In this issue:
Translating Technical Manuals
Xbench and ChangeTracker
Pricing Strategy Tips
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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 Kwana Ingram at ATA Headquarters—kwana@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!
American Translators Association
53rd Annual Conference
Hilton San Diego Bayfront • October 24–27, 2012
San Diego, California

Get Ready To Network! Connect with over 1,800 colleagues from throughout the U.S. and around the world. • Renew your motivation by meeting people with similar interests and sharing your experiences. • Build potential partnerships that will help you personally and professionally. • Listen to the buzz among freelancers, project managers, business owners, and government representatives.

Get Ready To Learn! Choose from over 175 sessions that feature a variety of languages, topics, and skill levels. • Focus on practical skills and theory, or join discussions that examine the current state of your profession or offer a look to the future. • Be inspired and challenged to consider new ideas. Discover the lessons learned from colleagues who have dealt with the exact problems you are currently facing.

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

Book Your Room
Hilton San Diego Bayfront
1 Park Boulevard, San Diego, California, USA 92101
Special ATA Room Rates (exclusive of tax)
Single = $259 / Double = $279
ATA rates include complimentary Internet
These special rates are available until October 1, 2012, or as space allows. Make your reservations online at www.atanet.org/conf/2012/hotel.htm. Or call +1-800-HILTONS and ask for the special ATA rate.

Why Should You Attend?
Videos, slideshows, reviews, & more
Read what past attendees have said, see photos and videos, get a glimpse of what to expect in San Diego, and check out previous ATA Conferences. Learn more at www.atanet.org/conf/2012/why_attend.htm.

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“Can you guide me in the right direction to gain the skills necessary to become an interpreter?” “I want to pursue the most profitable path in this career, but I really can’t tell where that path is at the moment.” “I was wondering if it would be beneficial for me to apply as a student member?”

Some of the questions that come to the “president” inbox are not much different from the concerns all of us had when we first entered the profession, but every generation encounters its own challenges as well. In general terms, the new generation of translators and interpreters joining the marketplace is probably more in tune with computer technology and social media and will find it easy to incorporate technology into their workflow. At the same time, younger colleagues may have less use for print media, including the publication you are reading now. The new design of our website, which has now entered the beta testing stage, incorporates these concerns and will offer more options to access content online.

With the Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting a 42% increase in employment for interpreters and translators from 2010 to 2020 (www.bls.gov/ooh/Media-and-Communication/Interpreters-and-translators.htm), our association must work to ensure that newcomers to the profession have access to adequate business resources and fully subscribe to our Code of Ethics and Professional Practice (www.atanet.org/membership/code_of_ethics.php). But that is not all. Our challenge is to be an open association in which the concerns of newcomers are heard and taken seriously without neglecting the needs of long-time members who are fully established in the industry. As a result, we need meaningful communication about our profession wherever possible, as each group has much to give and share. Our divisions and chapters are perfectly suited for this exchange, but we need to do even more to promote their enormous resources and wealth of collective knowledge when new members need information and advice the most—when they first join. If you are a fan of our Facebook page, you will have noticed that this effort has already begun. The page features a wide range of different events, publications, and facts for easy exploration, and the response has been positive, with a fan base of 2,859 in the spring of this year (www.facebook.com/AmericanTranslatorsAssociation). As of this writing, ATA’s Twitter feed (@atanet), which also distributes news and information relevant to the profession from a variety of sources, has 3,063 followers.

At its annual Planning Day, ATA’s Board of Directors took a close look at our membership structure this year to investigate practical ways to make our membership categories more inclusive. Under our bylaws only active and corresponding members are allowed to vote, and passing the certification exam is still the main route to becoming a voting member. Although we continue to offer active membership review as an option to gain voting rights, only a small number of members have chosen to use this option. Over the course of this year, we will attempt to redefine membership categories to foster involvement and a sense of belonging among all members and to welcome those who will join the profession in the future.

From the President

Dorothee Racette
dracette@hughes.net

Preparing for a New Generation

Every generation encounters its own challenges.

American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation: Help Yourself by Supporting the Professions

The American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI), a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, was established to help translation and interpreting professionals preserve their history, assist in their present work, and stimulate research and scholarship.

Give something back to the professions. Please make a tax-deductible contribution to AFTI today.

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Let’s be frank. ATA’s Annual Conference is really about two things: first-rate educational sessions and networking opportunities at every turn. Yes, the weather will be amazing. (It may be sunny where you are now, but remember how gloomy it was chez vous last fall?) Yes, San Diego is a favorite destination for good reason, and, yes, the food is incredible. But when you get down to brass tacks, the two main reasons to attend an ATA conference have to do with people sharing information and business cards. It is time to start planning your conference strategy.

Preparations are well under way on our end, and this year’s conference is starting to take shape. The stack of proposals has been whittled down, through a thorough (and often agonizing) process of peer reviews, examining feedback from past conferences, and aligning content to trending issues—all of which is necessary to create a compelling program. The resulting Preliminary Program will be bundled with the next issue of The ATA Chronicle. If you have not already blocked out the dates for ATA’s 53rd Annual Conference (October 24–27, 2012) and at least part of the Conference of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (Sunday, October 28 through Thursday, November 1, 2012), then now it is time to do so. (More information on AMTA’s conference can be found at http://amta2012.amtaweb.org.) Even as you are planning trips to family reunions and sending kids off to summer camp, autumn will be here before you know it.

And far too soon, the local office supply store will be in full back-to-school mode. Now is an excellent time to get a jump on things and take stock of your business cards and brochures, especially if it has been a while since you updated them. If you start now, you will not have to rush to find the right graphic artist (and a photographer for a new headshot). If all you need is restocking, you will not end up paying expedited shipping charges from the printer if you order them now.

Summer is also a great time to take a look at your online presence. When was the last time you dusted off your website or social media profile, not to mention your information in ATA’s online directory? Like you, Web designers appreciate the consideration of reasonable deadlines.

On a more practical note, a wise woman once reminded me that you should never wear new shoes to a conference—you want to feel energized to take advantage of opportunities, not distracted by surprise blisters or pinched toes. Because it is summery in Southern California year-round, you can take advantage of midseason sales now and break in those shoes well in advance of the conference. Gentlemen, this applies to you, too!

You can bet that your distinguished colleagues and invited speakers will be polishing their presentations over the summer, lugging their laptops on holiday to put together the kind of world-class content you have come to expect at ATA conferences. You can also take advantage of the one commodity no one has figured out how to increase—time—and start preparing for a successful conference.
The ATA’s Board of Directors met April 14-15, 2012, in Alexandria, Virginia. The Board met in conjunction with the Certification Committee and Language Chairs Spring meetings. (In ATA’s Certification Program, each language combination and direction, such as Spanish into English, has its own chair and graders.) Here are some highlights from the Board meeting.

Presentation of Candidates: The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee presented the slate of candidates for this year’s election. For director (three, three-year terms): Anne Connor, Cristina Helmerichs, Odile Legeay, Corinne McKay, Faiza Sultan, and Gail Tanaka Burns. (Please see the box below for more information.)

Membership: The Board had a lengthy discussion about voting and membership rights with the intent of looking for ways to increase the number of voting members. The Board will continue its efforts at the next meeting.

Budget: The Board approved the working budget for July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 and draft budgets for 2013-15. The $2.8-million working budget provides an interim financial framework. By using this interim budget, changes and revisions can be made based on the actual year-end figures. The final budget will be approved at the next Board meeting.

Interpreters: The Board heard updates on:

• Drafting an interpreting-related document similar to the new Guide to a Translation Services Agreement (www.atanet.org/careers/translation_agreement_guide.pdf);

• Noting interpreter credentials on ATA’s Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services in a manner similar to how ATA certification is shown for ATA-certified translators; and

• Investigating offering an interpreter certification exam.

Certification: Certification Committee Chair Geoff Koby updated the Board on the committee’s activities. Among the committee’s top priorities is the revision of the certification exam’s eligibility requirements. Driving the change is the committee’s desire to align the eligibility requirements with an increased likelihood of the candidate passing the exam.

Candidates Announced

ATA Election | 2012 Annual Conference | San Diego, California

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election at the upcoming 2012 ATA Annual Conference in San Diego, California, to elect three directors. Further nominations, supported by acceptance statements in writing by each additional nominee and a written petition signed by no fewer than 60 voting members, must be received by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee by July 20. Acceptance statements and petitions may be faxed to the chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, Jiri Stejskal, in care of ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6122. Candidate statements and photos of the candidates will appear in the September issue of The ATA Chronicle and on ATA’s website. The candidates proposed by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee are:

Director (three positions, three-year terms): Anne Connor Cristina Helmerichs Odile Legeay Corinne McKay Faiza Sultan Gail Tanaka Burns

Continued on p. 9
In Memoriam

Dr. Leland “Lee” D. Wright Jr.
1942-2012

Dr. Leland “Lee” D. Wright Jr., 69, died on April 10, 2012. An ATA-certified Spanish→English translator, he was a life member of ATA (1975-present).

Lee served on ATA’s Board of Directors from 1978-1984, and was a grader for ATA’s certification exam and a past chair of the Spanish graders group. Lee co-founded the Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA) and was a long-term fixture on its executive committee. A former editor of The ATA Chronicle (1983-1987), he was a frequent contributor to that publication and to NOTA’s newsletter, NOTA BENE (which he named).

Lee was born July 7, 1942 in Chicago, Illinois, the son of Shirley and Leland Wright Sr. The family lived in Chicago while his father worked in river transportation during World War II. After the war, the family moved to Iowa, first to Chariton, and then settled in Creston, where Lee graduated from high school in 1960.

At Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, he majored in Spanish with a minor in music, graduating with a BA in 1964. On August 21, 1965, Lee married Sue Ellen Shupe after completing his MA in Spanish language and literature at the University of Illinois. Both went on to complete their Ph.Ds at Washington University in St. Louis, where Lee studied Hispanic language and linguistics.

In addition to running his own translation company (Wright & Associates), Lee shared his gift with students, teaching language, literature, and translation at numerous institutions, including Baldwin Wallace College, Cleveland State University, Kent State University, and New York University’s School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Lee was also a technical translator, and worked as an international communications consultant with the engineering firm Davy McKee (1974-1982). With ATA Director Alan Melby and a small group of developers, he played an instrumental role in developing Mercury-Termex, the first PC-based translation-oriented terminology management program.

Lee leaves behind his wife, Dr. Sue Ellen Wright, and daughter, Dr. Elena Kramer. Memorial donations can be made to the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation in his name (American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, c/o ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314).

Honorary Membership: The Board bestowed honorary membership on Nicholas Hartmann and Lillian Clementi. Nick has served ATA in a number of roles, from president to division administrator to committee chair. He is currently the president of the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI). Lillian has been very active with ATA’s public relations efforts for many years. Among her contributions, she established the successful ATA Student Outreach Program and coordinated the creation of the Client Outreach materials to assist members in marketing their services, including writing, designing, and presenting them.

CalPro: The Board approved, pending legal review, offering the U.S. CalPro program to ATA members. This Excel-based program can help translators and interpreters calculate their rates. It is expected to be particularly useful to those just getting started.

The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are posted online at www.atanet.org/minutes.php. The next Board meeting is set for July 28-29, 2012 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.
Letters to the Editor

Expressing an Interpreter’s Fears

It is with great pleasure that I read Ewandro Magalhães’ article (“Afraid?!! Who’s Afraid?”) in the March issue. Indeed, I found this article particularly interesting and surprisingly true! The way in which Magalhães describes the fear that overtakes your body and brain when you step into the booth is extremely accurate. Especially for young, inexperienced interpreters. He found an authentic, yet colorful and vivid way of putting words to a feeling that is particularly difficult to express. This article combines both humor and good style in an easy and very readable way. I would highly recommend it to any inexperienced interpreter who needs to be reassured and/or encouraged.

Carole Josserand
Bellegarde-sur-Valserine, France

It was a pleasure to read Ewandro Magalhães’ elegant article, which uses witty comparisons and anecdotes to illustrate the notion of fear. Not only is it informative, but I am sure it will also help conference interpreters live with their fear and adopt a few tips to overcome it.

Emmy Plaschy
Geneva, Switzerland

Thank you very much for publishing Ewandro’s thoughtful article discussing the fears that new interpreters often face. As an educator of interpreters, and a mentor to new colleagues, I found his insight to be refreshing and right on target. Even experienced interpreters can benefit from reflecting on our comfort zones and where it is easy to become overly confident and inattentive to professional development. Great work!

Jennifer De La Cruz
Riverside, CA

Humor and Translation

After perusing “A Mis-Guided Missal,” by Mark Herman in the January issue, I was wondering if he was quoting an early draft of the English translation of the Nicene Creed at the end of his column. Implying that this creed’s new translation is stilted, Mr. Herman identifies certain sections, including:

He will come again in glory
To judge the living and the dead
And his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son
Is adored and glorified,
Who has spoken through the prophets.

Because I attend Mass weekly and have been using the new translation since late November, this passage caught me off-guard, in particular the words “And in the Holy Spirit,” which Mr. Herman cited specifically as requiring a subject and verb “between the ‘and’ and the ‘in’” for the whole sentence to be coherent. Please allow me to share the translation as it is written on placards issued in every pew of our church to assist the parishioners with the new Missal.

He will come again in glory
To judge the living and the dead
And his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son
Is adored and glorified,
Who has spoken through the prophets.

The pew card is a publication entitled Mass Responses and Prayers: The Roman Missal, Third Edition. The copyright information on the card indicates that it was published with the approval of the Committee on Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and it can be found at www.FaithCatholic.com. The same wording for this creed also appears in current editions of Magnificat (www.magnificat.com), a national monthly publication of all the readings for weekday and weekend Masses. I am sure you can understand why I found the title to Mr. Herman’s column to be in poor humor.

Melissa Abraham
Lafayette, LA

Send your letters to Jeff Sanfacon at jeff@atanet.org or American Translators Association, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314.
From the Classroom to the Courtroom:
A Guide to Interpreting in the U.S. Justice System

Edited by
Elena M. de Jongh
John Benjamins Publishing Company

This guide will familiarize prospective court interpreters and students interested in court interpreting with the nature, purpose, and language of pretrial, trial, and post-trial proceedings. Its innovative organization mirrors the progression of criminal cases through the courts, and provides readers with an accessible, easy-to-follow format. It explains and illustrates court procedure and provides interpreting exercises based on authentic material from each successive stage of the judicial process. Supplementary instructional aids include recordings in English and Spanish and a glossary of selected legal terms in context. An ideal reference manual for interpreters!

Pricing Strategies for Translators and Interpreters

By Judy Jenner

Pricing is a controversial and complex subject, and one that all linguists need to think about very seriously. In order to make a good living in the profession that we love, it is essential to figure out how to price our services. It is not about the price someone tells you to charge, but rather what you want to make and how you plan to get there.

During my webinar for ATA on this subject in February (“Pricing Strategies for Translators and Interpreters”), there were so many great questions and not enough time to answer them all, so I decided to address a few here. To purchase a recording of the entire webinar, please visit ATA’s website (http://atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar105_pricing.php).

What are the strategies to set minimum rates?

It is important to be very clear about your minimum rate in all communications with the client. You might want to put this information on your website, if you are comfortable doing so. Stick to the minimum rate you advertise, unless it is a repeat customer who sends you lots of work and who just happens to need one sentence translated.

What is the best strategy for informing customers of an inflation rate adjustment?

Clearly state that you have adjusted your rates for inflation on the price quotes that you issue during the first months of the year. It can be as simple as, “Please note that my rates have been adjusted for inflation by XYZ.” At Twin Translations, we update our rate sheet, which is publicly available, at the beginning of each year and post the adjusted rates there.

How do you deal with being undercut by less qualified translators/interpreters when dealing with certain agencies that just want to go with the cheapest rate?

That is always a problem. Unfortunately, you cannot control what others do. You can only control what you do (trite, but true). Move on to the next potential client and make sure you communicate the value of your services. The goal is to get clients to see your value and your abilities, not just your price. That said, there will always be clients who just want the cheapest price.

The U.S. economy is not the same as it was 10 years ago. What about those of us who feel we do not have much of a choice when it comes to accepting or rejecting a client’s offer?

Regardless of the economy, you always have a choice whether or not to accept a certain rate. As a business owner, you have to make some tough decisions, including walking away from work that does not pay what you charge. There will always be clients looking for world-class quality who are not very price-sensitive. Of course, the economic downturn has, in general, made customers more price-sensitive in all areas. But if you demand and receive adequate rates, you do not need hundreds of clients. You just need a few good repeat customers. Trust me, they are out there. You have a choice regarding the clients with whom you work. Let’s not take the “free” out of “freelancer.” You might enjoy the tough love and brilliant advice regarding pricing in Chris Durban’s book *The Prosperous Translator*. 


Do you charge late fees if payments are not made on time?

That is a good question, and it is a tricky issue. We rarely encounter late payers as we clearly define our payment policies up front. However, when people do pay late, we send them updated invoices with a late fee. Most folks provide prompt payment after receiving such invoices, but often conveniently exclude the late fee from the payment. Collecting on the late fee can be frustrating and time-consuming, so, depending on the amount owed and how much time you want to put into it, you have to decide whether to pursue the issue or just let it go. Your time is the only resource you have, so use it wisely.

What about reductions for repetitions?

I presume you are talking about repeated words/segments in translation environment tools. Our small business does not give discounts for those, unless the client wants to pay us for the investment we have made in these tools, including the hundreds of hours spent dealing with the software. Also, repetitions still need to be reviewed to make sure the context is correct. For instance, in many legal documents you will find the word “claim” used both as a verb and a noun. The software program would recognize this as a repetition, but you still have to review the sentence. However, we recently did a project that involved a series of handouts where the exact same information appeared four times on each page. In that case, we certainly only charged once. There was still some formatting involved to make sure the layout was correct, but charging only once was the right thing to do. There is always some room for flexibility.

If you demand and receive adequate rates, you do not need hundreds of clients.

Does it make sense to refer a customer who does not want to pay your rate to a colleague with lower rates?

Well, ideally, all translators and interpreters would charge adequate and professional rates. The reality is another, so I do not see why you would not want to make both your customer and your colleague happy. If the price potential clients want to pay does not work for you, why not refer them to a linguist who does offer the requested service at the requested rate? Many might disagree with me here, but if you cannot get the business, why not give it to someone else? The customer will only be forced to pay the adequate rate if no one is willing to work cheaper, which is not the case at the moment, although I would love to have our profession get there at some point.

What do you think about this? If you receive a request to take a free translation test, agree only if it is part of a paid assignment at regular rates. If you “fail” the test, the assignment is off. Then either you get paid for the test or not, depending on negotiation.

My opposition to free translation tests (= free work) always generates many interesting questions. While I think your proposal is interesting, it is still a risky undertaking. Evaluating the quality of a translation is a highly complex and subjective matter, and you are taking a monetary risk by letting the non-linguist client determine if your work passes muster. I still think that clients should pay for any work performed. It is not like you can ask your CPA for a sample tax return and then hire her if you, as the non-expert, deem her work correct. At some point, customers have to trust the expert they are hiring to do the job for them. There is risk inherent in any purchase, and the purchaser traditionally has to bear that risk. You, as a provider, can alleviate it by offering references and samples of previous translations (with the existing client’s permission, of course).

Here is another question related to translation tests. What about taking a free translation test for an agency for which you already work that is trying to win a new account?

Providing great service to an existing client and helping them win new business is great, but it does not change the facts. If the agency wants to win a new client, they might have to invest something (e.g., hiring you to do sample translations). You, as the freelancer who has no say in that business relationship, should not have to make that investment. In my opinion, this is an investment that the entity trying to win the customer should make. You are not responsible for your customers’ business relationships, nor should you be. After all, you are not an employee. You are a contractor.

A particular agency in my area charges very low rates for its work and they are driving all business in the city down. How do I reach out to them so they stop this practice?

Unfortunately, it happens all the time. Put them on your black list and do not work with them. The best thing you can do is to stay clear of that agency.
and let the chips fall where they may. I would not necessarily reach out to them to ask that they stop this behavior. My guess is that they will not, but if you are not afraid of confrontation, it is certainly worth a phone call. Let’s hope that the market forces will, at some point, eliminate bottom feeders.

**How do you feel about giving a commission to people who refer other jobs to you and vice versa? For instance, 10% of the contract price?**

Excellent question. Our small business does not actively look for work we cannot handle ourselves, but we outsource work to others on a regular basis. Many times, we will just send on the project to the superstar colleague we have selected. Other times, if the client asks us to coordinate the translation, we will take on the role of mini-agency and make a little bit of money off the top. More often than not, we just refer projects out. We do not charge a commission nor do others charge us if they send work our way. We do not expect anything in return for referring work, but colleagues can always buy me coffee if they want!

**How do you suggest dealing with clients who send your work out for review, specifically to non-translators who get nit-picky? What if the problems originate with the source documents?**

That is a difficult one, and this situation happens more often than you think—because everyone is a translator, right? I suggest gently educating the client on the process, sending one of the great ATA brochures (*Translation: Getting it Right* and *Interpreting: Getting it Right*), and pointing out that you have been hired as the outside expert to do the work. Ultimately, after clients have paid for the translation, they own it, so they may modify it as they please, but it would be reasonable to request that your name not appear on a translation with which they have tinkered. We have a long way to go before our services are truly respected in the larger marketplace, but we are on our way. Whatever you do, try not to take it personally and resist the urge to engage in finger wagging. It is annoying to have your work challenged, but it happens to other professionals as well. Stay calm and collected and show a willingness to cooperate—up to a certain point.

**How do you handle customer-initiated revisions after the project has begun?**

I would solve this by having a strong translation contract in place that specifies exactly what your services will or will not include. Professional transla-
tion typically does not include cus-
tomer revision, but you have to play it 
by ear. If a client just wants your input 
on why you selected specific terms, 
then that is certainly a reasonable 
request. However, if the customer 
wants to challenge every sentence, then 
you may gently point out that revisions 
are beyond the scope of the contracted 
services. You could offer to do revi-
sions at an additional charge. I think it 
is paramount for the customer to know 
which services are included before 
translation begins so both sides know 
what is expected. Having a solid con-
tract in place will help prevent many 
headaches.

Thanks again to all the colleagues 
who attended the webinar, and for 
posing such great questions!

Your time is the only resource you have, 
so use it wisely.
An essential step before delivering our translations is confirming that their quality and consistency satisfy our customers’ needs. Several standalone or online translation quality assurance (QA) tools can help us to do just that, and most computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools also offer useful QA features.

Two Windows programs that are useful for translation QA are ApSIC’s Xbench and Technolex Translation Studio’s ChangeTracker. Both tools are developed by translation and localization companies (ApSIC in Spain, and Technolex in Ukraine), and both are freeware, which makes them an excellent deal for translators and small translation companies. Of the two tools, Xbench is the more powerful, thanks to its rich terminology features. It allows searching glossary and translation memory files in various formats. At the end of a translation project, just switch to its robust QA features. ChangeTracker is a more limited tool, but what it does, it does well, clearly highlighting the differences between two versions of a translated bilingual file. Since Xbench does not currently track changes, the two programs complement each other and can be used together in a workflow designed to control and improve translation quality.

Xbench

Xbench’s QA features are designed to be used at an earlier stage of the translation and review process. Xbench’s QA features are designed to be used at an earlier stage of the translation and review process.

Xbench’s quality assurance features are designed to be used at an earlier stage of the translation and review process. Xbench’s QA features are designed to be used at an earlier stage of the translation and review process.

Features: Xbench offers the following features to help improve and control the quality of your translations. It can check:

- Spelling of source and target text for the entire project, in various languages. Spell checking is done differently here than in other tools: all the suspect terms from all the files checked are shown on one screen, and you can select those that will be examined during QA (while the others will be ignored). (See Figure 1 on page 17.)
• Untranslated segments, as marked by your CAT tool.

• Segments where target text is the same as the source.

• Inconsistency in the source or target text, that is, identical source segments translated differently, or identical translations for different source segments.

• Tag mismatch, which is useful, for example, when translating html or other markup files.

• Numeric mismatch, where numbers are different in the source and target segments.

• Repeated words.

• Double blanks.

• Key term mismatch, that is, differences between the translations recorded in a “key term” glossary and how the terms are translated in the bilingual files. This is extremely useful to ensure terminological consistency, but bear in mind that key term lists should be of limited length to avoid too many false positives.

• Segments that meet the search criteria you set up in the Project Checklist or Personal Checklists. In both types of checklist you can set up detailed searches for items you know you tend to get wrong.

The result of all the various QA checks selected is then displayed in a report. (See Figure 2 on page 19.) Depending on the file format of your bilingual files, you can jump from the items in the report to the segments, or

Figure 1: Xbench Spell Checker

![Figure 1: Xbench Spell Checker](image-url)
Xbench and ChangeTracker: Two Freeware Tools for Translation Quality Assurance

at least to the files, that need to be corrected. You can export the QA report as an html, tab-delimited, xml, or Excel file and share it with people who do not have Xbench.

Xbench is a powerful tool. You will need to devote time to learn to use it well, but the time spent in getting to know Xbench is an investment that will be repaid, yielding better and more consistent translations.

**Supported Formats:** Xbench supports the bilingual file formats listed in Table 1.

**Documentation:** Unlike most other freeware programs, Xbench’s help system offers complete and well-written documentation. Whenever some feature is added or changed, the help information is updated. Xbench’s documentation is particularly useful in explaining how best to use the more sophisticated searches, such as “power search,” “MS wildcard search,” and “regular expression search,” and how to take advantage of the options in the Personal or Project Checklists.

**ChangeTracker**

ChangeTracker is designed to compare bilingual files and detect any changes and edits. It works on pairs of bilingual files as a step-by-step wizard. The first file from a pair contains the translation before any edits or changes, while the second file from each pair contains the translation after changes and edits are made by an editor.

**Features:** ChangeTracker does only one thing, but it does it well: it displays the changes made to bilingual files during editing. (See Figure 3 on page 20.) It displays clearly all changes made to a translation and shows any “orphan” segments (that is, segments present only in the original translation or in the edited version). The comparison results can be exported as an xml or Excel file, and this exported report can even be used to create a bilingual table. This is useful, for example, if you need to create a bilingual glossary after translating a software program. (ChangeTracker’s documentation provides the details of how to do this.)

**Supported Formats:** ChangeTracker supports the bilingual file formats listed in Table 2. Some popular bilingual file formats are not included, but this is a young program that is being actively developed.

**Documentation:** ChangeTracker does not need much documentation, but it does include an online help system that provides all the necessary information to run the program.

---

**Table 1: Supported Formats in Xbench**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tab-delimited text (.txt)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MemoQ or other XLIFF tools</td>
<td>(.xliff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMX memory (.tmx)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRX/MARTIF glossary (.xml, .txr, .tmf)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trados 2007 (or earlier)</td>
<td>exported memory (.txt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trados exported Multterm 5</td>
<td>glossary (.txt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trados Multiterm XML glossary</td>
<td>(.xml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trados TagEditor (.txt)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trados bilingual MS Word</td>
<td>(.doc, .docx, .rtf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDL Trados Studio 2009 or</td>
<td>2011 (.sdlxliff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDLX (.jib)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDLX Memory (.mdb)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR Transit 2.6/XY directory tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 2: Supported Formats in ChangeTracker**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trados TagEditor (.txt)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDL Trados Studio (.sdlxliff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MemoQ (.xliff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiom Translation Workspace</td>
<td>(.xlz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMX/Oscar (.tmx)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wordfast (.xml)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Helium (.he)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx,</td>
<td>.rtf)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Suggested Workflow**

Xbench and ChangeTracker can be integrated into a single workflow (at least if the CAT tool you use for translation and editing is among those supported by both tools). Here is a workflow I use and recommend:

1. **Translation:** Performed in your normal CAT environment. The result is one or more bilingual files.
2. Editing: Again, performed in your CAT environment to produce edited bilingual files.

3. QA: Use Xbench to check for completeness, various types of mismatches, conformity to a key term glossary, etc. Corrections are then made in the bilingual files.

4. Comparison: After QA has been completed and any necessary changes made to the edited bilingual files, a comparison report is created using ChangeTracker. This report highlights all the changes made by the editor to the translation. Depending on your process, this report may be used to document the editing done, or as the starting point for further steps (for example, making new changes, reversing some of the previous edits, and so on). Both Steps 3 and 4 might be run more than once, if necessary.

5. Final QA Check and Delivery: Once you are satisfied with the quality of your translation, the final version of the translated and edited bilingual files is delivered.

Downloads
You can download Xbench and its spell checking dictionaries from ApSIC’s website (www.apsic.com), and ChangeTracker from Technolex’s website (www.change-tracker.com).
Notes

1. ApSIC does provide a separate change tracking program, ApSIC Comparator, which performs the same functions as ChangeTracker, but the development of this program appears to have been stopped a few years ago, so ApSIC Comparator does not support as many formats as Xbench or ChangeTracker.

2. Download the full presentation of Xbench’s many features at www.abouttranslation.com/p/xbench-training.html.

Additional References

Translation Quality Assurance Tools: Current State and Future Approaches
A presentation by Tamara Lukyanova and Julia Makoushina of Palex Languages & Software, with the results of a survey on the use of translation QA tools. The survey is from five years ago, but I believe it is still informative and useful. You can download the survey (both as a presentation and as a paper) from Palex’s website.

Other Translation QA Tools
Most CAT tools include their own set of QA features, which may range from basic to rather sophisticated.

QA Distiller
www.qa-distiller.com
A commercial, standalone program.

ErrorSpy
www.dog-gmbh.de/software-products/errrorspy.html?L=1
Another commercial software.

Moravia’s PQAC Online
https://qms.moravia-it.com/PqacOnline
A free online tool.
So, what are technical manuals?
They are not some literary work with a few technical buzzwords. Technical manuals are written for a very precise and specific purpose: to convey information to those who need it to operate a piece of equipment, keep their jobs, or, simply, enhance their lives. They are roadmaps. Remember: you do not read technical manuals for pleasure; you use technical manuals because you need to know what they tell you. Translators of technical manuals must keep this in perspective or their translations will become useless pieces of cheap literature.

Who writes technical manuals?
Professional technical writers with in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, impeccable writing skills, and an excellent command of the “manual style.” Or, at least, that is who should write them. Reality is a bit different:

• Some know little about the subject and confuse the user about what to do and not to do.
• Some are still learning how to write.
• “Style” is reduced to a boring repetition of warning sentences and a mix of technical and legal words.

Who translates technical manuals?
Professional technical translators with a thorough knowledge of the subject matter, impeccable writing skills, and an excellent command of the “manual style.” Again, at least, that is who should translate them. In the real world, however:

• Some translators have no idea what they are translating.
• Basic technical concepts (which should always be included in the translated text) are simply left out.
• “Style” is reduced to a simple “word by word translation” (the dictionary translation syndrome).
I have a manual to translate. Now what?

Do you know the subject matter? How well? If you are unfamiliar with the subject matter and getting a sense of the material seems impossible or impracticable, be honest and do not accept the assignment. You will save your client and yourself a lot of trouble and embarrassment.

I know the subject matter and still have the manual to translate. Any clues?

Read it! From top to bottom! Period. Outside the environment where the manual was produced, you are probably the first person to read it. Everything in it has to make sense to you. Everything! Otherwise, how are you going to convey to others who speak your language the “meat” of the manual?

Okay! I have read it. Now what?

Establish the style of your translation, which may be different from the one used in the source copy. Here are a few pointers:

• An “informal” style may not translate well into your mother tongue.

• Use the infinitive or the imperative form, as appropriate or customary in the technical world of the destination country of the manual.

• Become familiar with the world where the manual is going to be used. For example, the term “sales office” in the source copy may have to become the “representative” or the “dealer” in your translation.

My manual has lots of words related to buttons, dials, and displays. Should I translate these?

I am glad you asked, because most translators do not! Call your client and find out if the lettering on the buttons and dials and the text in the displays are going to be translated as well. Usually, they are not! (For economy reasons, they claim.) So, if you translate “LOWER” or “LEFT” into your language, the poor operator will be looking for a button that does not exist. He or she is there to operate the machine, not to translate. That is your job! Do it well!

How should I translate these words?
• DANGER
• WARNING
• CAUTION
• NOTICE

Become familiar with the standards governing the usage of these “safety words,” both in the source country and the target country. Safety words should never be translated by looking them up in a bilingual dictionary. For instance, WARNING is a word that should convey a situation that is less hazardous than DANGER (i.e., life threatening), but more dangerous than CAUTION (i.e., minor bodily injury and damage to the equipment). So, find out the right word in your language that conveys the same meaning and preserves the hierarchy of these safety words.

Should I convert the units of measurement that appear in my manual?

First, find out if there is legislation in your country regarding units of measurement. Consider if conversions will make the manual more understandable to the user. If the user is to press a button when the needle of a pressure gauge (graduated in pounds per square inch) reaches 120 PSI, then converting this to kPa (i.e., kilopascal) will leave the poor guy/girl looking for something that does not exist. When it comes to units, there are three basic rules for the translator:

1. Learn the ropes about units of weight and measurement.

2. Make units usable. Quite often, this means not doing anything to them.

3. Avoid surprises! Always ask your client what should be done about the units in the manual.

My client sent me a list of words that are the captions for the illustrations of a manual. Now what?

If you want to provide a quality translation, do not touch them until you see the illustrations. Would you buy a house based on its description alone?

My manual has some words that I cannot find in any of my dictionaries. Now what?

Before calling your client for assistance, look in the Yellow Pages. (Remember them?) We still receive printed copies of the Yellow Pages in Portugal, complete with great images, which make them excellent reference books. Maybe you never thought about it, but they are the only “general technical dictionary” updated every year by the people who use the terminology themselves. I have several of these books in various languages in my library. They are simply invaluable!
The manual I received looks great. I am sure that it is well written and that its translation will not be that difficult...

You know what they say: “beauty is only skin deep.” Under the glossy print and six-color cover, look for little things like:

- Poor copy written in “international” English.
- Unclear sentences (English may be the writer’s second language).
- Unusual acronyms/abbreviations known but to God.
- Incorrect captions in the illustrations.
- Graphs with incorrect information, labels, or values (e.g., 110-volt power outlets in machinery exported to Europe [?]).

Some “little things” in the manual do not look right to me. Why?

Typographic style is different from country to country. For example, spiral-bound texts are set differently in the U.S. than in Europe. And in Europe, periods and commas are set outside quotation marks, while in the U.S. they are set inside. Get those little things right!

My manual asks the user to comply with American regulations, like OSHA, ANSI, NFPA, CFR, etc. How do I handle this?

First, do you know what those acronyms mean? You should. Second, if they refer to materials, you are okay. But if you ask people in your country to comply with foreign laws and regulations, something is wrong. Within proper context, OSHA may become “the company’s safety regulations” and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) may be best translated as the appropriate equivalent code used in your country. Find out.

My manuals include several references to other publications (either from the same company or just trade publications). I should translate their names, right?

No! Not unless they have already been translated and you know their title in your own language. Otherwise, people interested in referring to those publications will not be able to locate them. Again, the name of the game in the world of technical manuals is “every piece of information should be presented in a way that makes it usable.” Anything less will turn any useful information into just a bunch of “filler words.”

The manual sent to me includes a three-page warranty section. Looks easy!

Do not be fooled about how easy a legal text looks. For non-lawyers, legal texts will always be incomprehensible. If you still want to do it yourself, ask your client to have it reviewed by a specialist in the area. Or, at the very least, have your lawyer friend go through your translation. I call it common sense!

I have a one-page “EC Certificate of Conformity” required by some EEC, EC, or EU Directive; in my last manual, this was called “Declaration of Conformity”...

“Certificate” and “Declaration” are both used. EC (European Commission) Directives have the “EEC” or “EC” designator in their official reference number. Leave this as it is. Refer to the name of the Directives by their official designation (there are 23 official names for each Directive). So, get some EU Directives in several languages from the EU’s official website. They have all the correct, validated terminology you need. Access all European Union law at http://eur-lex.europa.eu. Save yourself some time and provide your client with a top-notch translation.
Language is ever evolving and never static, and interpreters must strive constantly to expand and refine their linguistic knowledge. As such, they must incorporate ways to practice language skills into their daily lives. Many of us have used paper flashcards to help facilitate language acquisition at some point in our career. It is a simple method: on one side of the card we write a term in our first language (L1), and on the reverse we write the same term in our second language (L2). Oral flashcards take the concept of practicing forward and backward translation a step further by turning it into a listening and speaking activity. As we shall see, this technique is particularly valuable to interpreters.

**Why Oral Flashcards?**

Creating a study method that works for you is key to successful and sustained vocabulary practice and development. Oral flashcards are productive tools for learning new terms or practicing less commonly used ones because the exercise mimics what interpreters actually do on the job by drawing on auditory and vocal skills far more effectively than traditional paper flashcards. They can also be created easily. Instead of writing on a card, you create an audio recording of the terms you wish to practice. The process involves just a few steps:

- Prepare a list of terms or phrases you want to learn and group them by topic. Familiarize yourself with the terms so that you can pronounce them smoothly when recording. Each recording should be no longer than five minutes. This will facilitate locating terms quickly for review and will keep digital audio files smaller.
• Record yourself saying each term in L1, leave a brief interval to allow yourself time to respond during practice sessions, and then say the term’s equivalent in L2. You should also make a second recording from L2 to L1, since it is important to create oral flashcards that move in both directions to strengthen backward and forward translation.

There are a variety of methods with which to create oral flashcards. (Links for the products mentioned below can be found in the box on page 28.)

**Digital Recorders:** These devices are an inexpensive option. Some recorders give you the ability to create multiple files containing word lists, but you will be unable to customize the list names since they will appear simply as numbers on the recorder’s display. This is a disadvantage because you will be unable to scroll through and find specific lists quickly or switch the order of your lists. Some digital recorders come with software that allows you to upload recordings as mp3 files to the computer, where you can rename the list files so they are easy to locate and differentiate. From there, you can burn a CD or transfer the files to an iPod, mp3 player, or smartphone. Although digital recorders with this capability cost more, it is worth the extra investment to have the flexibility they offer.

**GarageBand for Mac:** If you are a Mac user, the GarageBand application, which comes standard as part of the iLife suite, provides a user-friendly option. GarageBand allows you to select “Create New Podcast Episode” from the main menu. Users can indicate whether their recording is of a male or female voice, which improves quality. Editing features include the ability to change the timing of your recording, split tracks, move portions of a track, and insert new portions of recorded material into an existing track. The recording quality is good and it is easy to export files directly to iTunes and upload them to an iPod, iPhone, or burn them to a CD.

**Windows Sound Recorder for PC:** PC users might be interested in Windows Sound Recorder. This application, which comes standard on PCs, is user-friendly and allows you the benefit of recording directly to your desktop. This is an especially good option for those new to recording on anything other than a digital or standard tape recorder, since it requires no additional investment. The only requirement is that you have a sound card and an inexpensive microphone.

**Podcasts:** You can create podcasts with programs such as Audacity, PodProducer, and WildVoice Studio, which can then be transferred to an iPod or mp3 player or else played directly from your computer. Again, these have the benefit of allowing you to customize the names of your lists so they can be identified and located easily.

**Software:** Free downloads or recording software are also available, such as Audacity (for PC, Mac, and Linux at http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download) and Free Sound Recorder for PC (http://cnet.co/Free-Sound). If you want something with more capacity, you can purchase a number of software programs. Prices vary; so do your research and find the one that best fits your needs and preferences (see reviews at http://bit.ly/voice-software-reviews).

**Smartphone Apps:** Many smartphones come preloaded with a voice recorder. You simply record onto your phone and play it back whenever you want to practice. There are also downloadable apps for purchase that allow for voice recording. For example, I have used QuickVoice on my iPhone for voice recording (www.quickvoice.com/quickvoice).

**Tape Recorder:** Finally, there is nothing wrong with a good old-fashioned tape recorder, if this is what you feel most comfortable using. A disadvantage will be searching for your lists or locating them using a counter.

In addition to helping us learn and practice, an added bonus of oral flashcards is that they are considerably more portable and accessible than a notebook or a stack of traditional paper flashcards. It is much easier to schedule time to practice and study vocabulary into our daily routine when it can be done while walking the dog, running on the treadmill, vacuuming, or cooking dinner.

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**Repetition fulfills important functions in normal, everyday speech.**
Oral Flashcards: Tapping into Auditory and Vocal Skills to Improve Term Acquisition Continued

**Drawing Upon Oral and Auditory Learning Strategies**

The effectiveness of oral flashcards goes beyond mere convenience. This approach to term acquisition also takes advantage of certain neurological theories associated with how we learn and retain information, some of which are discussed below.

**Learning in Chunks**

Research in second language acquisition has shown that attempting to learn a language word by word will not result in the internalization of that language’s overall linguistic structure, and instead can contribute to fossilization because a speaker is unable to create original utterances with the language. Communicative approaches to language learning thus emphasize the importance of meaningful input: hearing the language used realistically and in context so that learners can begin to incorporate it into their ever-developing internal understanding of how the language works.

Similarly, these approaches stress the importance of learning meaningful chunks of language in context. According to David Wood, coordinator of the program for the Certificate in the Teaching of English as a Second Language at Carleton University’s School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, these chunks are linguistic formulas or, “fixed strings … of words that have a range of functions and uses in speech production and communication and seem to be cognitively stored and retrieved by speakers as if they were single words.” Many first phrases spoken by those just beginning to learn a language (e.g., “What’s your name?” or “How are you?”) are common examples of chunks. Similarly, the doublets and triplets common to legal language can be described as chunks (e.g., “give, devise, and bequeath”). Because these word strings follow a set pattern, speakers can remember and use them without variation. By learning the meaning of a chunk, we are able to communicate without having to think through the nuts and bolts of its construction. For example, Spanish learners can easily express likes and dislikes using *Me gusta / No me gusta* long before they understand indirect object pronouns.

Such formulaic sequences play an important role in language acquisition. Chunking aids in the internalization of language and contributes to fluency by increasing the amount of speech produced without a pause. In other words, we communicate meaning rather than simply string individual words together. Novice language learners, for example, can have a completely legitimate conversation using nothing but chunks such as “Hello, how are you? What’s your name? Where are you from? Where do you live? What’s your phone number? Nice to meet you. I’ll see you later.” and so on.

Speech patterns and tendencies to use formulaic sequences are such that we become aware of them both consciously and subconsciously. Never was this clearer to me than the time I had a student raise his hand and ask what I was always looking for when I said *Vamos a ver* (“Let’s see”) as I consulted the list of activities for the day. This type of awareness, as Wood points out, helps, “establish a pattern-recognition unit, which is then strengthened by frequent input, eventually leading to single-step memory access … [and] … automatization or retrieval in a single-step process of remembering.” Thus, we do not have to think of each individual word or form in a chunk; rather, the entire string is accessed and produced as one unit. Using these chunks or even a series of them allows time for us to attend to other utterances that demand more attention and are not formulaic. For example, a novice language learner does not consciously have to think about the meaning of “My name is…” and can instead pay attention to the information that follows.

**Repetition**

Without a doubt, repetition is essential to learning chunks of information. It is not enough simply to listen to something; we need to reproduce the sounds and train our vocal chords to form them. Repetition in language learning has sometimes gotten a bad rap because of its association with the behaviorist audiolingual approach of the 1950s and 1960s. Lee James and Bill VanPatten, both internationally recognized scholars in the field of second language acquisition, note that audiolingualism, which is based on theories of behaviorism, was originally, “[d]eveloped at military schools (where one did not question authority) ... [and it] ... explicitly cast the instructor as drill leader.” The end goal of this approach is to create good habits in language learners and eliminate bad ones. Therefore, audiolingual learning activities emphasize patterned drills. Central to this approach are compact language drills (CDLs) in which learners repeat what an instructor says.

As a result, repetition is sometimes cast aside because it conjures up the image of rote drills. Nevertheless, repetition fulfills important functions in normal, everyday speech. We need only think of how children parrot everything they hear when learning to speak to know that repetition serves as a building block of language learning and, later, original creation with the language. This is a result of a compo-
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ment of working memory known as the phonological loop, which deals with spoken and written language. In an article in Psychological Review, Alan Baddeley, Susan Gathercole, and Costanza Papagno explain that the phonological loop, “comprises both a phonological store, which holds information in phonological form, and a rehearsal process, which serves to maintain decaying representations in the phonological store.” Similar to using chunks, repetition allows us to produce easy to remember formulaic utterances while giving our minds time to craft what follows.5

Second language speakers have to know both content and form to create utterances within a language. Novice language learners tend to remember words in L2 by binding them to their L1 translation; in other words, they do not see a new L2 term as having meaning in and of itself, but rather through its link to the word in L1.7 In an article discussing language representation and processing in fluent bilinguals in Neuropsychologia, Shekeila Palmer, Johanna van Hoof, and Jelena Havelka explain that with increased proficiency, speakers of a second language develop, “an asymmetrically connected linguistic system in which the two lexicons are linked both directly at the lexical level, and indirectly via independent links between each lexicon and the conceptual store.” That is, we make connections both on a word-for-word and a meaning-for-meaning level. As many of us know from experience, the consequence of this asymmetrical system is that backward translation—going from L2 to L1—is faster than forward translation because it tends to be lexical, or at the word level. In contrast, forward translation tends to be based more on meaning and concepts.8

Our practice of new terms should challenge us to exercise every aspect of the brain’s capacity to learn and adapt to linguistic patterns.

Musical Memory

The concept of listening to a recording also ties into how the brain processes auditory stimuli. Music and memory are uniquely linked. Music often accompanies our memories, and those memories of music come back very accurately. Oliver Sacks, a neurologist and professor of neurology and psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center, has found in his work with patients that, “musical perception, musical sensibility, musical emotion, and musical memory can survive long after other forms of memory have disappeared.”10

As linguists, we can capitalize on our musical intelligence and the strength of musical memories. If you listen to anyone for very long, you will pick up on the unique rhythmic qualities of his or her individual speech. We can likewise tap into our own musicality—the unique rhythms and sounds of our individual way of speaking—to help us remember by following the beat of our speech patterns. Self-repetition of words and phrases plants a rhythmic memory in your brain of the way you produce those words and phrases. Practicing our vocabulary by listening to audio recordings of ourselves repeating terms allows us to draw on the rhythm of speech (and not so much on the linguistical aspects) to retrieve and recall content.

For example, whether you consider yourself a musician or not, you likely have experienced something known as an earworm at some point in your life. Earworms are those snippets of music that get stuck and replay through our minds, often with maddening consistency. When we remember, neurons fire in the same pattern as when we first perceived the object or event we remember. In the case of earworms, it appears that the pattern is firing repeatedly—much like a scratch on a vinyl record or CD.11 As studies of music and the brain indicate, musical memories often outlast other memories since they are stored differently. Tapping into your own musicality by using oral flashcards to learn, practice, and remember is like having a backup rhythmic copy of the concrete.

As country singer Trisha Yearwood sings, “The song remembers when.”12 Oliver Sacks likewise quotes one of his correspondents: “Every memory of my childhood has a soundtrack to it.”13 Many of us would agree with both observations regarding the power of musical memory.

Understanding How We Learn

Taken together, these understandings of the architecture of our linguistic system suggest that oral flashcards are an effective strategy to help us enhance our vocabularies and improve our skills as interpreters. Because we, as linguists, need to be able to move back and forth fluidly between languages, our practice of new terms should challenge us

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to exercise every aspect of the brain’s capacity to learn and adapt to linguistic patterns. By using repetition to strengthen our proficiency in a language, and by becoming familiar with the musicality of our individual pronunciation, we will become more aware of how these language patterns can affect our performance.

Notes

2. Ibid., 13-33.

3. Ibid., 17.


8. Ibid., 1426.

9. Ibid., 1426.


Blog Trekker

What to Do When the Client Is Wrong?

(Posted by Tess Whitty on her blog, The Business of Translation, www.swedishtranslationservices.com/blog.)

I have followed a discussion on ATA's Business Practices group on Yahoo! (http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ata_business_practices) these past few days with interest. The discussion is about when a non-native client insists on inserting grammatical errors into the target text. There can be other similar situations, but it all boils down to instances where a client wants you to change a translation that you know is correct to something that is no longer correct. What is a translator to do?

The first instinct might be to refuse to do it, and to tell the client that he or she is just plain wrong. After this, you might add an explanation of why the client is wrong. This is a natural reaction, but it might easily lead to hard feelings, and one of you will probably not want to work with the other anymore.

Another reaction might be to just accept the suggested errors and move on with your day. This is easier said than done for a translator, who is used to grammatical correctness, the beauty of a good text, and a quest for perfection in finding the right word. Accepting these errors might leave you with a gnawing feeling of dissatisfaction and a worry that someone might think it was you who inserted the errors into the translation.

So what are we to do instead? ATA members Chris Durban and Dee Shields offered some great suggestions in the Yahoo! discussion. Chris works with direct clients and often gets credited as the translator in their documentation. Her suggestions are:

- Listen carefully and pleasantly, and then explain, preferably in writing, why the suggested solution is not correct.
- Allow the client to save face by suggesting a second or third option.
- Accept certain suggested errors, but ask the client to remove your name from the credits.

Dee Shields says that the option of being credited as the translator is rare for her, and probably for many of us, and offers the following suggestion:

- Tackle each point in writing with an explanation of why you chose the term or wording over the one the client suggested. Document your choice with links and/or references to style guides, dictionaries, and such. The trick here is to leave emotions out of it and not overdo the “proof” in the documentation.

The important thing is to remember that the client usually does not fully understand what it is that we translators do and how we do it. Once you give them some insight into that, they usually realize that you are the one possessing the expertise and that you most likely know more about the intricacies of the target language than they do.

You have to weigh the value of this particular client against your honor and reputation as a translator and tread lightly on the client’s feelings if you do not want to lose their business. It can also come down to how much time and effort it is worth to correct the client. Whatever the situation or choice, it is always wise to step back and not let your emotions or pride get too involved.

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I am an avid reader and love to connect the dots. While perusing literature regarding the seven virtues, it struck me that our job as interpreters can specifically encourage progress in that regard. Let’s take court interpreters as an example.

The virtues in question are prudence, justice, restraint, courage, faith, hope, and charity. The first four are the cardinal virtues that originated in Greek philosophy and the last three are the theological virtues from the letters of Paul of Tarsus.

**Prudence:** Prudence is rather underrated and yet very important in my opinion. An interpreter must exercise this quality at every turn. This means being discreet and knowing when to speak up to request additional information to avoid any misunderstanding. Interpreters must also know the appropriate time to explain any logistics of the interpreting procedure to the parties involved, such as proper seating and the importance of speaking slowly and clearly. When conversing with the parties involved with the case, an interpreter also needs to exercise prudence by not expressing a personal opinion or sharing private conversations with others.

**Justice:** I will not dwell on justice, as that is the main reason for many of our jobs—to assist the courts and the legal system to administer same.

**Restraint:** Restraint goes hand in hand with prudence. There is a difference, however, in that it regulates not only the volume of extraneous information the interpreter solicits or adds to interactions, but also the manner in which he or she does so. It is disconcerting to see overly verbose interpreters who want to give opinions on every subject discussed during an assignment even though it is not their place to do so, or who interpret for a longer period without a break simply because they like to hear themselves speak and want to impress others. These tactics are seldom successful.

**Courage:** Courage is needed to interpret under difficult circumstances, including interacting with problematic and/or incomprehensible witnesses, accepting assignments that require us to go beyond our comfort zone and learn new skills or terminology, and dealing with criticism in a professional manner.

**Faith and Hope:** Now we come to the theological virtues, which are more abstract but no less important. We must have faith in ourselves that we can rise to the occasion if an assignment is within our scope and deliver a professional interpretation. This does not mean that we should have blind faith that we can do a job without adequate credentials or preparation. It means that we must have faith in our abilities to perform well under challenging circumstances. With the proper training and effort to guide us, we need to believe in our ability to achieve the desired level of professionalism. Unfortunately, as the French writer François de la Rochefoucauld said as far back as the 17th century, “We promise according to our hopes and perform according to our fears.” We can also turn to John F. Kennedy’s positive advice that, “We should not let our fears hold us back from pursuing our hopes.”

**Charity:** Finally, there is charity, which does not necessarily imply financial giving. It can mean giving of yourself and of your time. We can learn charity by maintaining positive working relationships, refraining from being overly critical, and offering help when it is needed or mentoring colleagues. With the right attitude, interpreters can put clients at ease during stressful times in court. Another way to exhibit charity is by volunteering pro bono for worthy causes that can benefit from the services of our profession.

If you practice these virtues through your work, you will not only take a step toward self-improvement, you will also be able to share the benefits you have gained with the world around you.
The other day a representative of a language services provider called up to question me about translators and their use of machine translation (MT). I was a tad puzzled about the phone call, but I tried to make the best of it. As I hemmed and hawed with my answers, however, I realized how little information we actually have on this topic.

The representative’s first question was about the percentage of professional translators using MT. His focus was on “normal projects”—those projects that were not originally set up with the express goal of using MT. The short answer: I do not know, and I am not sure that anyone does. But there are signs to indicate that use by translators is certainly increasing. One telltale sign is that virtually all translation environment tools now include the Google Translate (or Microsoft Bing Translator) add-in. Many also link to other MT engines as well, including desktop-based, customizable versions of tools like Systran and PROMT.

Of course, just because “it’s there” does not mean that it is being used. Some language combinations lend themselves to MT more than others. For instance, I would bet that a higher percentage of Swedish→English translators use MT than German→English translators because of the greater morphological similarity between Swedish and English. And some kinds of translatable texts are more suitable than others: with software strings you might have a much higher “success” rate than with complex medical or technical texts. With all these variables, I would venture to guess that around 20% of all professional translators belong to that relatively new specimen that uses MT to pretranslate. (I would be thrilled if someone had some actual statistics to correct or substantiate this.)

The language services provider representative’s follow-up question was even more interesting: Should translators have to disclose that they are using MT? I have an easy one-word answer to that: No. Of course not. I was happy to hear that the representative agreed we should not have to volunteer that information.

We are selling a product, not a process. While it is true that our clients are defining the process ever more closely for many projects, it is still the product—our translation—for which we are paid. Now, if it becomes obvious to our clients that we have used certain processes—such as translation memory, voice recognition, MT, or any others—that have had a detrimental effect on the quality of our products, or if we have not used certain processes—such as specific glossaries, style guides, or even spell-checkers—to help ensure the necessary quality, then there is a problem that we will have to address. But if we deliver a product that matches the quality criteria articulated in the job description, it is up to us how we got there.
The Interpreter’s Edge: Practical Exercises in Court Interpreting

Reviewed by:
Susan Rascón

Author:
Holly Mikkelson

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ACEBO

Publication date:
1995

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Available from:
www.acebo.com/edgfrnt.htm

It is a pleasure to share this review of the third edition of The Interpreter’s Edge: Practical Exercises in Court Interpreting by Holly Mikkelson, which for years has represented the gold standard in interpreter training.

While seeking course material for an introduction to interpreting (Spanish and English) course I was preparing for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s Translation Program, I found great consensus among knowledgeable professionals in the field; everyone recommended the training material from ACEBO. Following my attendance at the Agnese Haury Institute in Tucson in 2001, I listened to some of the tapes while driving. I then passed both the written and oral portions of the federal court interpreter certification exam on my first try. I still do not feel I have mastered the entire contents of The Interpreter’s Edge, even after using it in the classroom for 10 years, but with great confidence I tell my students that if they have a thorough grasp of that material, they stand a good chance of passing interpreter certification exams.

The texts and scripts cover a broad range of topics common to the courtroom setting. There have been many instances in my own interpreting where I have been thankful for the time I spent with these texts and scripts, as words or phrases came up that I had learned through The Interpreter’s Edge.

I cannot stress enough the importance of reading the “How to Use” section (pages ix-xi), as well as the introductions to the three main sections covering simultaneous interpreting, consecutive interpreting, and sight translation. Be sure to look at these before reading any of the simultaneous or consecutive scripts! However, the way you use the book will depend on your skills, your timetable, and your own personal preferences.

Content
The book is divided into three main sections: “Simultaneous Interpretation” (120 pages), “Consecutive Interpretation” (106 pages), and “Sight Translation” (94 pages). The Interpreter’s Edge also includes eight CDs. It is important to understand that, unlike some of the other resources available from ACEBO, these CDs do not include recordings of anyone interpreting the scripts. Rather, the recordings consist of the original scripts themselves, in order for the interpreter to hear what is said as if he or she is in the courtroom. This does not mean, however, that you must research unfamiliar vocabulary on your own. Following the lessons in each of the three sections are very helpful notes. In terms of my own skills, I found that the terms discussed and translated in the notes sections were exactly the ones I needed. If you are an experienced interpreter, you may wish to peruse a few pages of the notes sections to see whether it will be fruitful to study those pages prior to interpreting each lesson. Then I would suggest that you try interpreting one of the scripts “cold.” See if this amount of preparation is appropriate for you. This way you have an opportunity to incorporate new terms into your vocabulary and then immediately use them in a simulated court interpreting experience.

Each of the three main sections includes not only practice texts/scripts (included on CD in the cases of simultaneous and consecutive), but also short introductory sections that are densely packed with excellent advice and guidance on interpreting in general and how best to take advantage of the material that follows.
Do not underestimate the value of the shadowing, dual tasking, and paraphrasing exercises included in the simultaneous section. Shadowing will help you become accustomed to speaking and listening at the same time. Dual tasking will increase your concentration. Paraphrasing will help with decalage and mental agility. Those deeply immersed in test preparation will particularly appreciate that each lesson specifies the rates of speech, which vary across the different lessons. The introduction indicates that, “most interpreter certification exams are given at 140 to 160 words per minute” (pages 1-3), and you will be aware of the word-per-minute rate for each of the 20 lessons.

The consecutive section, in addition to 18 lessons with consecutive interpreting scripts, includes a helpful introduction and six additional exercises that work on memory and note-taking skills.

Holly Mikkelson aptly points out that sight translation “is often given short shrift in court interpreter training” (pages 1-3). This section includes 24 texts specifically chosen and designed to develop all the skills needed for sight translation.

*The Interpreter’s Edge* is versatile, in that it can be used in a classroom setting or for self-study. It is appropriate for interpreters with any amount of experience. Those needing more preparation will definitely want to study at least the vocabulary in the notes sections thoroughly prior to attempting to interpret the lessons. Those better versed in courtroom vocabulary may want to jump right in, recording a rendition or working with a partner or group, and then double-checking vocabulary choices against the notes. An important point to remember about the translations provided in the notes section is that even though there are often alternate ways to interpret each word or phrase, you can always feel confident using the translations provided in these lessons.

Having used this book for 10 years in an introductory course, my experience has been that the students who excel are those with very strong language skills and very little interpreting experience. Sadly, I have found that bad habits in experienced interpreters are very hard to break. This is particularly the case when it comes to length of utterances. Any interpreter has strengths and weaknesses, but it seems that many lack the discipline necessary to allow a witness to complete a thought before interrupting that witness to interpret. Consecutive interpreting is particularly stressful, and we all fall into the habit of jumping in to interpret before we forget what has been said. We may have perfect accuracy on short utterances but be unable to handle long ones. In this regard, *The Interpreter’s Edge* teaches the best practices and discipline necessary to pass interpreter certification exams. It is very important that, during your practice, you wait to pause the recording until the witness has finished speaking. Resist the temptation to pause the CD while the witness has finished speaking. Work on your note-taking and memory skills.

As a special note to translators, I want to point out that my own background is in literary translation. Frankly, I was surprised to learn that translation is excellent preparation for interpreting. As translators, we are constantly expanding our vocabulary and structuring sentences. We cannot simply skip or avoid unfamiliar words. Often without realizing it, we are building the foundations for effective interpreting. If you are primarily a translator and are thinking about trying your hand at interpreting, I strongly encourage you to use a resource such as *The Interpreter’s Edge* in order to start off on the right foot and develop good techniques and discipline.

This is a third edition, published in 1995. Some of the texts are somewhat dated, and the value of the exercises would be increased by updating them. Another concern is that there are some monosyllabic words written with accent marks (again, dating the material). Examples of this are *vi*, consistently written *vi*, and *di*, written *dī* (e.g., page 245, line 1). Other than this, I have not come across typos or other errors in these materials.

**Overall Evaluation**

All in all, *The Interpreter’s Edge* is an excellent resource for court interpreter practice and training. Of course, it is difficult to find a one-size-fits-all product for something as complex as interpreter training and exam preparation. Those wanting to hear Holly Mikkelson do consecutive interpreting will want to use *[Edge 21: An Interpreter’s Edge for the 21st Century]*. For more advice on note-taking, check out the ACEBO video *Consecutive Interpretation and Note-Taking*. Finally, many of my colleagues and I will never be seen in court without our copy of *The Interpreter’s Companion*, another excellent resource from ACEBO.

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Maybe the best policy for a translator is to avoid any attempt to translate a quote from a third language in a text that contains his or her source language. Latin and Greek are typical examples, and if you are like me, you do not know either and have no quick way to address the need. In the absence of plain dumb luck, the quote is likely to remain an irritant in the final product. Hey, that is what we are supposed to do: make the final product be as identical as possible to the original. The author of the original always takes a risk by including foreign quotes, thus supplying the translator with license to do the same. Am I making sense here? Check Malve’s reply to (G-E 4-12.9) and you will see what I mean.

New Queries

(Da-E 6-12.1) The term timeløst fag proved to be a tough one in this Danish quote: Sundheds- og seksualundervisning og familiekundskab er et timeløst fag i den danske grundskole. What is being referred to here?

(E-M 6-12.2) If this column has had Macedonian in the past, I am not aware of it. Anyway, in a listing of items related to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, “inline circulation pump” was mentioned. A Macedonian equivalent would be lovely.

(E-Po 6-12.3) “Cookies,” that is, small amounts of data sent to your browser from a Web server and stored on your hard drive, is the subject of this query. What are they in Polish?

(E-R 6-12.4) A list of systems for sawmills provoked trouble when it mentioned “bandsaw deviation detection for automatic feed speed control available with extended column.” What are these extended-column bandsaws, and what is the Russian?

(E-R 6-12.5) The abbreviation Pwh was defined two ways in a petroleum-engineering text: as “flowline back pressure” and “wellhead pressure.” Are these the same thing, and what would be good Russian for them?

(E-Ro 6-12.6) What is the Romanian term for “railroad spike?” This should be an easy one because Romania has thousands of miles of railways. Do not say I never provide easy stuff in this column.

(F-I [E] 6-12.7) In mechanical engineering, what is verrou bandeau? Here is the text: Verrou bandeau horizontal 4 pênes ronds en acier renforcé. Adapté pour les larges de portes entre 600 et 1200 mm. Possibilité de renfort par addition d’une ou de deux barres verticales permettant l’addition de 2 ou 4 pênes supplémentaires.

(F-R [E] 6-12.8) How to find good Russian for la régularisation du transfert des droits corporatifs de la société XXX en faveur de la société ZZZ? The context is a memorandum entered into to establish basic principles and periods for reformulating corporate rights of XXX company to the property of ZZZ company.

(Sp-E 6-12.9) Too many conflicting definitions can be worse than not finding any at all. In this case, the architectural term trompa (una trompa es un arco que se encuentra en el interior de la pechina y sirve para reforzarla). Taking into account the resources consulted, it could be a “cantilevered vault” or a “corbel.” Architectural experts, here is your chance.

Replies to Old Queries

(E-F 3-12.1) (trial time points): How about heures ponctuelles de visites, asks Peter Christensen?

(E-Po 4-12.4) (lifestyle product): Piotr Graff, having seen the definition given on page 34 of the April issue, offers towar z górnej półki, which literally means “an upper-shelf item,” perceived as high status, high quality, and high priced.

(E-Sp 4-12.6) (candied): Dianelys Chile says that this adjective, as applied to sweet potatoes, for example, is batatas confitadas. She also gave thought to azucaradas or caramelizadas. The former conveys the idea of being sugary, while the latter conveys the notion of something being caramelized. Neither is a correct word given the context, so she would say it is confitadas.

(F-E 3-12.4) (barre soulignée): This corresponds to “underscore,” asserts Peter Christensen.
(G-E 4-12.9) (Teilemarche): Germans, says Malve von Hassell, have a habit of combining words from different languages. In this case, she suspects it to be the words for “parts” and “market” (marché – French). She presumes this to be a wholesale market for parts and accessories. Roland Grefer says that the only thing that comes to his mind is the Swiss German term March, meaning “boundary mark.” Perhaps at some point this was the boundary mark or delimiter for the list of automobile parts and accessories, especially if the text was prepared by a Swiss individual. Per Dohler, on the other hand, believes this may be a misspelling of Teilemarge, meaning (spare) parts margin. Given the systematic syllable-final devoicing of consonants in German, he notes that speakers have a difficult time distinguishing, for example, the sibilants in “ridge” vs. “rich”—which, incidentally, are in the process of converging in American English as well, leaving behind a slight but noticeable difference in vowel length.

(Sp-E 3-12.10) (guayabera): This is a single word, says Dianelys Chile, that is a reflection of an entire culture. Since the guayabera is worn loose and not tucked into pants, the context of the original query tells her that the writers were left hanging, out in the open, and in a vulnerable and risky position. She feels that it ought to be kept as is and that a footnote or parenthetical statement should be used for explanation.

(Sp-E 3-12.11) (las cajas repartidoras de fibra óptica): Peter Christensen has found “optical fiber distribution frame” and “optical fiber distribution box,” along with some others. He considers them suspect, though, because the nomenclature might not be bona fide American English due to these pieces of hardware tending to originate in Asia.

(Sp-E 4-12.11) (poner en mora): Jean-Pierre Maldonado says that in contractual situations, this means “to place in a noncompliance status.” For financial matters, it is “to place in past-due status.” Dianelys Chile says that the phrase refers to placement of an account in a delinquent status due to nonpayment of an invoice; in this case, for a breach of contract, most likely for not paying in a timely way.

My goodness, the Translation Inquirer finds himself in the rare position of having no grounds to complain about anything—with regard to this column, our organization, or anything else. Thank you for the responses!

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Few discussions of the 6,000 languages currently used worldwide ask how these languages originated, nor do they ask in what ways these languages are fundamentally different or fundamentally the same. One book that does discuss these matters is The Power of Babel (Henry Holt, 2001; Perennial reprint 2003), by the linguist John McWhorter. The book’s subtitle is “A Natural History of Language,” and it presupposes a single original language, first spoken some 150,000 years ago, that diverged and differentiated among different groups of people to the thousands of existing and extinct languages. The page references in this column are to the Perennial reprint.

According to McWhorter, there is no such thing as a definite “language” in the sense that no two people speak exactly alike. Therefore, every newborn person changes the language of his or her predecessors at least slightly, and no language remains constant, despite recent developments like writing and mass communication, which tend to slow change.

The book is frequently funny. For example, McWhorter notes that Cyrillic letters with shapes and sounds corresponding to those in the Roman alphabet include K, A, O, Z, T, and M. But C and P stand for the sounds /s/ and /r/ and not for the sounds of their Roman counterparts. Therefore, to a person used to the Roman alphabet, printed Russian frequently looks like multiple copies of the word Kaopectate (234). His illustration of the French penchant for definite articles is Pépé le Pew’s exhortation, “Let us make ze love!” (25). And, though English has many prefixes and suffixes, unlike some other languages it appears to have only one infix, recently introduced: an obscenity inserted into words like “fantastic” (170).

McWhorter debunks popular myths about language. He explains that there is no sharp distinction between a language and a dialect. In fact, two geographically separate linguistic groups, each clearly speaking totally different languages, can be separated by a series of linguistic groups, each of which speaks a language (dialect) differing only slightly from those of the linguistic groups on either side of them. That is, a dialect of a dialect of a dialect, etc., of a language can be a completely different language. “Standard” languages are simply the dialects of the current elites. Yesterday’s substandard jargon (e.g., street Latin) becomes today’s standard speech or speeches (e.g., French, Italian, Spanish, etc.). Moreover, the linguistic changes most people notice—say cultural changes such as new slang words—are the most superficial ones. Fundamental changes that usually occur very slowly totally change the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation; these changes are largely due to chance, not culture.

Languages diverge, remix, are cut down, and are rebuilt in processes difficult to retrace. Of course, it is possible to show that French and the other so-called Romance languages derive from Latin. It is also possible, via long and difficult linguistic research, to show that Latin derives from an earlier language usually called Proto-Indo-European. But Proto-Indo-European was spoken a mere 5,000 or 6,000 years ago, and it is absolutely impossible to trace the evolution of languages back 150,000 years to the presumably original language.

Languages have commonalities and peculiarities, and English is most peculiar with respect to its vocabulary. The majority of words in many languages stem from earlier forms of the language, but only 1% of English words are traceable back to Old English (though they are words like “and” and “not” that are used more than 60% of the time). Ninety-nine percent of English words have been imported from other languages. If French is addicted to definite articles, English is addicted to the distinction between indefinite and definite, between a-ness and the-ness (184).

Such a distinction is not necessary for clear comprehension, and many languages do quite well without any articles at all. Conversely, English does not seem to need multiple noun classes, each with a separate set of case endings and/or other distinctions. These classes are usually called genders, though the 16 noun classes of the West African language Fula do not correspond even remotely to any masculine-feminine-neuter distinctions (168). The fact is, almost all languages include complexities unnecessary for communication.

McWhorter takes a stab at answering the question of how languages such as Proto-Indo-European and many of its descendants acquired declensions, conjugations, and other complicated grammatical apparatus. From the history of language we can deduce that, for many language families, the earlier the language, the more complex its
It derives from the Latin word Italian, as in first person singular future tense in have,” had already been grammatical—which, though literally meaning “I and conjugation endings was created. An entire list of case and modifications, an entire list of case and conjugation endings was created. The ordinary meanings were frequently lost, the grammatical words continued: the ordinary meanings became grammaticalized. That is, ordinary words with ordinary meanings, like “to” and “have,” took on purely grammatical functions, as in the expressions “to speak” and “to have spoken.” The process of change continued: the ordinary meanings were frequently lost, the grammatical words began to be perceived as part of the main words, and, after rearrangements and modifications, an entire list of case and conjugation endings was created.

McWhorter gives as a simple example the ending to indicate the first person singular future tense in Italian, as in amero [I will love] (193). It derives from the Latin word habeo, which, though literally meaning “I have,” had already been grammaticalized to become a way to signify the future tense when placed after an infinitive, as in amare habeo (I will love). In the transition to Italian, the words became united, sounds were lost and changed, and amerò is the result.

The uniting and disuniting of words can have interesting results, as illustrated in the derivation of a word like “nickname,” which is a very strange word if one thinks about it. Eke, cognate of German auch, once meant “also” in English, so an alternate name was an eke name, which, by compounding and rebracketing the sounds became a nekename, and finally “a nickname” (28).

My one serious disagreement with McWhorter is his scanting of the differences in registers of language, such as the differences between prose and poetry. For example, he tells how religious tradition preserves earlier stages of English, such as in the Lord’s Prayer: “Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name … Give us this day our daily bread,” and states that the prayer in modern English would be: “Our father who is in heaven, may your name be hallowed … Give us our daily bread today” (37). But that is not a good rendering in modern English because it ignores the poetical register of the text. “Give us our daily bread today” is not merely an updating of the language but a transformation from the poetic to the prosaic, from a statement with religious power to one without.

While McWhorter’s book is well worth reading by anyone interested in language, there is obviously still more to say about the “natural history of language” than is included in his book, especially about how statements in a language change or become fixed according to the purposes for which they are used.
Upcoming Events

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August 2-4, 2012
Nebraska Association for Translators & Interpreters
13th Annual Conference
Grand Island, NE
www.natihq.org

August 19-22, 2012
Translate in the Townships
3rd International English-French Conference on Style in Translation
Orford, Quebec
translateinthetownships.com

September 8-10, 2012
Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters & Translators
Annual Conference
Nashville, TN
www.tapit.org

September 28-30, 2012
Translation Forum Russia 2012
Kazan, Russia
http://tconf.com

September 28-30, 2012
Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer
Interpreting the Future Conference
“Translators and Interpreters: Experts for International Communication in Specialized Fields”
Berlin, Germany
www.interpreting-the-future.com

October 5-6, 2012
Polish Association of Translation Companies
TM-Europe 2012 International Translation Management Conference
Warsaw, Poland
www.tm-europe.org

October 5-7, 2012
California Federation of Interpreters
10th Annual CFI Continuing Education Conference
“Building on a Decade of Professional Development”
Los Angeles, CA
www.calinterpreters.org

October 13, 2012
Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network
3rd Annual Conference
Novi, MI
http://mitinweb.org

October 17-20, 2012
Conference of Interpreter Trainers
Annual Conference
Charlotte, NC
www.cit-asl.org/conf/presenters.html

October 22-26, 2012
Société française des traducteurs
9th SFT Medical Translation Seminar (English-French)
Lyon, France

October 24-27, 2012
American Translators Association
53rd Annual Conference
San Diego, CA
www.atanet.org/conf/2012

October 28-November 1, 2012
Association for Machine Translation in the Americas
10th Biennial Conference
San Diego, CA
www.amtaweb.org

November 16-18, 2012
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Convention & World Languages Expo
Philadelphia, PA
www.actfl.org

November 21-23, 2012
Languages and the Media
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