In this issue:

Language Services in India
Looking at Speech Recognition
Demystifying Medical Terminology
YOUR COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT TRANSLATION MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

ALL OF THE POWERFUL FEATURES AND FUNCTIONALITY YOU EXPECT, PLUS:

- Asset and Translation Memory Management for Authors
- Advanced Project Reporting and Statistics
- Short-term Subscription Licensing Available
- Annual Release Cycle and Regular Updates
- Award-winning Technical Support and Training
- And Much More!

Purchase MadCap Lingo and Receive 12 Months FREE Maintenance.
(Save $199)
LIMITED TIME ONLY

CONTACT SALES TO GET YOUR FREE MAINTENANCE
Sales@MadCapSoftware.com | +1 858.320.0387

Download a free trial at www.MadCapSoftware.com

Copyright © 2012, MadCap Software, Inc., and its licensors. All rights reserved. MadCap Software, the MadCap Software logo, and MadCap Lingo are trademarks or registered trademarks of MadCap Software, Inc., in the United States and/or other countries. Other marks are the properties of their respective owners.
May 2012

Contents

FEATURES

11

India Finds a Place on the Translation-Localization Map
By Vijayalaxmi Hegde
Many companies with clientele in India are now hoping to market their wares in Indian languages in order to grow. These companies will need language services providers who can support them and meet their needs.

16

Automated Speech Recognition: Translator Friend or Foe?
By Hassan Sawaf and Jonathan Litchman
Speech recognition is the new hot technology, but will it be a friend or foe of translators as it is integrated with machine translation and used in real-time voice translation applications?

19

From Hippocrates to Hypoglycemia: Demystifying Medical Terminology
By Gary Smith
Medical lexis sometimes appears in general texts, so a basic knowledge of the subject can always come in handy.

24

Just for the Thrill of It!
By Angeles Estrada
A fun and off-kilter look at the interpreting profession.

COLUMNS

6 From the President
7 From the President-Elect
8 From the Executive Director

DEPARTMENTS

27 The Entrepreneurial Linguist
28 Blog Trekker
30 Interpreters Forum
31 GeekSpeak
32 Dictionary Review
34 The Translation Inquirer
36 Humor and Translation
37 Upcoming Events
38 ATA Certification Exam Information
38 Active and Corresponding Membership Review
Our Authors

May 2012

Vijayalaxmi Hegde is a research associate at Common Sense Advisory. Her primary focus areas are e-learning, localization, multilingual research, and emerging markets. Contact: viju@commonsenseadvisory.com.

Jonathan Litchman is a senior vice-president at SAIC and leads the company’s Linguistics and Cultural Intelligence Operation. He has degrees from Emory and Johns Hopkins Universities. Contact: Jonathan.D.Litchman@saic.com.

Hassan Sawaf is the chief scientist for SAIC’s Linguistics and Cultural Intelligence Operation. He completed his doctorate studies in computer science, with a specialization in translation and information extraction from speech and text, at the University of Aachen, Germany. Contact: Hassan.Sawaf@saic.com.

Gary Smith translates from Spanish → English and Catalan → English. A British native, he has lived in Spain for 20 years. He also spent a year in France, where he translated documents at a research center. He specializes in general science and technical texts, economics and business, and labor contracts. In addition to ATA, he is a member of the Spanish Association of Translators, Copyeditors, and Interpreters and serves on the board of the Valencia Region Association of Translators and Interpreters. Contact: info@glokalize.com.

Ángeles Estrada, a federally certified court interpreter and a conference interpreter, lives and works in the Washington, DC area. She graduated cum laude from Loyola University, has an MA in creative writing from George Mason University, and translation certificates from Georgetown University. Contact: angelesea@aol.com.

Advertising Directory

Send a Complimentary Copy

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

Simply e-mail the recipient’s name and address to 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!
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/whyAttend.htm.

Promote Your Company
Exhibit • Sponsor • Advertise
Take this opportunity to reach over 1,800 attendees who need your services and products. Learn more at www.atanet.org/conf/2012/advertise.htm.
While a substantial part of the services our Association provides is aimed directly at the membership—from directory listings and professional updates to business education tools and newcomer services such as mentoring—we also consider it an important part of our mission to reach out to the public and major stakeholder groups. These efforts have paid off recently in several areas and will ultimately benefit all members of ATA and the profession.

The American Bar Association recently passed a resolution establishing standards for language access in the courts and urging all courts to adopt these standards. The principle listed in the first standard of the associated report reads: “As a fundamental principle of law, fairness, and access to justice, and to promote the integrity and accuracy of judicial proceedings, courts should develop and implement an enforceable system of language access services, so that persons needing to access the court are able to do so in a language they understand, and are able to be understood by the courts.” Many members of our community, including ATA Director Lois Feuerle, contributed to the development of this document as part of long-term committee work that involved lawyers as well as legal interpreters and translators. The extensive footnotes of this milestone document the thorough research of the committee, and we were proud to see ATA outreach materials referenced as well. (See http://bit.ly/abanow-2012 for further details.)

Highlighting another event of interest to legal translators and interpreters, the International Legal Research Interest Group of the American Society of International Law (ASIL) and the Law Library of Congress co-hosted a seminar on legal translation issues for information specialists in Washington in March. All participants received copies of our Getting it Right brochures at the request of ASIL.

An unexpected outreach opportunity came from a very different market segment when ATA was asked in March to write a guest contribution on translation for Tech Writer, an online magazine for technical writers and editors that reaches some 10,000 readers each month. Readers had asked for specific pointers on making technical translation projects go smoothly and we were happy to oblige. (The final article can be found at http://techwhirl.com/focus/technical-translation.)

Since we do not have an extensive public relations budget, most of these outreach opportunities are generated from the bottom up, by practicing translators and interpreters who make their voices heard in their various communities and fields. Whenever you step in to clarify the difference between translation and interpreting, comment on a news story online, participate in discussions, offer a presentation in a school, or agree to serve on a committee that promotes our profession, your actions make a big difference and contribute to the growing awareness in American society of the importance of professional language services. As always, your comments and opinions are very welcome. Keep up the good work!
Translators and interpreters now have three more reasons to put the Golden State on their travel agendas. Along with breathtaking scenery, world-famous attractions, and lots of sunshine, the following events will allow you to schedule your trip around a wealth of continuing education opportunities. Aside from professional growth, such events provide an open forum where individuals from all sectors of the industry can gather and foster a greater connection.

Monterey — InterpretAmerica Summit: InterpretAmerica was established in 2009 to provide a national forum for the interpreting profession. I will be representing ATA at InterpretAmerica’s 3rd North American Summit on Interpreting, June 15-16, 2012, in Monterey. I will be talking to people about issues that are important to interpreters, such as credentialing and technology. It is all part of keeping channels open to a professional community that forms such a vital part of our association’s membership.

San Diego — ATA’s 53rd Annual Conference and the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas 10th Biennial Conference: In addition to ATA’s 53rd Annual Conference in San Diego, October 24-27, 2012, at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront, the 10th Biennial Conference of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA) will take place October 28-November 1, 2012, at San Diego’s Catamaran Resort Hotel. AMTA promotes research and development of automated language translation technology. It is no accident that ATA and AMTA have scheduled back-to-back conferences. Both organizations recognize that there is much to be gained from talking—and listening—to each other. Programs at the two conferences will offer opportunities for professional translators and interpreters and developers of machine translation (MT) to meet and share their ideas and hopes concerning the application of this technology. Equally important, the conferences will allow people on both sides of the issue to better understand each other’s work. Keep checking the websites of ATA and AMTA in the coming months for more details.

If the sun is not enough to motivate you to find an excuse to extend your California stay, think about the opportunities that stepping outside of your silo can provide.

Caitilin Walsh
cwalsh@nwlink.com
From the President-Elect
California Itinerary

Translators and interpreters now have three more reasons to put the Golden State on their travel agendas.
Since April 1997, Terry Hanlen has served as ATA’s Certification Program manager. It is with great sadness that I report Terry’s departure from ATA.

Terry was under the weather at ATA’s Annual Conference in Boston, but as usual he plugged away and did what he had to do. When he got home he was admitted to the hospital. Three days later he had bypass surgery. Within a week he was back sounding like the same old Terry—cracking jokes and laughing. Two days later he suffered a massive stroke. He is working his way back, but he needs to focus on his health and rehabilitation.

In the Certification Program, where there are more than 100 volunteers involved—from committee members to graders—Terry worked from the start to win them over. He was quick to strike up a conversation and see what was new. He would cajole volunteers, trying to get them to turn their work in sooner or take on an additional task.

Terry cared greatly about the integrity of the exam and about managing the program. He was fair but firm. He would try to accommodate, but he would not make exceptions. He also had the nearly impossible job of telling candidates they failed while trying to keep them from becoming angry or giving up.

In recognition of his management skills, Terry was named deputy executive director in 2000 while continuing to administer the Certification Program. In his new role, he was more than my backup; he was my counterbalance. I would bounce ideas off of him, particularly when it came to working with volunteers and staff. I used to tease him about being so ready to disagree with me. I would halfway rant about wishing that someone would just please say yes to one of my ideas. He would laugh, apologize … and then continue to disagree with me. While I grumbled about it, I knew that the give-and-take would result in an even better outcome.

Taking over for Terry is his longtime assistant Jonathan Mendoza, who has been with ATA for over seven years. Jon is well versed in the program, so the transition should be smooth.

In difficult situations, they say you can tell a person’s true character by how they handle the pressure. In that case, ATA is in great hands. The Certification Program leadership—Geoff Koby (chair), David Stephenson (deputy chair), and Celia Bohannon (trainer)—and the staff at ATA Headquarters, specifically Jon and Roshan Pokharel, have really stepped up, with no complaints, and kept the program moving forward since Terry became ill.

Terry will be missed. ATA was fortunate to have Terry as a dedicated employee. I was fortunate to have him as a trusted colleague, adviser, and friend.
ATA Webinar
For more information, visit www.atanet.org/webinars

May 24, 2012
12 Noon Eastern Time
Translating Civil Procedure from Spanish to English
Presenter: Thomas L. West III

This webinar will examine the terminology of a civil lawsuit in Mexico and compare it with U.S. terminology and the terms used in other Spanish-speaking countries. We will cover the pre-filing stage, the pleadings, evidence (pruebas), types of judgments (sentencias), and appeals (recursos). We will also discuss typical phrases used in filings and how to translate them. Understanding the framework of civil procedure will help translators who are called upon to translate any of the documents filed in a civil lawsuit.
Over the past three decades, translation has evolved from a profession practiced largely by individuals, to a cottage industry model, and finally to a formally recognized industrial sector that is project-based, heavily outsourced, and encompasses a wide range of services in addition to translation. As projects have grown in size, scope, and complexity, and as project teams have become increasingly distributed across the globe, formalized project management has emerged as both a business requirement and a critical success factor for language services providers. In recognition of these developments, this volume examines the application of project management concepts, tools, and techniques to translation and localization projects. The contributors are seasoned practitioners and scholars who offer insights into the central role of project management in the language industry today and discuss best-practice approaches to translation and localization projects.

India’s economic growth rate of nearly 8% in recent years and strong domestic consumption patterns should be invitation enough for global businesses in a cash-strapped world. Expanding into emerging markets like India is now almost a business imperative for several reasons.

Especially for buyers and sellers of language services, multilingual India holds a distinct appeal. The burgeoning consumer market consists of individuals with a strong preference for products and services that communicate to them in their own language. As such, the world’s leading companies must prepare to market products in such languages as Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, and Marathi, or watch in slow anguish while their India-ready rivals gain the advantage in these lucrative markets. Below are some important reasons why the time is right for buyers and sellers of language services to enter the Indian market.

**Big buyers are already there.** Global businesses such as Carrefour, Amazon, and Volkswagen are either already doing business in India or are gearing up to do so in the immediate future. Also, companies that have been in India for some time are now thinking of tapping the second layer of markets located in semi-urban or rural areas by seriously investing in localization. For example, last year 3M launched its US$25 million research and development facility in Bangalore to focus on new “In India, for India” products and boost the company’s localization initiatives. SAP, a market and technology leader in business management software, will soon make available localized software in Hindi to better serve its 4,300 customers in India, of which 75% are small and medium enterprises. Like many of their peers, these companies started out by selling in English to clientele in Indian cities, but are now marketing their wares in Indian languages in order to grow. These companies are looking for language services providers (LSPs) who can support them and meet their needs.

**Globalization is not a one-way street.** As outside companies enter the country, ambitious Indian enterprises are going shopping abroad with their deep pockets. While some like the Tata Group are buying up companies, others, such as Infosys, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, and SanmarGroup, are setting up wholly-owned subsidiaries in places as diverse as China, Switzerland, and various African countries. These companies need to localize their products for their target markets. So, even if a company is
not directly entering the Indian market, tapping these companies may be a good way for LSPs to establish the India connection.

**Multilingual India is underserved when it comes to language services.** India has dozens of languages that have more than a million speakers (see Figure 1 on page 15), but its demand for language services has barely been met. Communicating in English with your Indian consumers is fine if you want to scratch the surface, but if you are hoping to experience real growth, you cannot ignore the more than 400 million speakers of Hindi or the 30 to 40 million speakers of Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, and Tamil. While advertising agencies in India have long been aware of this marketing mantra, many companies still have not built complete personas in local languages. Most attempts at localization seem half-hearted. For example, while their advertisements and even customer care centers may provide language options, many companies’ websites and product documentation are frequently available only in English.

**The translation and localization market in India is still immature.** Translation is still an emerging profession in India, and this is partly the reason most of the Indian market remains untapped regarding language services. Trained and qualified translators and interpreters are hard to find for the simple reason that there are few certificate courses for translation and interpreting offered by universities and colleges in India. There are two reasons translation is getting the short shrift. First, in multilingual India, where most people speak two languages if not more, translators tend to have a hard time establishing themselves as professionals and getting others to take them seriously. Second, many companies have yet to mainstream translation in their production process. While increasing demand for language services has the potential to change this situation, this is the right time for LSPs to step in and establish themselves.

**The cry for interpreting services is getting louder.** Until recently, interpreting in India was mostly restricted to the capital city, New Delhi, and usually used only by the government or foreign embassies, but this is slowly changing. Legal and medical interpreting services are growing in India, but there still are not enough LSPs equipped to provide them. For instance, the lack of qualified legal interpreters was acutely felt by Mumbai police recently when they tried to interrogate Somali pirates. Without an interpreter it was difficult for officials to proceed with the case. Another example is the medical tourism industry, which is driving the demand for medical interpreters as it brings patients from various non-English-speaking countries to India. Top hospitals in India already employ teams of full-time interpreters to aid communication between patients and medical staff.

Despite all the factors above working in favor of buyers and sellers of language services, LSPs can still expect some hurdles associated with immature markets. For example, finding and retaining qualified staff will be a huge challenge for LSPs looking for ways to help their businesses grow quickly. As mentioned previously, it will also take some effort to raise buyer awareness concerning the need for integrating translation into the production process, although this is a challenge LSPs have learned to accept.

These are initial hiccups, however, and should not deter serious players. But anyone wishing to enter a new market must be equipped with information about the business landscape of the country, especially related to their industry. Over the past few years, Common Sense Advisory, an independent market research company, has helped build a profile of Indian LSPs, based in part on surveys and interviews with Indian translation and interpreting firms. The company’s findings include:

- **Medium and small Indian LSPs increased staff numbers in 2011.** The number of LSPs that reported having fewer than 5 full-time employees and between 31 to 50 employees recorded a more than 70% increase in employee strength. More than half of Indian LSPs had only one office.

- **Indian LSPs earned an average of US$1,416,667 in 2010.** From 2009 to 2010, the growth rate of Indian LSPs was 24.44%, but for 2011 to 2012, these providers have ambitiously projected their growth rate at nearly 99%. In comparison, the global language services market is currently growing at a rate of 7.41%.

- **In 2011, nearly 70% of Indian LSPs reported that their revenue came from translation.** Re-selling accounted for nearly 23% of their sales, and the average salary of language services industry professionals in India was US$22,166.

**Drivers of Demand for Language Services in India**

The demand for language services in India will be driven by two main factors: 1) the increased compatibility of browsers and operating systems with Indic fonts, and 2) the growing use of personal communication devices such as mobile phones and handheld devices.
Nearly all major browsers and operating systems today support Indic fonts, breaking down the English barrier that stopped the non-English-speaking Indian population from getting online. Microsoft Windows and Office are available in 12 Indian languages. Also, Microsoft’s Indic Language Input Tool helps users type in 10 Indian languages directly on any Web page, without requiring additional software downloads. Earlier this year, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) granted approval to India to administer generic top-level domains (gTLDs) in Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, and Telugu. This will encourage the growth of local language sites, help non-English-speaking people access them, and potentially boost e-commerce.

Before this can happen, however, issues such as hardware compatibility, e-mail support, and spelling standardization still need to be addressed. To assist in this effort, Technology Development for Indian Languages (TDIL), a program initiated by India’s Department of Information Technology, has made drivers for keyboards available. Many companies have also begun to offer input method editors (IMEs) and on-screen typing interfaces. Despite this, an all-Hindi or all-Telugu keyboard has yet to become a common computer accessory. Another challenge to overcome is that users will have to adjust to specific ways of writing out URLs in other scripts or risk ending up at an incorrect address.

In the world’s second-largest mobile phone market, the number of young people in India becoming glued to their phones is increasing. This implies that the need for data consumers can use is also on the rise. However, since mobile phone access is not restricted to urban areas, many mobile phone users in India may not speak English. Consumers are used to texting and using the features of the phone in their mother tongue, so they would find it irritating to be limited to English-only apps or sites for mobile phones. To address this issue, handset makers like Nokia are busy making phones and apps with local language interfaces. It is for these consumers that LSPs and businesses have to gear up.

Many companies still have not built complete personas in local languages.

Machine Translation for Indian Languages

The fact that translation technology is making its way into the Indian subcontinent will also prove to be a driver for language services in the future. In interviews with stakeholders in the industry, Common Sense Advisory has spotted a definite trend toward embracing machine translation (MT) for Indian languages. The technology itself is in the initial stages, but expectations are already high.

Until recently, MT systems built in India could be divided broadly into two categories: 1) those that use English as an interlanguage (also known as a “pass-through language” or “pivot language”), and 2) those that translate directly from one Indian language to another. By not using English as an interlanguage between Indian tongues, Sampark eliminates one huge step and gives localization efforts in India a boost. That is, a source text in Hindi could potentially be the key to direct translations in other Indian languages.

Translating through a pivot language usually means that the translation cycle costs more. Furthermore, quality is often at risk because of multiple translation passes.

Currently, Sampark translates Punjabi→Hindi, Urdu→Hindi, and Telugu→Tamil. Plans are underway to include other language pairs such as:
These are some of the most important languages in India, covering a large population across the country.

Aside from Indian organizations, other groups outside the country have also been coming up with their own MT solutions focusing on Indian languages. For example, Asia Online is working on language pairs involving Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu. SDL Language Weaver already supports translation between English and Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu. SYSTRAN offers translation from Hindi and Urdu to English.

The Centre for Next Generation Localization (CNGL) in Ireland recently launched a collaborative effort with IIIT to develop an MT system from English into Indian languages. In a recent interview,20 CNGL’s Páraic Sheridan said that the Indo-Irish team would work on building statistical MT systems that incorporate more syntactic information and, particularly, use morphological analysis for Indian languages that are morphologically richer. CNGL chose to work on an MT system for Indian languages because of the growing importance of India in the world economy and an anticipated high demand for local language content.

Localization for Indian languages could get a big boost from MT systems like Sampark. However, there could still be issues, including:

- **Sampark is not yet commercially available or viable.** Currently, Sampark’s developers have not discussed how and when it will be available for commercial use or when it will grow beyond its 180-word limit. It is also not known if the engine will be geared to work on mobile platforms.

- **Sampark relies as much on Hindi as other systems do on English.** Though the effort in building Sampark is commendable, going forward it will have to overcome its reliance on Hindi. As mentioned earlier, for any language initiative to be successful in India, it has to go beyond Hindi and reach the millions of people who speak other languages. That is, Indian languages need to be able to be translated directly between one another without Hindi acting as the pivot language. This is of particular importance to south Indian states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala, where Hindi is not as commonly spoken. Other parts of the country would also benefit from such a flexible MT system. Perhaps Sampark will use this approach in the future. There is already one language pair available on the Sampark site, Telugu-Tamil, which translates directly without Hindi.

Technology vendors should also note that most Indian LSPs handling large volumes of translation do not yet use terminology management software or translation management systems. Again, this could be virgin territory that technology vendors could mine.

**Opportunity Knock**

Translation and localization are indispensable to companies wishing to cash in on the Indian market and for Indian companies planning to sell their products and services internationally. With 1.13 billion people who speak 438 languages, the potential for language service provision in India is enormous. It remains to be seen how the language services industry will take advantage of this opportunity.

**Notes**


Figure 1: Languages of India by Number of Speakers (courtesy Common Sense Advisory)
While automated speech recognition (ASR) is a technology originally developed decades ago, the commercial success of Apple’s virtual personal assistant Siri and the trivia success of IBM’s Watson on Jeopardy! in 2010 have demonstrated significant breakthroughs in the field.  

Integrated with machine translation (MT), ASR helps produce speech-to-speech and speech-to-text translation in near real time. The most advanced translation systems already integrate the technologies on one platform.  

It does not take much imagination to see that this technology will affect the translation industry. However, just how the industry will be affected has yet to be fully defined. By taking a closer look at the technology, the challenges, and the likely applications of ASR, a clearer picture of its impact begins to emerge. Ultimately, this new form of translation automation will provide more opportunity for translators by generating additional content requiring human translation.

Evolution of ASR

ASR’s roots go back to the 1970s and the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency project “SUR.” The project produced a system that could recognize about 1,000 words. Many of us are familiar with the modern versions of this technology. For example, we have all been frustrated by the simple systems used by airlines or banks: “If you would like to speak to a customer representative, say ‘representative.’” These systems understand simple commands and have a limited vocabulary.

Today, a new wave of ASR and natural language understanding technology are able to gather more context around data to determine the most likely output. This breakthrough came about in large part from the increase in electronically translated data and a vast amplification in computational power.

ASR systems can now “think” and interpret the user’s meaning, rather than simply recognize and transcribe what is said. These systems can also be programmed to act on this meaning—whether it is to provide map directions to the nearest grocery store, score a win on Jeopardy!, or translate from one language to another.

ASR Systems: How Do They Stack Up?

It is important to select the right tool for the right job, and even in its most advanced form, ASR remains a
tool. So which ASR systems are best for translation?

At first glance, it would appear that judging ASR systems is fairly straightforward. ASR technology is typically measured along two metrics: speed and accuracy. Speed is measured by its “real-time factor,” or the time it takes for the computer to process what was spoken. Accuracy is usually measured by the word error rate (WER), defined as the number of insertions, deletions, and substitutions divided by the total number of words.

Unfortunately, getting a true measurement on ASR systems is not that simple. The main reason for this is because there are many variables that influence the quality of ASR. These include vocabulary size, the speaker, fluency/spontaneity of speech, background noise, and whether or not multiple languages are being spoken. Systems will be faster and more accurate depending on how they are employed. The more tailored a system is for a specific task, the better.

An ASR system that performs well with a large vocabulary and continuous, spontaneous speech is ideal for translation and interpreting. Language services providers may want systems that work independently of a speaker so a wide variety of people could employ it effectively, whereas freelance translators may want something tailored to their clients’ specific speech patterns or their own. Keep in mind that accuracy statistics and other forms of ASR measurement can be incredibly misleading. Be sure to adopt technology specifically tailored to the type of task you are doing.

**Where ASR and MT Integration Fall Short**

As recently as the 1990s, ASR and MT were two very divergent fields of study. Integrating the two technolo-
for the growth of data and multilingual communications requiring translation. According to IBM, 90% of data in the world today was created in the past two years. Social media use has grown as well. It took three years, two months, and one day to reach one billion Tweets. Now, there are a billion Tweets sent every week. In other words, the rapid growth in data will create a larger demand for human translators to post-edit and analyze the extra data output by ASR translation systems that would not have existed previously.

This is one of the reasons the language services industry is projected to grow so robustly even in the current global economic environment. In fact, the global market for outsourced language services and technology was predicted to reach $31.4 billion in 2011, and the demand for language services continues to grow at a significant rate—7.4% annually.

Not every translator wants to do post-editing work, but it does provide tremendous opportunity and freedom for translators to further define and specialize their role in the industry and within their career. Big data means big opportunity for translators and the language services industry.

Notes
Medical translation is perhaps one of those areas where the stakes are the highest if the translator makes a mistake. Considering the specialized knowledge and jargon often required, the prospect of working with these types of texts can seem daunting to those of us with little experience in the medical field. Nevertheless, medical lexis sometimes appears in general texts, so a basic knowledge of such a universal subject can always come in handy. Furthermore, not every medical text need inspire awe in translators. Nor should we forget that, unfortunately, there will always be a need for medical terminology. So, let’s take a look at the possibilities.

First, “medical texts” include a wide range of registers, target readers, and levels of knowledge that may make some of them more accessible to the budding medical translator. They range from in-depth research on new vaccines to leaflets giving public health information. While many doctors and researchers have an excellent grasp of the English language for their specific peer-to-peer communications, they may need to change register to explain concepts to, for example, children or the elderly. Or perhaps a pharmaceutical company needs to advertise its new product in another country, taking care to avoid making false claims, touching a cultural nerve, or simply being misunderstood. In some poorer countries with high illiteracy rates, it might even be necessary to advise clients not to translate their material, but instead to convey the message using images. Even here, great care is needed. For example, there was the famous case of a powdered milk producer whose logo was a smiling baby. Accustomed to seeing a picture of the product enclosed, the horrified locals believed the company’s trucks to be loaded with babies. In other words, good communication with the client and awareness of the specific target audience is just as important with images as it is when dealing with text.

Nor should we be put off by medical jargon. Spending 15 minutes with Wikipedia can provide a pretty good general overview of any given subject. I do need to stress, however, that Wikipedia is not entirely reliable as a reference. It is merely a starting point to more serious research. However, the citations provided at the end of each article will often lead you to more solid resources. You would also do well to search the glossaries on such sites as the National
Institutes of Health. (See the list of links on page 22.)

Etymology: Latin and Greek Roots

You should be aware that in English-speaking countries the vocabulary can undergo more changes when shifting register than in countries whose language has Latin roots. This is because, quite simply, a large part of medical terminology is indeed Latin-based. Greek, Hippocrates’ native tongue, is also still used today in this lexicon. Fortunately, this does not mean that you have to learn to write Latin and Greek, but a little knowledge of these ancient roots can go a long way. Many translators know the meaning of lumbalgie (more generally known as lumbar) and tendinitis (a.k.a. tendonitis). They presumably also know that lumb refers to the lower back and -itis usually means an inflammation. What, then, does the algie in lumbalgie mean? Not surprisingly, pain (from Greek). Many of you are probably well aware of how Latin and Greek roots can be used to make sense of medical terms. Take the prefix athri(o) (of the joints, from Greek), for example, which gives us the word “arthritis” (inflammation of the joints). So, what do you think athralgia means? You guessed it—what the layperson refers to as painful joints.

Take a look at the examples of Latin and Greek roots listed on this page to deduce the following medical concepts (answers provided on page 23):

- **aden (Gr.):** gland
- **angio (Gr.):** (blood) vessel
- **brachi(o) (L.):** of the arms
- **brachy (Gr.):** short
- **cardiac/cardial (Gr. & L.):** of the heart
- **centesis (Gr. & L.):** puncturing
- **cephaly (Gr. & L.):** head
- **cyte (from cito, Gr.):** cell
- **dactyl (Gr. & L.):** pertaining to fingers/toes (digits)
- **dermat (Gr.):** of the skin
- **ectomy (Gr.):** surgical removal
- **erythro (Gr.):** red
- **gastro/gastric (Gr.):** of the stomach
- **hemo (Gr.):** of the blood
- **hepatic (Gr.):** liver
- **hyper (Gr.):** high (too much)
- **hypo (Gr.):** low (too little)
- **-itis (Gr.):** inflammation (strictly speaking, -itis refers to allergies)
- **leuko/leuco (Gr.):** white (pale)
- **myo (Gr.):** muscle
- **nephro (Gr.):** of the kidney
- **ology (Gr.):** all-encompassing (to refer to the entire specialization)
- **oma (Gr.):** tumor
- **oss-, ost-, osteo (Gr.):** of bones
- **-osis (Gr.):** condition, disease, or increase
- **(o)stomy (Gr.):** surgical opening about the size and shape of a buttonhole, or a small slit (from stoma, Gr., meaning of the mouth). In medicine, this usually refers to an opening from within the body to the outside, occurring naturally or surgically (a figurative “little mouth”).
- **(o)tom (Gr.):** surgical incision (in general)
- **pathy (Gr.):** disease or disorder
- **penia (Gr.):** lowering, deficiency
- **plasty (Gr.):** involving plastic surgery
- **rhino (Gr.):** of the nose
- **tragia (Gr.):** abnormally large flow
- **rheoa (Gr.):** discharge, flow
- **syn (Gr.):** together
- **trachea (Gr.):** windpipe (from larynx to bronchi)

Now, how about trying a few exercises?

Practice Quiz A: Using the Latin and Greek roots provided above, have a go at deducing the following medical concepts (answers provided on page 23):

erythrocyte
glucopenia
myalgia
rhinorhea
rhinoplasty
hepatology
gastrostomy
nephritis
syndactyly
angiomata
thyroidectomy
abdominocentesis
Practice Quiz B: Try “inventing” the more formal medical version of the following terms using the Latin and Greek roots on page 20. Do not worry if you do not get it exactly right. The idea is to see if you are on the right track and have an idea of what expression to expect or look out for (answers on page 23):

- Headache
- Severe nosebleed
- White blood cell deficiency/low count
- High (blood) sugar
- Disease of veins or arteries
- Skin inflammation
- Incision into windpipe
- Of the heart muscle
- Short fingers or toes
- A tumor of glandular origin
- Bone-cutting operation
- Removal of a gland
- Puncturing the chest to remove fluid

When learning the etymology of this kind of medical terminology, the translator has the great advantage that it is fairly universal and used in many other languages, particularly Romance languages. It is also useful to take into account the singular and plural forms, although do not be surprised if English-speaking doctors simply add their beloved “s” on the end of a word to form plurals, a practice that is now widely considered acceptable or even standard grammar in many cases.

Be aware of your English target audience, too. We Brits and others can be very fond of retaining the “ae” found in Greek roots (haemo: of blood), whereas Americans prefer the phonetically logical “e” (hemo). Remember also that most other English speakers use the “o,” so you must take this into account if you are translating into U.S. English: oea→ea (U.S.). Very broadly speaking, some common plural endings for medical expressions follow these patterns. (See Table 1 for examples.)

Abbreviations in Medical Shorthand

There is one kind of text for which you should perhaps multiply your fees exponentially—doctors’ shorthand written notes, such as prescriptions. It remains a mystery to all humanity why physicians in all cultures and languages have handwriting that looks as if a drunken spider has fallen into an inkpot and crawled across the paper. To compound this issue, they also use Latin (though they often do so universally in different languages, which is clearly an advantage to the translator). First, then, you must decipher the actual symbols scrawled across the page into humanly recognizable characters. (If you are stumped, try asking those who are experts—anyone working in a pharmacy—to assist in cracking these hieroglyphs). The next step is to learn what some of these abbreviations mean. Below are a few common examples used in prescriptions.

- a.c. – ante cibum – before meals
- q.d. – quaque die – once a day
- q.A.M. – Quaque die Ante Meridiem – every day in the morning
- b.i.d/t.i.d/q.i.d – bis/ter/quater in die – two/three/four times a day
- You may also see something like “1 – 0 – 1” to indicate that one dose of the prescribed pill/medicine is to be taken in the morning or at breakfast, none at midday, and once at dinner or before going to bed.
- p.o. – per orim – by mouth (p.r. = per rectum, p.v. = per vagina)

In English, abbreviations may be used for days, weeks, months, and years (e.g., 2 w, which may also be written 2/52, or 3 m = 3/12). There are also common English shorthand abbreviations that doctors may use to

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-us → i</td>
<td>(e.g., bronchus → bronchi)</td>
<td>(L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-is → -es</td>
<td>(e.g., diagnosis → diagnoses)</td>
<td>(L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-um → -a</td>
<td>(e.g., ovum → ova)</td>
<td>(L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ex → -ices</td>
<td>(e.g., cortex → cortices)</td>
<td>(L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-a → -ae</td>
<td>(e.g., bursa → bursae)</td>
<td>(L)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-a → -ata</td>
<td>(e.g., stoma → stomata)</td>
<td>(Gr)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
describe symptoms, for example. Here are some of the most important or common ones:

- **Adv**: advised
- **BP**: blood pressure
- **CNS**: central nervous system
- **C/O**: complain of
- **CVS**: cardiovascular system
- **GIS**: gastrointestinal system
- **LLQ**: left lower quadrant (as seen from patient’s point of view)
- **MH**: medical history
- **NAD**: nothing abnormal detected
- **O/E**: on examination
- **p. reg.**: regular (normal) pulse
- **RUQ**: right upper quadrant (of abdomen, sometimes written RUQ ABD = right upper quadrant of abdomen)
- **RS**: respiratory system
- **T 90 F**: temperature 90 Fahrenheit
- **Δ**: diagnosis

To indicate that a symptom is present, a physician may use the symbol “+” and, if it is not present, “-”. To indicate the symptom’s degree of severity, a physician may simply add more symbols (“++” = significant; “+++” = severe).

So, let’s imagine our patient is being examined by a physician. The exchange might sound something like this:

**Patient**: “I fell on my backside about three days ago and it still hurts a little. I … err … I think there’s some blood in my poop. And yesterday my belly hurt a little right here.”

**Physician**: “Have you or your family had any serious stomach problems before?”

**Patient**: “Not that I know of.”

**Physician**: “Do you feel any itching in the area of your backside?”

**Patient**: “Err … Yeah.”

**Physician**: “Eaten anything unusual lately?”

**Patient**: “Well, I guess I left those prawns out of the freezer a little too long …”

**Physician**: “Okay, I think we should take a look and check it out.”

---

**Links to Medical Terminology**

(Note: The Wikipedia links listed below are useful learning tools, but only as a starting point in your research. Wikipedia’s reliability is sometimes questionable.)

- Mayo Clinic
  - Glossary of Diseases and Symptoms
- Regulations for Medical Abbreviations
- The University of Texas at Austin
  - Classical World in Medical Terminology
- United Kingdom Department for Work and Pensions
  - A-Z of Common Abbreviations
- U.S. National Institutes of Health
  - Glossary of Clinical Trial Terms
    http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/info/glossary
- Wikipedia List of Surgical Procedures
  http://bit.ly/zd22Vg
- Wikipedia List of Medical Roots, Suffixes, and Prefixes
- Wikipedia List of Abbreviation Used in Medical Prescriptions
  http://bit.ly/AD6s1D
After the examination, the doctor writes (scrawls):

c/o: Had a fall 3 d ago. + pr bleeding, not much. No MH reported. Pain in LLQ ABD. Food poisoning?


The physician’s conclusion is that any possible food poisoning has now abated (temperature and abdomen now normal), and that the anal discomfort and bleeding is due to mild hemorrhoids and not to the fall. A skin cream is prescribed.

Nothing to Fear

This article is intended only as a starter to spark interest in medical translations primarily through etymology. As translators, we should not fear vocabulary that at first sight seems beyond us. The information provided here is far from authoritative or comprehensive, since it covers only a small facet of an enormous subject. Nor is the etymological approach foolproof. There may well be confusing expressions such as cerebellum/cerebrum, brachy/brachi(o), and cardiac/cardia. Reliable references should be used, although Wikipedia can prove useful in providing general information. In any case, I hope that you now have a better idea of how to go about tackling medical terminology wherever it may appear in your specializations. And I hope you will now feel less intimidated when you visit your doctor, as you will have some inkling as to what he or she is talking about!

Answers to
Etymological Quizzes from Pages 20 and 21

Practice Quiz A

erythrocyte: red blood cell

sugar count (also: hypo+glyc+emia = low+sugar+blood condition)

myalgia: muscle pain

rhinorrhea: a runny nose

rhinoplasty: a nose job (!)

hepatology: the study of the liver (and its surroundings)

gastrostomy: a surgical opening to the stomach

nephritis: inflammation of the kidney (nephrons)

syndactyly: condition with fused/webbed fingers/toes

angioma: tumors deriving from/around vessels

thyroidectomy: removal of part or all of the thyroid

abdominocentesis: puncturing of the belly to extract fluid (e.g., for analysis)

Practice Quiz B

Headache: cephalalgia

Severe nosebleed: rhinorrhea

White blood cell deficiency/low count: leukocytopenia (also leucopenia)

High (blood) sugar: hyperglycemia

Disease of veins or arteries: angiopathy

Skin inflammation: dermatitis

Incision into windpipe: tracheotomy (If a “little mouth” is opened to connect the windpipe to the outside, this should be a tracheostomy in etymological terms.)

Of the heart muscle: myocardiac

Short fingers or toes: brachydactyly

A tumor of glandular origin: adenoma

Bone-cutting operation: osteotomy

Removal of a gland: adenectomy

Puncturing the chest to remove fluid: thoracentesis (intra-pulmonary)
There are a few professions that have an exhilarating and somewhat addictive quality—professional sports, acting, and politics come to mind. Athletes stay in the game despite their injuries, actors notwithstanding financial insecurity, and politicians regardless of the pandering and dishonesty around them. There are others, I am sure.

I am not just talking about a passionate commitment. Computer nerds get a kick out of lonely hours outsmarting the machine, scientists spend a lifetime researching a microorganism, writers take years working on something no one may read, while doctors and lawyers have been known to risk divorce for their dedication.

You will seldom meet an interpreter who does not love what he or she does. But, dedication aside, my emphasis here is on the intensity of the profession. In that sense, interpreters fall more closely in line with athletes, actors, and politicians.

In interpreting there is a heightened experience for a 30-minute span, and then, after a break, you go back for more punishment.

On the surface, it would seem that the common thread between the latter professions is the public attention enjoyed by practitioners. Picture the hard-muscled football player waving to a throng of fans, the actor exulting in the empathy inspired by the character he or she plays, the politician spurred on into making bombastic promises by a cheering crowd. If only we possessed an ideal athletic physique, generated sympathy in the limelight, or could speak for ourselves while on the job! Interpreters have none of this.

Some interpreters may strut into assignments like prima donnas, demanding perfect conditions to perform, but this is the nitpicking of one who knows that a chink in the ice will foil any triple lutz. There is always the anticipation of a fall—overcoming the fear of a fall, and surviving the fall smoothly, so all the audience remembers is a fluid performance.

Interpreters, like actors, have an audience that hangs on their every word. However, we need to hear every “crucial” word to make sense of the whole. We walk into a job fearing the acronyms that will stump us, the dates we may not catch, the proper names we will certainly butcher, the figures—here is a big one!—that we may shrink or expand, because the speaker could not be heard properly, or we were lagging too far behind to write them down.

It is this “all or nothing experi-
There is the elation—and the uneasiness—of knowing that an event hinges on the interpretation.

ence”—the difference between producing a nonsensical string of words and well-articulated meaningful speech—that drives and sustains us. Yet, although there is no denying the adrenaline factor, we are not just caught in a cycle of strain and relief.

There are blissful moments when we are one with the speaker, when he is so clear, well prepared, and eloquent that we can read him like a picture, and similes come easily in the other language; when we are perfectly in tune with the speech, its mood and emphasis, and can reach for seldom used words without any great effort. And other times—just as pleasing—when we are baffled, struggling to make sense of the words, and then something suddenly brings clarity, allowing us to infuse meaning into what we were botching. There are times when things go so well that we would not mind stepping up and sharing the limelight.

Yet, most interpreters do not seek the limelight. Even the most gifted consecutive interpreter finds it more stressful to work at a podium than to interpret simultaneously in a booth, sitting comfortably, note pad at the ready, with space to spread out and peruse printed references. You may see us eloquently waving our hands in an operatic fashion in the penumbra of the booth. However, before reaching the “frustrated actor” epithet, just check to see if we have our eyes closed, trying to shut out the world in a Vulcan mind-meld with the speaker.

For an interpreter, being ignored is a rewarding indication of competence. Some viewers reading subtitles in a foreign film walk away thinking the actors spoke their language. The master of ceremonies at a conference may remember to thank the interpreters when all is done (if there is a good feeling about the meeting and enough mirth to go around). For the most part, however, an audience that is used to working with interpreters forgets that they exist, while the unsophisticated user, who has never experienced simultaneous interpreting before, is interested in buying the technology of such a miraculous headset. This “invisibility” is pure affirmation for the interpreter, a sign that all went well.

We are disembodied voices. Yet, there is the elation—and the uneasiness—of knowing that an event hinges on the interpretation. We must remain anonymous, while serving as the linchpin that will allow weeks, or even months, of preparation to fall into place and make the event a success.

Interpreters get fully wired for 30 minutes and then need some down time so their circuits do not melt. This is not an endurance sport, but a relay race, where you give all you have and are always on the final sprint.

Now, it is time to come down from the clouds. Interpreters have no telepathic connection with presenters. For every time we are tempted to finish the speaker’s sentences, there are a hundred other instances where it is simply a question of stitching one thought after another without fireworks.

The brain thrives on that kind of rush, and the profession creates, or attracts, unique (do not say neurotic!) personalities well suited to such a roller coaster ride. Many interpreters work into their 70s with alert minds and good short-term memory. Few other professions can boast the same.

There is always the prepared speech, with unnatural sentence constructions, worked and reworked into a pretzel in the weeks leading up to the event. There is the 20-page presentation, read at 250 words per minute in an effort to jam it into a 10-minute time slot, and with no copy provided to the interpreter. There is the heavily rhetorical with little substance, the extremely content laden, the jokes that lack comic effect in the other language, and the play on words that cannot be conveyed.

Sometimes the linguistic chal-
The challenge is simply making sense of poor diction and strong accents. Conferences are not necessarily on interesting subjects and speakers are not always eloquent or well prepared. We do a lot of grunt work with only a handful of choice assignments per year. It is a job, like any other, and sometimes worse than most.

For many interpreters, it is a chore to travel constantly and live out of a suitcase—our personal lives suffer. The job often entails babysitting foreign guests, and many of us have attended enough receptions to last us two lifetimes. We go to luncheons and do not eat, or go to meetings and have to justify the need to sit close enough to hear and be heard. As freelancers, we live from one assignment to the next, juggling unpredictable schedules and not knowing when future jobs will come, or when the client will pay. We go to filthy jails and lofty courts, are acquainted with the dregs of humanity, and get to see how the system does and does not work. Still, there are bonuses.

We can swear like a sailor, with impunity, whenever a witness does, and enjoy the exquisite precision of consecutive court interpreting. At a conference, we can sail through a stream-of-consciousness speech that would drive any translator mad, but yet it is crystal clear when spoken and can be easily and faithfully reproduced without missing a beat, with the same inflection and tone.

Interpreters can give free rein to the occasional multiple personality and be considered, not deranged, but rather brilliant. At the podium and at the witness stand, we role-play. In the booth, we do anything that releases the mind. We doodle, examine any object at hand, twist bits of paper into shapes, and smooth out the folds on the tablecloth while we work.

Actually, there is nothing weird or magical about it. Thoughts flow more easily when they are not rushed. As bilingual (sometimes multilingual) and multicultural people, we carry separate and distinct legacies. Interpreting is the medium that allows both strands to come together and then simultaneously follow their individual paths. Interpreting and, to a different extent, translating have an intrinsic element of fulfillment that is not so much tied to what we do, but who we are.

And, when all the external allure of the profession falls away, we have words. Like translators, we love words. But at the end of the day, there is nothing to edit or review. We turn off the mic and go home.

---

We gain admittance behind closed doors, are entrusted with privileged information, and give voice to personalities few people ever meet.

---

In Memoriam

César Rouben • 1931–2012

César Rouben died on March 9, 2012, at Baycrest Hospital in Toronto, Canada. An ATA-certified English→French translator, he had been a member of ATA since 1996.

He was professor emeritus of French at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, where he taught from 1974 to 1997. During his time at McMaster, he served as chair of the French Department. Rouben was also a professor of French and translation at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, from 1964 to 1974. A freelance translator, his specializations included journalism, advertising and public relations, economics and finance, and international development. Rouben received his MA and PhD in French from McGill University.

He was a member of ATA’s French, Literary, Medical, and Translation Company Divisions. In addition to ATA, he was a certified member of the Association des traducteurs et interprètes de l’Ontario and the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council.
How to Lose a Client in 10 Steps

Most of the time, I am the person who provides translation and interpreting services to our clients. There are times when I am also the client, because we frequently outsource work to colleagues around the world. Over the years, through my own mistakes, others’ mistakes, and clients’ praise and criticism, I have learned a thing or two. I would like to share my (somewhat tongue-in-cheek) list of how to lose a client in 10 steps. Take it with a grain of salt, but it has (probably) all happened before.

Consider the deadline a mere suggestion. Deadlines are for suckers! You do not even know what time 5:00 pm Pacific Daylight Savings Time is in your time zone. (Hint: try www.timeanddate.com.) You do not care that your client’s career depends on her getting this contract translated. Surely she can wait an hour or two for you to finish. It was a tight deadline, so she is lucky that you can finish the thing in 10 steps. Take it with a grain of salt, but it has (probably) all happened before.

Complain publicly about the client. The Internet is a fantastic place to vent your frustration about the client, whether you choose to name them (why not?) or just refer to them as “the client from hell.” Surely your Twitter followers will back you up on this: the client is a jerk and you hope she loses her job.

Never apologize for your mistakes. Your customer requested American English and you delivered the project in British English because it sounds more sophisticated. After the client points this out, be sure to start your e-mail with “Let me explain …” and do not take any responsibility. After all, it is always the customer’s fault.

Make excuses. The reasons you did not read up on domestic violence legislation in your state for a temporary protection order hearing or research airbag technology for an automotive translation include: the dog attacked your computer, you locked yourself in your garage by mistake, or you ate bad sushi. Try the excuse about not being able to attach a file to an e-mail because your computer has a virus.

Do not follow directions. Why bother reading all the instructions? It does not matter that your client is legally obligated to publish forms that are no smaller than 12-point font or that she wanted to save some money by not translating the text highlighted in red. It is perfectly fine to deliver a PowerPoint translation in OpenOffice format because you hate Microsoft.

Do not turn in tax forms. It is not important that your client has to have certain information about their providers. You will get around to turning in those annoying tax forms when you have a minute. It really does not matter that your client will get in trouble with the accounting department. Let them sort it out.

Show up late. Judges are always running late, so you have plenty of time for a venti mocha latte with almond milk. Conventioneers are typically asleep for the first half hour of presentations, so if needed, your booth partner can cover for you.

Do not respond in a timely manner. E-mail and phone calls are annoying. You need your mid-afternoon beauty sleep, so it is perfectly acceptable not to return a customer’s frantic calls until 48 hours later. It probably was not that important anyway.

Get defensive. You do not understand why the customer insists on using “happy” when you think the term “content” is highly superior. Tell the customer that he is just some little cubicle dweller who should leave the big language questions to you, the brilliant linguist.

Have your customer solve your technical problems. Your translation environment tools just let you down, so call up your customer and tell her about your terminology memory troubles. While you are at it, perhaps she can help you format those pesky text boxes that will not allow the translation to fit.

Yahoo! Business Discussion Group

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

This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com.
The No-Fail Guide to Writing Popular Blog Posts

Do you wish you knew the secret to writing popular blog posts? You know, posts that get over 200 comments, 20 backlinks, and hundreds of shares on social networking sites?

I have started two blogs within the past five years. The first one became a Technorati Top 100 site, and I am currently working on the second, Quick Sprout. I have learned a few lessons about writing popular posts that I would like to share.

Use simple words. The first thing you probably notice when you read popular blog posts is that they are really easy to understand, no matter what the content. They are easy to read because the writer used simple words. I always write my posts with a fifth grade vocabulary rather than that of a highly educated person. I would rather you be able to read and understand what I write than appear like an educated person who just confuses people. The interesting thing is even with a fifth grade vocabulary, you will look like an expert. Also, people are more likely to share a post they think other people will understand. So use simple words, not fancy ones.

Use the word “you.” A really great blog post sounds like the author wrote it just for you. Do you know why that is? The writer used the word “you” instead of “we” or “them.” I write like this because I want to make you feel like it is just you and me at a café talking over coffee. Yes, my blog has thousands of readers, but my posts seem much more personal when I pre-tend to write for one person. A neat trick to help you do this is to think of somebody you know and pretend you are writing the blog post just for him or her. I know some writers who keep a person’s photo above the computer to remind them they are writing for just one person.

Write how-to posts. People want useful information. The content I wrote for the Technorati Top 100 blog was not very good, even though it was highly ranked, and it was because I did not offer a solution to people’s problems. I did not show anyone how to do anything. The template for a how-to post is simple. Just sit down and write out all of the steps involved in doing something. Say you want to show your audience how to subscribe to your blog with an RSS reader. The headings within your post might be “Choose a reader,” “Sign up,” “Click on the RSS button,” and “Subscribe.” Under each heading, give more information, explain what to look for, list the pros and cons, and point out confusing issues.

Write detailed posts. When I started Quick Sprout, I was frustrated with how slowly it was growing. I wrote good posts and got some comments, but not enough to make people want to share and link back. At one point I decided to experiment and write a really long, detailed post. It took me some time to write and I hoped it would be worth the effort.

It was! People commented on and shared that post a lot. From that point on I decided I would only write long posts with a lot of good, specific information. People love long, detailed posts because so many other blogs only offer information that is short and light on details. To add detail to your posts, use statistics and graphs. A post with images, stats, and graphs will get more links than the same post without the visual appeal. (See http://mz.cm/ImprovedLinkBuilding.)

Write detailed posts. When I started Quick Sprout, I was frustrated with how slowly it was growing. I wrote good posts and got some comments, but not enough to make people want to share and link back. At one point I decided to experiment and write a really long, detailed post. It took me some time to write and I hoped it would be worth the effort.

It was! People commented on and shared that post a lot. From that point on I decided I would only write long posts with a lot of good, specific information. People love long, detailed posts because so many other blogs only offer information that is short and light on details. To add detail to your posts, use statistics and graphs. A post with images, stats, and graphs will get more links than the same post without the visual appeal. (See http://mz.cm/ImprovedLinkBuilding.)

Hook your readers. The first way to hook readers is to write a great headline. Great headlines are:

- Unique: You can only use unique headlines once. You must carefully tailor the headline of each post because each post is unique.
- Useful: A headline is useful when it promises practical information. The reason how-to guides are popular is because they give answers to problems.
- Ultra-specific: Add numbers or statistics to a headline to make it specific. My article, “6 Advanced Ways to Improve Your Search Rankings,” is a good example because I used both a number and the word “advanced.” (See http://bit.ly/ImprovedRanking.)
- Urgent: The best way to create urgency is to work a deadline into your headline. “6 Days Until the Stock Market Crashes” or “Your Last Chance to Get a Free Copy of My Book” are good examples.

The best headlines have at least three of these features.

After the headline, hook readers with a great first sentence. Ask a question, share a quote or statistic, or make a crazy statement that does not seem true, but is. The point is to write a first sentence people cannot resist.

To prevent readers from skimming your post, write strong sub-headlines. Sub-headlines are especially important if your post is long. Readers should be
able to scan them to get a summary of what the post is about. I write my sub-headlines as normal headlines and use the four points I highlighted earlier. That way, readers will see them and say, “I have to read this!”

Create a conversation. One of the most important parts of writing popular blog posts is to write them like they are conversations. People forget that blogging is social media, and being social means you know how to carry on a good conversation. To have a conversation means to listen to the other person and ask questions. It shows the person you care about what she thinks, and you do not think it is all about you. (It is not.) The same conversation rules apply for a blog. To create a conversation, exchange words at the end of the post. People usually do this in the comments, though some prefer e-mail. If there is not a dialogue, you are talking to yourself. At the end of your posts, always ask people what they think, and tell them to leave their thoughts in the comments.

Prove your points. In your posts, it is really important to prove any claims you make. For example, in the section where I said graphs and statistics get more backlinks, I linked to another post that supported what I said. If you do not do this, you will lose credibility and people will not believe what you say. When you support your points with links to other posts, you also share another good source of information with your audience. Chances are that the author will link back to your blog at some point, too.

Show you are an authority. A lot of bloggers are uncomfortable with this point because they feel like they are tooting their own horn. To show you are an authority on a subject means you have to get other people to say you are an authority, and then point out that they said so. You are not bragging; you are pointing out the truth. How you say it matters, of course, so stay humble.

One way I showed you I have the authority to speak about writing popular blog posts is that I mentioned my blog was a Technorati Top 100 blog. It shows that someone else with credibility recognized me as an expert. I also could have told you how many readers Quick Sprout has. There must be a reason so many people like the blog, right? People will not think you are bragging if you do not force your accomplishments on them. Look for ways that feel natural. You might have seen blogs with “As seen in” sections that display the logos of important companies and media sources. This is another way to show you have authority, as well as testimonials from readers and clients.

Care about your readers. One of the biggest lessons I learned from starting two blogs and several companies is you have to care about people, and show them that you do.

I love reading blogs where I can feel the writer’s concern for me. I try to do that on Quick Sprout. One obvious way to do this is to bring attention to the people who helped you succeed. If you truly care about people—including your readers—you will try to learn new ways to improve your posts so you can help more people. That is certainly a good recipe for success!

There is a lot of competition in the blogosphere, and it is easy to get frustrated when your blog cannot get the attention it deserves. Be patient and use these tips. I am certain you will start to write popular blog posts on a regular basis.
There is always so much focus placed on doing a quality job, be it in the field of interpreting or translation, that I thought it would be prudent to stress the aspect of collecting payment for our work, as this is what pays the bills. Throughout the years I have been in business, for better or for worse, I have often had to become involved in collections.

In my young years, I was trusting and naïve and assumed that if we had done an assignment properly, we would be paid. Experience has taught me that this corollary does not necessarily hold true.

Some of the basics to keep in mind include that you should always have an attorney who is familiar with business and collection procedures draft a contract with the pertinent language so that you are protected. Have a contract in place that has an addendum specifying rates as well as credit terms, filing fees, and attorneys’ fees to be paid by the prevailing party, and the venue where any complaint will be aired. Make sure there is a well-defined cancellation clause. Also, make sure that the language about attorney’s fees and interest rates that will be charged to the client for any invoices that are not paid on a timely basis is clearly visible on your invoices.

If you can justify it with your work volume, I would heartily recommend buying a software package such as QuickBooks (http://quickbooks.intuit.com). This software will help keep your financial house in order because it slices and dices the information for you. Scheduling software that interacts with QuickBooks is also highly advisable. It will allow you to have a linked paperless trail of all your work and efforts to collect.

In this economy, it is not recommended that you work with any clients who have not signed a contract, whether they have the money to pay or not. I have had attorneys at prestigious law firms tell me they are not going to pay my bill because the client has not paid them for that particular invoice, or because the client lost the case and he is not going to pay out-of-pocket. There is a myriad of excuses that could be used against you, and since you have to hire an attorney to sue the client or file the case, it often makes sense to eat the bill. I must admit, however, that I have at times pursued these matters because my sense of justice was outraged. If the client does not want to sign a reasonable work contract, beware.

To forestall making the painful decision to write-off a past-due invoice because of the cost involved to collect, I would suggest that you never let a bill that is over $250 or $500, depending on the level of your accounts receivable, fall under the radar without the client being called. Once the bill passes the 90-day threshold, your ability to collect is drastically reduced. The client knows that it will be burdensome for you to sue, and he has already gained 90 days during which he has kept your money. Maintain a regularly updated Bad-Pay list so that you and any employees are aware of which clients do not pay and you have a record of any outstanding payment. You should only accept work from those on that list if they pay you for the outstanding invoices and you charge them an estimated standard fee, to be paid cash on delivery, for any new work requested. You would be surprised at how many firms on this list will call you back for work regardless of their past record, and how sad would it be if you fell for the same song and dance a second time?

Finally, please avail yourself of standard business services, for example, applying for a number with the collection receivables management firm of Dunn and Bradstreet (www.atanet.org/membership/sponsored_services.php). This will show potential clients that you are serious about your credit. You should also join the Better Business Bureau. Both of these services offer resources to help safeguard your business from potential risks.

These simple steps should allow you to minimize potential losses in 2012.
I know, I know, it is the Year of the Translator. In fact, according to the Chinese calendar, I am a dragon myself. But just in the past few weeks I have started to realize that this very well might also become “our” year: the Year of the Translator.

You think it is presumptuous for a technology columnist to make that statement, especially when technology seems to be finding ever more insidious ways to encroach on “our territory”? Well, hear me out.

Recently, I presented a webinar for the Globalization and Localization Association that sketched out the history of translation technology. I am not going to bore you with the entire hour of material, but in a nutshell here is what we found. What started out as technology to support the translator’s process directly (by storing previous translations and giving ongoing suggestions based on that data) morphed into a support system for the complete production chain. By providing features like workflow support, project management, and online accessibility, the technology catered to the needs of translation buyers and multilingual language service providers as well.

At the same time, the development of the core translation features stagnated at its 1990s levels. There were a number of reasons for this development quagmire. First and foremost, we translators just did not show much interest. Understandably, it does not make good business sense for a software developer to focus on developing new features for a group that does not embrace technology—especially while the technology-happy translation buyers and language service providers were clamoring for developers to automate their production processes even more.

This quest for more productive production processes will continue. But a few things happened in the past year or so that caused developers to sit up and re-evaluate the dated state of their core translation technology. First, machine translation’s renaissance prodded developers into incorporating low-cost machine translation plugins into translation environment tools. At the same time, machine translation developers demanded more nuanced translation memories to build up their data banks. Together, these factors created the perfect conditions for inspiring new enthusiasm among developers interested in bringing our translation technology into the 21st century.

You see, the vast majority of tools previously gave only manual access to data below the level of a complete segment—typically a sentence—even though it had long been obvious that below the sentence is where the true linguistic treasure of translation memories was buried. When statistical machine translation developers (the folks whose machine translation engines are based on large amounts of data) and others called for a new approach to the whole-segment-only approach of translation memories, tool developers responded surprisingly quickly. Today, most major tools have found some sort of subsegmenting technology that provides a way to unearth automatically the real value that translation memories hold and to give us that material at our fingertips.

Now what if these two technologies—access to machine translation and a more granular access to data in translation memories—were actually combinable? What if my tool were to parse automatically my translation memory and offer me all kinds of phrases, terms, and any parts of sentences that match whatever I am currently translating (in addition to the good old perfect and fuzzy matches)? What if it used all those subsegments to give me a first translation draft, and THEN went out to a machine translation engine and asked it to fill in the blanks?

Or what about the other way around? Sent out for a machine translation but then automatically replaced all parts from the machine translation match that are in my translation memory?

Or what if my terminology data base actually contained “intelligent” data, so it knew how to conjugate and decline words, automatically form a correct plural, or use the correct gender as it joins and replaces terms?

Or … ?

There are plenty of possibilities beyond the ones listed above, and tool developers are already working on and releasing features that take some of them into consideration.

Exciting? I think so. After all, it is unlocking a treasure vault of potentially useful data that we have never before been able to access!

But I am more than just excited. In fact, the reason I think this could play a big part in making 2012 the Year of the Translator is that our fears have been more than allayed.

While many of us worried that technology would push us out, it is actually placing us front and center once again. It is not all about clever workflow solutions and automated processing, though that clearly has its value. Instead, the responsibility for the new “new” thing stands and falls with the translator. Leveraging all the old and new data sources works only with the expertise that we bring to the table. (Of course, this assumes that we will do a better job than last time and engage in essential dialogue with the tool developers).

While we are basking in our renewed power, we have the opportunity to step out of the shadows and

Continued on p. 33
The Norstedts engelsk-svenska ordbok - professionell is the reference I use most in my translation business. I have the electronic version of this dictionary on my desktop and laptop and use it daily. Now that I have the hardbound, larger-than-brick-sized paper version in my hand, I do notice things I have not seen in the electronic version. In particular, I appreciate the comprehensive section located before the actual dictionary, where there is a list of abbreviations, dictionary signs, directions, a note on American English, irregular verbs in English, pronunciation guidelines, an overview of the dictionary, plus a list of all the world countries (in English and Swedish).

The current dictionary is a further development of the well-known Norstedts stora engelsk-svenska ordbok, which has for decades been the go-to resource for all language professionals translating from English into Swedish. The core of the dictionary is the general English vocabulary, with the addition of many current specialized words and expressions from such areas as business, gastronomy, medicine, music, sports, information technology, and technology. This all adds up to an enormous dictionary with 138,000 words and phrases.

The focus is on everyday language, but attention is also given to higher stylistic language versions, older words, and slang words. The goal of the dictionary is to provide translations that are both grammatically and idiomatically correct. The user is provided with thorough information on grammar, style and usage, as well as pronunciation advice for each word. I have not found any reviews for the new version online, but the reviews of the previous edition have almost always given five stars.

Components

Introduction: The older version of this dictionary, Norstedts stora engelsk-svenska ordbok, has become the standard—a necessary reference for students, teachers, translators, business people, and the general public. The authors of this new edition have added more than 3,000 words and included new meanings for existing entries. The introduction states that the dictionary is the largest and most complete English into Swedish dictionary on the market. It incorporates definitions from a large number of other dictionaries and encyclopedias, plus it includes authentic examples from newspapers, books, television, the Internet, and texts stored in databases. With all of these examples, abbreviations, and other information, the Norstedts engelsk-svenska ordbok - professionell is truly the one and only resource for professionals working with English and Swedish.

The dictionary begins with seven pages containing hundreds of abbreviations, two pages with special dictionary characters such as parentheses and brackets, and four pages of instructions covering such topics as order, spelling, compound words, articles, pronunciation, and conjugation. The dictionary is based on British English, but also covers most American English variants. The American English version of a word is specifically indicated when it is different from the British word. The introduction to the dictionary also includes six pages listing most of the irregular verbs in English, plus an overview of word structures.

Overview: The dictionary uses the following structure for entries:

- Main entry
- Pronunciation (using the phonetic alphabet)
• Translation
• Part of speech
• Phrase, examples with translation
• Untranslated examples
• Verb phrases
• Construction
• Conjugation
• Subject
• Swedish explanation
• Regional variants
• Style level
• Reference
• Pronunciation
• Additional Entries

Physical Characteristics: This dictionary has an excellent binding with a sturdy cover. The typeface is clear and very legible, with the main words indicated in bold. The paper quality is good, even if the pages are thin. In order to fit as many words on the page as possible, the typeface is small but still very legible, but this is to be expected of a dictionary of this size. Entries are arranged on facing pages, with the first word of the two pages listed in the left upper margin and the last word of the two pages in the right upper margin.

Contents: During my 10 years as a translator, I have relied on this dictionary to help me with many words and expressions. Only with highly specialized words within electronics, engineering, mechanics, law, medicine, and other specific areas does one have to refer to another, more specialized dictionary. Examples of less common words that I found include frowster, hypothyroidism, platitudarian, spar buoy, Walcyrie (proper noun), cybercrime, apodosis, and musette. I also found most abbreviations, such as SPLA, WAN, CWS, IAFA, IBRD, and ISDN. I have not discovered any errata in the dictionary, indicating that it has been scrupulously edited. The dictionary seems to have all of the latest words (e.g., “Twitter”) and also some words not used much anymore, such as “henchman” and “twopenny-halfpenny.”

Overall Evaluation
The Norstedts engelsk-svenska ordbok - professionell is the best choice for professionals working with English into Swedish translations. However, it is not a book that one can easily take everywhere. As a complement to the printed edition, I recommend the electronic version that can be downloaded to your computer. If you do choose the print version, it is easy to search and to read. Although it does not contain any illustrations, which are always nice for explaining plants, animals, etc., the number of entries is quite comprehensive. If you do not find the word for which you are looking in this dictionary, it must be a word from a highly specialized field.

Tess M. Whitty is an English-Swedish translator living in Park City, Utah. She runs Swedish Translation Services and specializes in software localization, marketing, and business communications. She is the chair of ATA’s Chapters Committee and the language chair for ATA’s English→Swedish certification exam. She is the president of the Utah Translators and Interpreters Association. She also blogs and gives presentations about business and marketing skills for translators. In addition to ATA, she is a member of several local translation chapters and the Swedish Association of Professional Translators. Contact: tess@swedishtranslationservices.com.

GeekSpeak Continued from p. 31
engage with the general public when Found in Translation: How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms the World is released in October by Penguin. It is high time to claim some of the recognition that our profession so deserves, and I envision this book and the conversations it will inspire to be yet another reason to enjoy this Year of the Translator.
In civil engineering, a real estate transaction has been completed and the sale is final. An independent third party, the escrow agent, holds all the monetary funds and documents until the close of the sale. What would be good Italian for this technical feature of real estate sales?

**New Queries**

**Cz-E 5-12.1** In civil engineering, a document referred to PD (project documentation?) on naftové hospodářství.

**E-F 5-12.2** I think these two terms are close enough to be posted together: “in-shore” and “at-shore.” How would you deal with them in French if you were translating a résumé that spoke of being a “project engineer group for at-shore and in-shore hook-up and completion?”

**E-G 5-12.3** It would not be a proper column without mystery acronyms. Two consecutive puzzlers appear in a text about servoamplifiers: “Turn ARST (DI signal) on to clear the fault or restart the servo drive.” Do not bother with an online search for ARST; you will get nowhere fast. Good German, please, for both of the terms in bold print.

**E-I 5-12.4** Except for in the electro steel industry, “ramming paste” is not a household term. The challenge here is to find proper Italian for a substance that assists in maintaining the melting baths. The paste is typically delivered in large bags along with cathodes that form the bottom of the bath, with the paste applied as part of maintenance.

**E-I 5-12.5** There appears to be a set of operations accompanying the closing of a real estate transaction called “close of escrow.” This essentially means that a real estate transaction has been completed and the sale is final. An independent third party, the escrow agent, holds all the monetary funds and documents until the close of the sale. What would be good Italian for this technical feature of real estate sales?

**E-Sp 5-12.6** What on earth is a “treatment winding of a transformer?” The sentence leaves no doubt as to its existence: “The windings can be divided into three basic characteristics, as follows: mechanical, electrical, treatment.” If you can, please provide the Spanish for this.

**F-E 5-12.7** Apparently referring to a specific calculation approach in math and statistics, conjonction d’aléas appeared in several contexts in a document, and we simply do not have space to quote them all, but here is a sentence of reasonable length: Un calcul probabiliste dans le cas d’une conjonction d’aléas de différentes sous-populations de variables, composition statistique régionale.

**G-E 5-12.8** In motocross racing, which I know is an obsession for a large number of ATA members, there appears in German to be a difference between a lauf and a durchgang. What is it and how would you express it in English?

**I-G [E] 5-12.10** In a financial text, the phrase con esonero dei conservatori di responsabilità proved difficult. The text mentions: fare iscrizioni, surroghe, postergazioni, cancellazioni e rinunce di ipoteche anche legali con esonero dei conservatori di responsabilità, effettuare trascrizioni ed annotazioni di ogni specie. Is that enough context to make it fair?

**N-E 5-12.11** Here is a nautical text that contains sjaprovetur, a puzzling word that seems to be nonstandard, and thus not likely to mean anything as cozily familiar as “maiden voyage”: Konsulenten har beregnet at skipets gjennomsnittsfart på sjaprovetur skal være minst ... knop ved sommerdyp-
gang. It brings back memories of my one and only ferry ride from Kristianssand to the Danish coast in May 2000.

(Pt-E  5-12.12) Two wildly different suggestions to solve the following problem led the Translation Inquirer to believe the matter was far from settled. Acerta os ponteiros appeared in a commercial document: O Rio acerta os ponteiros para voltar a ser o centro do mundo nas discussões sobre sustentabilidade. A 114 dias do início da Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Desenvolvimento Sustentável – a Rio + 20, numa alusão às duas décadas da Rio – 92 –, a cidade quer aproveitar a presença de até 150 chefes de Estado para promover uma festa democrática, ligando o asfalto às favelas, diferentes regiões da cidade e a capital aos municípios vizinhos. To what do those three words refer?

(R-E  5-12.13) Овчина-голяк appears in a listing of various kinds of skins and furs. The translator had a basic understanding in the source language of what it was, but needed help with a possible generally accepted English equivalent.

Replies to Old Queries

(Cr-G [E]  2-12.1) (sekundarizmi): Jasenka Tezak-Stefanic says this word does mean “metastases,” but is not a colloquial term. It is a standard technical term among Croatian medical professionals along with novotvorine (“tumors”). A friend of David Clayberg completed the assignment by informing him that it is Metastasein in German. Shifra Kilov renders the term as “secondary lesions” or “secondary tumors” or, as above, “metastases.”

(D-G [E]  2-12.2) (verzetsherdenkingskruis): Edith Kelly says that the literal translation ought not to be used in German, but that the answer is Trägerin des Widerstandsordens or Widerstandsverdienstkreuzes.

(E-F  3-12.1) (“trial time points”): Dominique Carton explains that these represent the different times when selected criteria like efficacy and toxicity are evaluated. Usually these times correspond to a visit by the subject to the trial center. Generally, she says, points d’évaluation de l’essai is used for this term. Catherine Dorian-Conner prefers exprimé en nombre de jours suivant le début de l’étude. She believes the term typically would be used to express what a graph would show on the x-axis. The y-axis would be a dose or concentration of data on a specific parameter.

(F-E  3-12.4) (barre soulignée): This is simply an “underscore,” says Catherine Dorian-Conner.

(F-Po [E]  3-12.5) (dégourdissage): What is involved here, says Catherine Dorian-Conner, is a procedure prior to welding to reduce the risk of cracking or breaking. In English, it is simply “preheating.” Robert Shillenn tells us that it is derived from the French verb dégourdir, meaning to relieve numbness, particularly in the hands and feet, by applying moderate heat, especially if the numbness is from exposure to cold. As a technical term, désourdisage derives from the basic meaning of the verb and from the fact that cracking is possible in a piece of metal depending on how cold it is and the type of metal. “Pre-heating” will probably suffice as a translation.

(Sp-E  3-12.10) (guayabera): Mercy Dominguez says this is a Venezuelan saying meaning “excluded, left on the outside, left hanging out to dry.” The guayabera is a shirt deliberately meant to be worn outside, not tucked in. Janet Quiroz puts the word into the context of “and we’ll get screwed again.” The name of the game in using guayabera is to use a relatively benign word instead of an offensive cussword.

In the March “Humor in Translation” column by Mark Herman, I was amazed to read his report about a 90-year project finally come to fruition with the publication of a multi-volume dictionary of Akkadian. Even more amazing was that, once people in the Fertile Crescent settled down into fixed communities, their thoughts fell into patterns we easily recognize and identify! Ancient Babylon may have been an easier place for a modern American to adjust to than certain other countries in 2012.

Are You LinkedIn?

Take advantage of your ATA membership. Joining LinkedIn through ATA gives you an instant community with opportunities to grow your network quickly. Don’t wait—get your online networking underway!

To join, just visit www.atanet.org/linkedin.php.
Humor and Translation
Mark Herman
mh18@columbia.edu

Fictional Translation

Sometimes truth is indeed stranger than fiction. Ian Jack, former editor of the British literary journal *Granta*, writing in the guardian.co.uk on June 17, 2011, tells one such story. He writes about Albanian author Jiri Kajane, who died at the age of 65 on the very day that Jack wrote about him. Kajane always found more literary success abroad than he ever did in Albania during the Stalinist regime of Enver Hoxha. He was lucky that, after the single performance of his satirical play *Neser Perdite (Tomorrow, Every Day)* in 1981 in Tirana, he received no more than a ban from the ministry of culture. Thereafter, Kajane wrote short stories, and, even after Hoxha’s death in 1985, he considered his position to be too precarious for any publication in Albania. And so, though he achieved some success in the West via translation into English, he was an unknown in his native country.

Many U.S. editors liked and published Kajane’s stories. Most of them featured two protagonists, a narrator known only as the Deputy Minister of Slogans, and his friend Leni, the sous chef at the Hotel Dajti, who helped each other through the universal problems of love, family, and boredom. In the 1990s, serious literary journals publishing Kajane’s stories included Glimmer Train, the Chicago Review, and the Michigan Quarterly Review. A story was also included in *The Killing Spirit: An Anthology of Murder-for-Hire*, published by Canongate in 1996, and two years later by Overlook Press in New York. In that anthology, Kajane’s work appeared alongside pieces by Ian McEwan, Joyce Carol Oates, Patricia Highsmith, Graham Greene, and Ernest Hemingway, and a review by *Time Out Scotland* declared him to be “Albania’s second greatest living writer,” second only to Ismail Kadare.

Jack describes the appeal of Kajane’s stories as perhaps:

their laconic strangeness, … Much of the attraction of writing from eastern Europe vanished with the Berlin Wall. The stimulant of oppression was no longer there; Big Macs had replaced the secret police. But Albania wasn’t Czechoslovakia. It looked, by comparison, remote and mysterious—and here sang a new and mysterious voice.

Kajane’s English translators are Kevin Phelan, who has a day job, surprisingly, as an FBI agent, and Bill U’Ren, who has a day job, unsurprisingly, as an assistant professor of creative writing at a liberal arts college in Baltimore. U’Ren also claims he was formerly a psychological coach to the San Diego Padres baseball team. As of June 2011, the collected stories of Jiri Kajane were still available online with the “second greatest living Albanian writer” emblazoned on the book cover, and Phelan and U’Ren credited as the translators.

Despite the many publications, the photographs and biographical details that appeared in the contributors’ notes of those publications, and the glowing reviews, Jiri Kajane does not and never did exist. Phelan and U’Ren invented him.

The two met while they were creative writing students at the University of California, Los Angeles. Phelan had visited Albania a couple of times in the 1980s, while U’Ren had never been there. As young writers, they discovered that their stories, set in the contemporary U.S., attracted little attention. And so, as “translators” of an Albanian genius, they achieved success. And, in a later Kajane story, they partially gave the game away to those who could read the clues. In this story, the admittedly fictional chef Leni has written some pieces that he is trying unsuccessfully to sell to the editor of a British literary magazine (*Granta*?). “It’s just that they’re not very Albanian, if you know what I mean,” says the editor, Ian James (Jack?).

Fictional translation is not new. In my May 2008 column, I wrote, regarding the early 19th-century craze in France for British gothic novels, that:

even truly original [French] works were called translations [from English], since that would help get them into print. Sometimes, an original French work was translated into English and published in England, and then re-translated back into French and republished in France.

So, is fictional translation a pernicious fraud? We are talking about work, after all, that was never said to be anything but fiction.

Is a piece of fiction less good, less authentic, because the author is also fictional and the translation is a hoax? Does an Albanian story have to be written by an Albanian? Are Shakespeare’s plays less good because they are set in places like Greece and Austria, which Shakespeare almost certainly had never visited? Are
The ATA Chronicle

May 2012

novels by the male author George Eliot less good because they were really written by the female Mary Anne Evans? Were Kajane’s stories successful because they told English-speaking readers what they wanted to hear about Albania, rather than the truth? Are television sitcoms successful because they tell viewers what they want to hear, rather than the truth? Does fiction ever tell the truth? Does only fiction tell the truth? And is that truth maintained in a translation? Are Kajane’s stories worth translating? Into Swedish? Into Chinese? Into Albanian?

Respond away!

Humor and Translation Continued from p. 36

Visit the ATA Calendar Online

www.atanet.org/calendar/

for a more comprehensive look at upcoming events.

Upcoming Events

May 31-June 1, 2012
National Council on Interpretation in Health Care
6th Annual Membership Meeting
Madison, WI
www.ncihc.org

June 1-2, 2012
Iowa Interpreters & Translators Association
8th Annual Conference & Interpreting Workshops
Orange City, IA
www.iitanet.org

June 15-16, 2012
InterpretAmerica
3rd North American Summit on Interpreting
Monterey, CA
www.interpretamerica.net

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

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://mitnweb.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

Visit the ATA Calendar Online

www.atanet.org/calendar/

for a more comprehensive look at upcoming events.
ATA Certification Exam Information

Upcoming Exams

California
San Diego
2 Sittings
October 27, 2012
Registration Deadline:
October 12, 2012

New Mexico
Albuquerque
September 15, 2012
Registration Deadline:
August 31, 2012

Texas
Austin
July 21, 2012
Registration Deadline:
July 6, 2012

Utah
Provo
September 8, 2012
Registration Deadline:
August 24, 2012

Argentina
Buenos Aires
August 11, 2012
Registration Deadline:
August 24, 2012

Mexico
Guadalajara
September 22, 2012
Registration Deadline:
September 7, 2012

All candidates applying for ATA certification must provide proof that they meet the certification program eligibility requirements. Please direct all inquiries regarding general certification information to ATA Headquarters at +1-703-683-6100. Registration for all certification exams should be made through ATA Headquarters. All sittings have a maximum capacity and admission is based on the order in which registrations are received. Forms are available from ATA’s website or from Headquarters.

Active and Corresponding Membership Review

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

Jeana M. Clark
Pella, IA

Christina Green
Milwaukee, WI

Bryan Lopuck
Saratoga, CA

Carol G. Velandia
Towson, MD

Marilia V. Vinson
Astoria, NY

Ali Djebli
Niskayuna, NY

Rosa M. Lopez-Gaston
Albuquerque, NM

Elida M. Testai
Gilbert, AZ

Andrés Veszelka
Kecskemé, Hungary
Make a critical difference with what you know.

You already know that intelligence is vital to national security. But here’s something you may not know.

The National Security Agency is the only Intelligence Community agency that generates intelligence from foreign signals and protects U.S. systems from prying eyes.

If you would like to use your advanced language skills to break and make the most important security codes in the world, then explore NSA. At NSA you can experience a variety of careers as you work on real-world challenges with the latest technology. You’ll also enjoy a collaborative work environment with flexible hours that will enable you to strike a balance between work and life.

You won’t find this kind of experience anywhere else.

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

- Pashto
- Dari
- Urdu/Punjabi
- Farsi
- Chinese
- Korean
- Russian
- Somali
- Swahili
- Tajik
- Uzbek

Watch the Video.
Get the free App for your camera phone at gettag.mobi and then launch the App and aim it at this tag.

WHERE INTELLIGENCE GOES TO WORK®

U.S. citizenship is required. NSA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants for employment are considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or status as a parent.
The new SDL Trados Studio 2011 does it all.
For translators, project managers, reviewers and terminologists.

The market-leading translation memory software
Are you looking for ways to accelerate translation? Do you find yourself translating the same content again and again? For over 25 years, SDL has been developing leading translation memory technology used by over 80% of the translation supply chain. **SDL Trados Studio 2011 Freelance** is the ultimate translation software, providing all the tools you need to edit and review high quality translations in the quickest possible time. It can help you complete translations up to 40% faster!

Depending on the type of content being translated, this figure could increase further.

Special offer for all ATA chronicle readers: www.sdl.com/promo/ATAREADERS