31-November 5, 2010
Association for Machine Translation in the Americas
9th Biennial Conference
“Machine Translation in the Production Pipeline”
Denver, Colorado
http://amta2010.amtaweb.org/

November 6-8, 2010
6th International Federation of Translators Asian Translators’ Forum
“Translation and Intercultural Communication”
Macau, China
www.umac.mo/fsh/de/atf

November 11-13, 2010
American Medical Writers Association
70th Annual Conference
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
www.amwa.org

November 13, 2010
Northern California Translators Association
Trados Studio 2009 Workshop for Beginners
San Francisco, California
www.ncta.org

November 15-19, 2010
Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association
“Connecting Worlds: Training for Health Care Interpreters”
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.nitaonline.org

November 19-21, 2010
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Convention and World Languages Expo
Boston, Massachusetts
www.actfl.org

November 27-28, 2010
Mexican Translators Organization
14th International Translation and Interpretation Congress
“San Jerónimo 2010”
Guadalajara, Mexico
www.omt.org.mx

December 1, 2010
Graham School of General Studies,
University of Chicago
“Translate This: Language Skills, a Career in Translation”
Chicago, Illinois
https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/php/translationstudies

December 4, 2010
Northern California Translators Association
Trados Studio 2009 Workshop for Intermediate Users
San Francisco, California
www.ncta.org

Visit the ATA Calendar Online
www.atanet.org/calend/ for a more comprehensive look at upcoming events.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

NATIONAL LANGUAGE SERVICE CORPS

The National Language Service Corps (NLSC) is a public civilian organization made up of on-call multilingual volunteers willing to offer their diverse language skills to help communities and government agencies. The organization’s goal is to provide and maintain a readily available civilian corps of individuals certified in English and other languages. To find out more or to apply, please visit nlscorps.org.
This softcover dictionary is printed on good quality paper and uses a very legible font. As the title indicates, it is a dictionary of criminal law and procedure. It is not a general dictionary in the sense that you would not refer to it to look for every legal word that gives you problems in a translation. It is also not a dictionary to use when you are translating a contract, but one to have handy when your work involves criminal law.

Content

Looking up terms is easy since the dictionary follows the usual alphabetical order and includes cross-references if the word or phrase you seek appears under a different entry. During my searches, I found very few filler words that can be found easily in other dictionaries (e.g., “voucher,” “fine,” “espionage,” “eye for an eye”).

There are two appendices. The first one is an extensive bibliography. The other one is a bibliography of codes, rules, and guidelines. Both appendices are very helpful, providing information on where the author obtained his information and additional resources for the translator.

Many terms have a very detailed explanation of their meaning relative to criminal procedure. I find this feature very useful because it allows for a better understanding of the legal process, thus making the progression of the translation more fluid.

Another useful feature for both the novice and experienced translator is that many of the entries include a section on translation pitfalls, in which the author indicates which terms to avoid. The dictionary also includes comparative criminal procedure law citations from many different countries, allowing the translator to get a glimpse of the legal differences existing between criminal law in the U.S. and Latin American countries. I find this very valuable because, in addition to the legal differences, the translator learns about the legal syntax used in other countries.

Also very helpful is the inclusion of a section on traditional terminology and translation models in the explanations of some terms. Here you can find comparisons between the usage of certain terms in the U.S. and in Latin America. One example of this type of broad explanation is a detailed entry for the term “probation,” starting at the bottom of page 140 and continuing to page 150. It includes descriptions of English and Spanish terms, colloquial terms, terms to avoid, the history of probation sentences, and information on comparative law. The author provides in-depth explanations of English and Spanish terminology, highlighting what terms to avoid and giving details about probation in relation to the history of sentences.

There is another excellent explanation for “parties to the offenses.” In this thorough entry, running from page 117 to the bottom of page 119, one is informed in the aforementioned traditional terminology and translation models section of two translation models. One model offers traditional U.S. terms translated into traditional Latin American terms. The other offers traditional U.S. terms translated into modern Latin American terms.

Caveats

Even though this is a helpful and educational dictionary, I disagree with some of the translations that are provided for very common terms. Here are a few examples.

• First, the ubiquitous duda razonable, which the author translates as duda racional. Both duda razonable and racional mean...
“doubt related to reason,” but due to the similarity with the English term, *duda razonable* is preferable and is the term used routinely by interpreters as well as translators.

- The suggested translation for both “incriminating evidence” and “circumstantial evidence” is *prueba indiciaria*. Circumstantial evidence is not necessarily incriminating evidence (*prueba comprometadora*). This might have been an oversight when editing the dictionary, but *prueba indiciaria* is not the translation for both of those terms.

- The suggested translation for “preliminary hearing” is *audiencia de indicios*. An online search for that term, placed in quotations, does not provide any results. I believe it is simply a *vista/audiencia preliminar*, in which the defendant is informed of the accusations and is asked about hiring an attorney or having a public defender provided for him or her. This procedure can occur at the same time as the arraignment (*instrucción de cargos*) in which the charges are described for the defendant. Sometimes it is done prior to the arraignment.

In addition to the above, I found a few typographical errors in this volume: *nesecita* and *aqélla* (page 60); *Cabanalles* instead of *Cabanellas* (page 85); *ocacionar* (page 111); *busca* (page 123); *condicional* (page 144); and *suspección* (page 146).

**Overall Evaluation**

Overall, I consider this to be a good dictionary. It has information on criminal law in Latin American countries that might be hard to find when working on a translation. It does have its caveats, so I would consult other sources in addition to this dictionary, especially when the suggestions provided for common words vary greatly from what the translator already knows.

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**CALL FOR PRESENTATION PROPOSALS**

**Bridging Cultures**

XIX World Congress of the International Federation of Translators

Hilton San Francisco Union Square
San Francisco, California
August 1-4, 2011
www.fit2011.org

The XIX World Congress of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), to be held in San Francisco, California, on August 1-4, 2011, will bring together translators, interpreters, terminologists, and other professionals from all over the world to discuss topical issues. Over 75 educational sessions will be offered in a variety of categories.

Presentation proposals are now being accepted in the following categories: Audiovisual Translation; Community Interpreting; Copyright; Human Rights; Language Standards; Legal Translation and Interpreting; Literary Translation; New Trends; Terminology; Training and Education; Translation and Culture; Translation Technology; Varia.

Proposals will be selected through a competitive peer-review process. Presentations may be offered in English and French only.

**Deadline: December 10, 2010**

The FIT XIX World Congress will be hosted by ATA in cooperation with FIT. For more information, including the proposal form, visit www.fit2011.org/proposals.htm.
New Certified Members

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

**English into Spanish**
- Álvaro J. Muñoz Cantón
  Helsinki, Finland
- Ceferino Rodriguez
  Springfield, VA

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Active and Corresponding Membership Review

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

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. With more than two-million plus hits a year, consumers and businesses have clearly learned to look at ATA’s directories first when shopping for professional translation and interpreting services.

**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/onlinedirectories/update_profile.php.
Never reluctant to be corrected for the sake of truth, the Translation Inquirer now modifies his definitions of outback and woop-woop, two words from Australian English, from two months ago in the opening paragraph on page 42 of the August issue. Catherine Muir, who actually lives in a mining town at the southeast corner of the Outback, writes to say that the internationally famous outback is defined as remote, sparsely inhabited back country, especially in Australia. Outback cities do exist, however, but they do not include Darwin. Woop-woop is purely Australian, unrelated to any other nation, and means the middle of nowhere with no transport links to the outside. If a major city exists, by definition it is non-woop-woop in nature. Understandably, humor is built into this term. Thank you, Catherine!

New Queries

(E-F 10-10.1) Anatomical experts, gather round: the query is about “external postgenual bursa,” in a context of “lateral subtendinous bursa of the gastrocnemius muscle.” Is there a French synonym for this?

(E-N 10-10.2) In the world of lifting tools, how would one render “air trolley” into good Norwegian?

(E-Po 10-10.3) Trying to render an insurance document into Polish, a member of our clan stumbled over “recoverable damages,” as in: “If the employee’s absence is occasioned by actionable negligence of a third party in respect of which damages are recoverable, all amounts paid by the Employer shall constitute loans to the Employee.”

(E-Pt 10-10.4) Being couched in terminology reminiscent of “mark to market,” a U.S. GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles) procedure, this query asks how to render “mark to model” in Portuguese: “Mark-to-model assets essentially leave themselves open to interpretation.” Now it is true that investopedia.com provides a definition of the term, but this does not necessarily make it easier to provide the translation.

(G-D [E] 10-10.5) Sealing systems is the context of this query about the verb molchen. What is to be done with the following line? Läuft kein Dichmittel mehr aus der Leitung, ist jede Leitung mit Schwammgummi kugeln, deren Durchmesser mindestens um 10% größer als der größte Leitungsschnitt ist, zu molchen.

(G-F [E] 10-10.6) In Swiss and Austrian medical terminology, what are Wahlarztkostenruckersätze? English is acceptable for this query that originally asked for a French equivalent.

(G-I [E] 10-10.7) Drittpfandbesteller proved to be tough in this shareholders’ commitment contract: Die Parteien halten fest, dass zwischen den Parteien...sowie der Partei zu 7. als Drittpfandbestellerin am 29.11.2009 eine Vereinbarung abgeschlossen wurde. What sort of legal entity is this?

(Pt-E 10-10.8) In a construction and civil engineering context, what does the following phrase refer to: una area que apresente diversos valores a serem agregados?

(R-E 10-10.9) Here is some contract language, and the words in bold print posed the problem: ОАО не является тем влаственно-распорядительным органом, чье бездействие, исходя из требований АПК РФ, может быть признано незаконным. What sort of agency is it?

(Sp-E 10-10.10) Instrumente and instrumentación were stumbling blocks in a document about a Spanish pension fund. Some quotes from the several context paragraphs provided by the translator were: Acuerdo adoptado con el visto favorable de los dos tercios de la totalidad de sus miembros, en el caso de que el Fondo instrumente un único Plan, and el Reglamento sobre la instrumentación de los compromisos por pensiones de las empresas con los trabajadores y beneficiarios. Who wants to try these?

Replies to Old Queries

(E-F 8-10.1) (benchmark agnostic): Helena Contreras-Chacel has not seen agnostique face au benchmark in financial documents, but has encountered the following: ce fonds privilégie le rendement absolu et est par conséquent totalement indépendant par rapport au benchmark. Therefore, a good translation could be the six words in bold print above.

(E-I 8-10.3) (upstream and downstream ports): Luisa Crosara believes these are condotti a monte e condotti a
valle in the context of a pump. Leonid Gornik reminds us that, as in English, the a monte and a valle have nothing to do with “above or below”; they have to do with positions in the flow.

(E-R 8-10.4) (crystalline colloidal array): Khaliuna Haden translated both the long context sentences for this, for which we give thanks: Радиационно-дифракционные материалы, основанные на кристаллических коллоидных массах, применялись для различных целей. Кристаллическая коллоидная масса (ккм) – это трехмерная упорядоченная масса единично рассеянных коллоидных частиц. Leonid Gornik agrees, though the term may appear to be senseless: colloidal? crystals? Boris Silversteyn prefers кристаллическое расположение коллоидных частиц.

(F-E 8-10.7) (trousse composite): In the context sentence from page 32 of the August issue, Helena Contreras-Chacel detects a French text already translated from another language. The troublesome term seems to refer to a kit made of diverse elements for surgery. Helena goes into the heart of the quote and proposes the following: “space on the cart for three types of procedure kits.” The final two words are her translation of the term asked about.

(F-Pt 8-10.8) (propriété du sol): In French, this term means “land ownership,” says Helena Contreras-Chacel, including the land plus anything above or below it, as defined by civil law in Brazil, Mexico, Spain, and France. So the U.S. equivalent is “real property” and the context sentence fragment is best rendered into English as “58 per 10,000 of the real property and of the common areas.” Not ignoring the Portuguese, Helena notes that article 526 of the Código Civil Brasileiro mentions a pros-

priedade do solo abrange a do que lhe está superior e inferior em toda a altura e em toda a profundidade.

(In-E 7-10.7) (menganggarkan dana): Note the spelling correction by Catherine Muir, who defines it in English as “to allocate funds.” The overall sentence, which appeared on page 42 of the July issue, is best translated as: “This year PTPN II has no plans to expand its land holdings or to allocate funds for corporate investments.”

(R-E 8-10.9) (Узел перегрузки): Both Boris Silversteyn and Lev Gutman assert that this should be a “transfer unit” for moving widgets from one conveyor to another. Leonid Gornik prefers “transfer facility.”

(Sp-E 3-10.11) (política de acogida e integración): Acogida is most often translated into English as “welcome,” says Helena Contreras-Chacel. Keep in mind this can be either positive or negative in Spanish (buena acogida, mala acogida). The current world climate in which migrations are increasing exponentially means that no country may be properly said to have a “welcome policy,” and therefore they all now have “reception policies.”

(Sp-E 7-10.9) (ensayo de laboratorio): For Jean-Pierre Maldonado, this is “testing under [strict] laboratory conditions.”

(Sp-E 8-10.10) (tueste torrefacto): Gonzalo Ordóñez calls this “dark roast,” and finds the two words of the term to be a reiteration of each other. This is the fancier of the two methods for roasting coffee, says Helena Contreras-Chacel. It involves the addition of sugar during the roasting process, and contrasts with tueste natural, the “natural roast.” Therefore she suggests “50% roasted coffee and 50% torrefied coffee.” Deana Smalley points out that the sugar dusted onto the product, and caramelized into it, seals in all the yummy flavors and aromas, though some consumers assert just the opposite. This method also is said to be a better source of antioxidants. She prefers “torrefacto roasting” in English.

The Translation Inquirer was even in the happy position of holding back some responses until the November/December issue. If yours was one of them, please be patient, because the compiler of this column long ago succumbed to a squirrel mentality and likes to put some responses in reserve against leaner times. Thank you!
The following fable was sent to me by Jack Thiessen, who has kindly allowed me to edit it to fit the length of this column.

Hear the language of the wolf! For a thousand miles, it is howled along the caribou trek. Survival depends on it.

From their beginning, the native people of Canada’s Northwest Territories have lived close to nature. They listened well, learned well, and knew from the howls when and where to wait for arriving caribou each spring. And thus it was for many years.

Until there came three missionaries from the south, young, vigorous, each under the age of 30, preaching salvation and teaching the language of the Lord. At first, these evangelicals tolerated differences, but eventually, uncomprehending of the source of the natives’ knowledge, they declared that knowledge to be witchcraft. “Stop your superstitious ritual,” they decreed. “Trust that the Lord will provide.”

Some of the younger generation of natives, fervent to be saved, obeyed the missionaries. But the elders still heeded the voice of the wolf. Late in the month of May in the year of our Lord 1948, they prepared to hunt the caribou, proclaimed by the howls as due to arrive the following afternoon. The missionaries cried out against it, encouraging their converted charges to sing and pray and ask the Lord’s forgiveness for heathen practices.

Nonetheless, that night the hunt began. And that night the three missionaries mysteriously drowned.

But the ideology of the missionaries, part of the larger ideology that all change is progress, prevailed. A part of that ideology, perhaps not one the missionaries intended to convey, is that close to nature is far from God. Within one generation, the language of the wolf was forgotten.

But no authority ever solved the murder of the three missionaries. Their mute bodies yet lie in a graveyard in Baker Lake, half an hour’s walk northwest of the Catholic chapel, in a remote corner of a remote lifeless hamlet where no native is buried. They lie just on or just below ground, permafrost and available tools precluding deeper and safer interment. They lie in graves like those in the Holy Land, surmounted by stones in a vain attempt to keep foraging predators away. They lie, awaiting God’s final decree, their remains eaten by rodents.

Hear the language of the wolf!

Herman is a librettist and translator. Submit items for future columns via e-mail to hermanapter@cmsinter.net or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 1409 E Gaylord Street, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858-3626. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.
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