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November/December 2012

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Our Authors

Carolina Alfero de Carvalho, a native bilingual speaker of Portuguese and Spanish, has a master’s degree in English-Portuguese translation. A professional translator since 1996, she began working in subtitling in 1997. She has worked with Brazilian film producers and provides audiovisual translation services for corporate clients. She has translated a wide range of feature films, series, documentaries, and corporate material in her three working languages. Since 2005, she has taught translation and subtitling techniques through classroom and distance courses. Contact: carol@scribatraducoes.com.br.

Bianca Bold has a bachelor’s degree in languages/translation and is currently pursuing her master’s degree in translation studies at York University in Toronto, Canada. A native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese, she has worked with English, Spanish, and Italian for over 10 years, offering translation, interpreting, subtitling, editing, and courses in translation for subtitling. Experienced in translating ads, marketing copy, and social media content, she has also translated and edited numerous corporate videos and a range of material for DVD and Brazilian cable television in all of her working languages. Contact: bianca@biancabold.com.

Mario E. Chávez is an experienced Spanish translator currently living and working in Westlake, Ohio. He has a master’s degree in audiovisual translation from the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. He has presented at ATA Annual Conferences since 1994, published articles in translation journals, and taught classes on translation. Since 2011, he has been writing a client-oriented blog on translation issues (wordsmeet.wordpress.com). His master’s thesis on the evolution of Spanish technical writing across 40 years of computer books was published in 2011. You can follow him on Twitter (@wordsmeet). Contact: mc@wordsmeet.com.

Jeana M. Clark has a BA in international business management and German. She provides computer-assisted translation tool training for various companies and institutions, and has been a freelance German translator and editor since 2003, specializing in business, information technology, legal, and real estate documents. She also serves as the treasurer for the Iowa Interpreters and Translators Association. Contact: jeana@clarktranslations.net.

Esma A. Gregor has a Ph.D. in linguistics from Humboldt-University, Berlin. She has worked as a full-time translator since 2008, after several years working in-house at an investment company and many years of part-time translation work. She specializes in financial, legal, and information technology translations. Contact: esma.gregor@gmail.com.

Mathew Kane is a localization consultant. Interested in all things related to China, he has a BA in East Asian studies from Hamilton College, attended Chinese language programs in Beijing and Harbin, China, and worked for Chinese companies in Beijing for two and a half years. More recently, he worked as a senior project manager for LinguaLinx, a language services provider. Contact: kanemat@gmail.com.

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KNOWING MATTERS

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

- Arabic
- Chinese (Mandarin)
- Pashto
- Persian-Dari
- Persian-Farsi
- Russian
- South and Central Asian languages
- Somali
- And other less commonly taught languages

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 past year has been busy for us, and the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and our staff have led to new developments in many areas in addition to maintaining our existing services. This year’s highlights include:

Certification
- A successful pilot exam of the keyboarded version of our certification exam was held in the summer, followed by a full keyboarded exam sitting in San Diego. Additional keyboarded exams will be scheduled next year. This is a major milestone and concludes a complex development effort, led by ATA Director Alan Melby, that involved numerous volunteers over multiple years.
- Changes and adjustments to the Certification Program made this year included opening up the practice exam to non-members and revising eligibility requirements. We have also started publishing statistical passing rates in all language combinations for which certification is available.

Conference
- At the time of this writing, it is estimated that 1,700 people from all over the world will attend ATA’s 53rd Annual Conference in San Diego. The Exhibit Hall is sold out for the second year in a row. The conference program offers nearly 200 sessions in a dozen languages.
- Our newly developed conference app for mobile devices has been a big hit, putting resources at your fingertips and easing the transition to an electronic job marketplace.

Membership Services
- We established the Arabic Language Division.

Business Tools for Independent Contractors
- We introduced an Excel-based calculation tool (US CalPro) that allows for the precise calculation of overhead and business costs (www.atanet.org/business_practices/calpro_us.xls).

In spite of these many positive accomplishments, 2012 was a fiscally difficult year. Our lowlights of the year all fall in this category.

Reserves
- While the recovering financial markets made up for some of the past years’ losses in our investments, we are not yet back to the previous level in our reserves.

FIT Congress
- The 2011 Congress we organized for the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs (FIT) in San Francisco resulted in a considerable deficit.

Budget Plans
- To address the FIT losses, the Board and staff had to make some difficult decisions. Notably, the staff was reduced from 12 full-time employees to 10 by attrition, and we had to make cuts in a number of programs, such as the media consultant who had been assisting in our public relations efforts. Plans call for making up the losses over the course of three years, which may limit program funding and staffing for that period.

The Board is confident that we will work through these fiscal challenges. Our savings are materializing and we have many plans for 2013. Thank you in advance for renewing your membership for 2013 and for being a part of our thriving organization.
ATA’s 53rd Annual Conference is behind us now. The business suits are at the dry cleaners and you are back at your desk (likely under gray skies, if you live in a northern clime). If you are anything like me, there is also an extra pile of paper on your desk consisting of all the bits of information you collected during the conference. Here is the rub: it would be easy to jump right back into the workaday routine, but you owe it to yourself to squeeze every last benefit from this conference.

No matter how you have gathered these bits and pieces—anything from an envelope tucked in an outside pocket of your bag (the conference equivalent of a shoebox) to taking photos with your smartphone and using an app to file them—it is time to organize this information so it is accessible and ready to use. Below I offer you my process for dealing with the conference aftermath.

Contacts: First up are all those contacts. A seasoned conference attendee taught me the time-honored craft of discretely making notes on the back of business cards to remind me why I have them. Since I am on LinkedIn, sending connection requests is a great way to keep this contact information where I can find it, without clogging my contact manager, and it has the added benefit of expanding my network and keeping the information up to date with no effort on my part. A quick reminder here that you have three months after the conference to extract your notes and information from the conference mobile app.

Vendor Information: If you spent even five minutes in the Exhibit Hall, you came away with some vendor information regarding a tool, service, or an agency that interested you. In my experience, I see a spike in work about six months after any high-exposure marketing effort—like ATA’s Annual Conference. So it makes sense to get up to speed on productivity tools now before the big projects hit. If I want to make any purchases, conference discounts generally expire soon after the conference and before the tax year heads to a close. Vendor information will also still be available on the conference mobile app until February, so if you did not pick up information at the conference, look for it here.

Receipts: You will need to clear up your conference receipts. At my first ATA conference, capturing receipts meant shoving them into my pockets. I now snap pictures of them with my smartphone. Once I am back in my office, I can enter the information easily into my accounting system and file it. My accountant thanks me every year and even gives me a discount on my business returns for being so well prepared. I also take a minute to check my boarding passes and hotel folios against my hotel and airline loyalty programs online before scanning and filing them with the other receipts.

Session Notes: Finally, there are the speaker handouts and educational session notes I collected. Since I determined long ago that a bookshelf and a hard drive cost about the same, but one takes up much more space and is not readily searchable (and needs dusting), I prefer electronic files. I am thrilled that the conference mobile app provides a place to take notes for each session. If the speaker’s handouts are included on the conference CD or DVD, I will discard the paper; otherwise, I will send a message to the presenter and ask for the handouts as a PDF. (This practice is great for networking, too!) It is a useful review to transfer any marginalia from the paper handouts. Items to follow up on are transferred to a task list, and every year I find that many of my notes are no longer relevant (usually regarding questions that got answered).

There is one last item I have to follow up on—inspiration. Sometimes, it is a cocktail napkin schematic, sometimes just a note to myself. I try to take some time to reflect on what to do with that glimmer of an idea. Writing an article on a session or a subject provides instant credibility and visibility. And of course, this inspiration may translate into a presentation for next year’s conference. Are you inspired? The call for proposals for ATA’s 54th Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, will open in early January!
In the recent ATA membership survey, 63% of the respondents said that they have never participated in an ATA listserv. This is a missed opportunity. One of the strengths of this organization is that colleagues are so generous about sharing their knowledge and experience. As I have written before, it never fails that a conference attendee residing outside the U.S. will express his or her surprise and pleasure over how ATA members are so willing to share.

You can benefit from this same experience throughout the year by signing up for various ATA listservs and blogs. These discussion groups are free to ATA members. You do not even have to post or respond to comments. You can lurk—that is, just read the messages.

**ATA Business Practices List:** ATA’s Business Practices discussion group on Yahoo! (http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ata_business_practices) provides valuable, practical information for translators, interpreters, and language services company owners. This listserv has blossomed over the years, to the point where participants held their second face-to-face reception at the recent ATA Annual Conference.

**Division Listservs and Blogs:** Most of ATA’s divisions either have their own listserv or are affiliated with one. These online forums, which have various levels of activity, are full of helpful information, particularly terminology tips. If you are stumped on a phrase, more than likely one of your colleagues has seen it or can point you to a resource to research it. The forums are also great for networking, although you will have to move out of the “lurker” stage and post responses to queries.

To subscribe to these division-related listservs, please go to the specific division and look for the listserv information there. To access each division, please go to www.atanet.org/divisions/index.php. Once you sign up, you can either receive messages from your colleagues as they are posted or get the day’s messages bundled in “digest” mode.

Besides the listservs, some divisions have switched their newsletters to a blog format, which allows for the posting of comments. The follow-up comments often provide real nuggets of valuable information.

Sign up for a listserv today and get more out of your ATA membership. If you have any questions regarding division listservs, please contact ATA Chapter and Division Relations Manager Jamie Padula at jamie@atanet.org.

**Be Sure to Renew**

Speaking of membership, thank you for being an ATA member in 2012 and please renew for 2013. Renewal information will be mailed to you and posted online.
KILGRAY TRANSLATION TECHNOLOGIES’ FIRST TRANSLATION TOOL CONFERENCE IN THE USA
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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The greatest challenge for translators of subtitles has to do with the formal features that are inherent in this activity: space and time limitations, which entail intelligibility constraints. Most of the tips that work for translators of subtitles are also valid for those who work with space constraints that exist in marketing/advertising, social media, and localization in general. Even the editorial market may impose limitations, when editors ask us to keep the text the same size as the original so that the same layout can be used. In other contexts, sometimes the translation has to fit within a button, banner, or space designated for a heading, presentation slide, or other limited areas. So wordiness is out of the question.

**Space Constraints**

When subtitling, your main goal is to convey a clear, concise message that fits in a maximum of two lines, according to most standards, and is displayed long enough to be read. Line length depends mostly on the medium and font size and usually varies from 30 to 40 characters, including punctuation and spaces. The task of segmenting the stream of oral discourse into one- or two-line blocks is often called “spotting,” and includes both external (where each subtitle starts and ends) and internal aspects (what goes in the first and second line).

Space limitations usually are not the main issue in subtitling. We will often not use all of the space available due to time constraints. On occasion, however, such as when two or more individuals engage in quick dialogue—during arguments, for instance—not all of the oral discourse might fit. Since a single subtitle can reproduce the speech a maximum of two interlocutors at a time (one per line), we need to judge what is more relevant and what to leave out.

**Time Constraints**

Another important limiting factor is related to the time during which the subtitles need to be displayed so that they can be read properly. This depends on the duration of the oral speech and usually varies from one to six seconds.

One major concern in subtitling is synchrony, which plays a crucial role in defining the formal constraints discussed here. When a subtitle is in sync, viewers see the target text appear at the same time as they hear its oral counterpart. The subtitle should ideally remain on the screen until the end of the speech segment, or slightly longer. Bad synchrony is a distraction and may hinder the viewing experience.

There are different ways of calculating the optimal display time, which considers the average reading speed of the viewers. Most clients prefer to use a maximum of 15 characters for each second of subtitle duration. Because it takes longer to decode written information than oral speech, the translation has to be shorter and more “economical” than the original. If the character-per-second ratio is not taken into account, the function of the translation might fail. There is no point in rendering a perfect, detailed, fancy text if the public will not have enough time to read it.

**Intelligibility Constraints**

Viewers of subtitled material interact with this media differently than readers of written texts, who can...
flip pages and take their time before they move on to the next section. When watching a subtitled movie, you usually have enough time to read each subtitle once. If the information cannot be easily understood at first sight, chances are viewers will not be able to retrieve that part of the message. Therefore, texts should be concise, uncomplicated, and free of unusual lexical items or wordy structures.

**Let’s Declutter!**

To comply with the formal requirements and allow viewers to understand the message quickly, you can use strategies to convey the main idea with fewer characters and segments that are easy to read. Although nuances may be lost and the focus of the message may shift, you should change the textual structure, syntax, or style, as necessary, for the sake of global comprehension.

Below are some of these strategies, categorized as omission and simplification. In the pairs of sentences shown as examples, the second line illustrates a “decluttered” subtitle.

**Omission**

You should avoid omissions as a general rule. However, in extreme cases, such as concomitant, long, or fast-paced speeches, it is a survival strategy: if you do not omit some of the text, viewers might miss it all. Here are six situations in which omission is acceptable and, sometimes, even recommended, when the available space can be better used for more important information.

1. **Vocatives:** Omitting vocatives is usually welcome after a portion of the video has been shown, when viewers are likely to have learned who is who in the film.

   - **Andrew,** lock the door.
   - **Lock the door.**
   - It’s great to see you, **sister**
   - It’s great to see you.

2. **Hesitation, stuttering, self-correction, etc.:** Subtitles are not meant to replace the original material, but rather to convey the message effectively. Since viewers can observe the rhythm, intonation, and body language in the film, some orality markers tend to be omitted. Their insertion could generate confusing written segments and hinder direct understanding.

   - The truth is **... hmmm ...** I need cash.
   - The truth is I need cash.
   - She **vi-vi-visited** her niece.
   - She visited her niece.
   - Joe is in room 705 **... no, wait ...** 706.
   - Joe is in room 706.

3. **Onomatopoeic words:** Words that sound like the noise they refer to may be understood by foreign-language viewers. In these cases, viewers do not miss much if onomatopoeia is omitted to make room for more relevant information. Besides, attempting to convey in writing a typically oral concept may become a hindrance or cause an unintended comic effect.

   - **Tick tock ...** time’s running out.
   - Time’s running out.

   - I heard the explosion: **badaboom!**
   - I heard the explosion ... **

4. **Redundancies and repetitions:** Although repetitions and redundancies are often used as emphasis, the essence of a message should take precedence when the space available is too tight. As a general rule, you should avoid redundant structures, which are common in spoken language.

   - **I told you! I told you** it wouldn’t work!
   - I told you it wouldn’t work!

   - Maria **saw what he did.** She’s sure because she **saw it**.
   - Maria is sure because she saw what he did.

   - **The problem is ... is that** we’re out of supplies.
   - The problem is we’re out of supplies.

5. **Background speeches:** With concomitant background and foreground speeches, you should prioritize the most relevant information, which is usually the most audible utterance. This is often the case for scenes in crowded places and when someone speaks while a television or radio is on.

   - **The problem is ... is that** we’re out of supplies.
   - The problem is we’re out of supplies.

Most of the tips that work for translators of subtitles are also valid for those who work with space constraints that exist in marketing/advertising, social media, and localization in general.
6. **Succinct replies:** Utterances such as “OK”/“Yes”/“No” are sometimes grasped from the context or even body language.

**Simplification**

You should simplify the text to make subtitles easy to read so that viewers understand them at first sight. The nine tricks below often create simpler and more concise texts, so feel free to use them on a regular basis, and not only when struggling with space or time constraints.

1. **Direct word order (vs. indirect order, intercalations, etc.):** The usual word order in English is subject-verb-object and normally results in more natural, logical, and concise structures. Indirect word order and intercalations (of adverbial phrases, for example) require the use of commas or other particles that lengthen the sentence.

   - **At the beginning of the year,** Paul started his project.
   - Paul started his project at the beginning of the year.
   - Being with him, she realized, was all that mattered.
   - She realized all that mattered was being with him.
   - It was not what they had imagined, this complicated relationship.
   - This complicated relationship was not what they had imagined.

2. **Coordination (vs. subordination):** Coordinated sentences require less cognitive effort because they are usually shorter and allow for a faster perception of the relation between the two (or more) parts of a message.

   - Although I would like to go out, I’ll stay home tonight.

   - Here’s a picture of when I graduated.
   - Here’s a picture of my graduation.
   - Although I would like to go out, I’ll stay home tonight.
   - Teaching them a lesson would take a long time.
   - They taught them a lesson.

3. **Modulation:** You can often portray the same (or similar) situation from various perspectives. This strategy is called modulation and is widely used in translation in general. By slightly changing the point of view, you might make a message fit in the short space available.

   - Our flight didn’t take off on schedule.
   - Our flight was delayed.
   - Those cookies were made by us.
   - It’s not such a bad idea to go on vacation.

   - Our flight didn’t take off on schedule.
   - They made a reservation.
   - We made those cookies.
   - It’s a bad idea to go on vacation.

4. **Transposition:** As with modulation, transposition is also commonly applied in other translation areas. With transposition, there is a change in word class or part of speech.

   - I would like to go out, but I’ll stay home tonight.
   - Since it was raining, we cancelled the hike.
   - He persisted in spite of being exhausted.
   - It was raining, so we cancelled the hike.
   - He was exhausted, yet he persisted.

5. **Simple verbs (vs. compound verbs or verb phrases):** There are differences in terms of verb aspect and style between simple verbs and compound verbs. However, sometimes you need to compromise this detail so that the space is used wisely to convey the overall idea, which is more important.

   - Have you eaten yet?
   - Did you eat?
   - They were finally taking control of the situation.
   - They finally took control of the situation.

6. **Direct questions and imperative forms (vs. indirect questions and requests):** Conventionally, indirect questions and requests represent politeness. Here again, some nuance may be lost in order to allow for a general, faster understanding. Space and
time limits permitting, you can add “please” to imperatives.

- **I’d like to know if you signed** the contract.
- **Did you sign** the contract?
- **Would you mind closing** the window?
- **Close** the window [, please].

7. High-frequency words (vs. low-frequency words): Sometimes the length of a word is not the most relevant factor, but the frequency with which it appears in the target culture. Viewers may spend more time reading subtitles with uncommon lexical items; so the simpler the vocabulary, the better it usually is.

- My course **embodies** those topics.
- My course **includes** those topics.

- All I heard was their **yakety yak**.
- All I heard was their **noisy talk**.

- She **swathed** the baby in blankets.
- She **wrapped** the baby in blankets.

8. Using numerals (vs. spelling out numbers): Some clients have strict standards for representing numbers on the screen. While some ask that 1 to 10 always be spelled out, others leave it up to our judgment. Overall, numerals are welcome.

- They have **sixteen** grandkids.
- They have **16** grandkids.

- We celebrated our **seventh** anniversary.
- We celebrated our **7th** anniversary.

9. Abbreviations (vs. whole words) and acronyms (vs. spelled out compound words): Abbreviations are usually acceptable, except in two specific cases: 1) when the word is functioning as a noun on its own, and 2) when the abbreviation is uncommon and hinders immediate understanding. Acronyms that are well known to the target audience are usually welcome.

- We saw **Doctor** Smith.
- We saw **Dr.** Smith.

- I live in **apartment** 304.
- I live in **apt.** 304.

- The country’s **Gross Domestic Product** increased 5%.
- The country’s **GDP** increased 5%.

- **We saw the dr.**
- **We saw the doctor.**

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**Useful Resources for Audiovisual Translators**

- **Díaz Cintas, Jorge, and Aline Remael. *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* (Manchester, UK; Kinderhook, New York: St. Jerome, 2007).**


- **Multimedia Translation**
  - www.multimediatranslation.org

- **Carolina Alfaro de Carvalho’s MA thesis on subtitling (in Portuguese)**
  - www.scribatraducoes.com.br/dissertacao

- **Subtitle Project**
  - www.subtitle.agregat.net

- **Subtitle and Translation**
  - www.transedit.se

- **Translation Client Zone**
  - www.translationclientzone.com/tag/audiovisual-translation

- **Video Help**
  - www.videohelp.com

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**Useful Resources for Audiovisual Translators**

We will end here by listing a few helpful resources, both print and online, in the box above. We hope the strategies discussed here get you started on the road to clutter-free subtitles.
The main tool of the trade for a translator is the keyboard. Aided by a word processor, translators can write from 500 to 5,000 words a day, depending on their typing speed, writing skills, and translation experience. Some translators working in transcription use dictation software to speed up the process prior to doing the actual translation. One of the best known products out there to help translators save time is Dragon NaturallySpeaking.

As a fast typist, I never had the need to use dictation software until a new client provided the starting point for my adventure with this kind of productivity tool. The original documents I received from this client were all formatted as PDFs and consisted of medical documents of various kinds, from clinical assessments to EKG interpretation reports. These documents were image files of handwritten notes and typed or computer-generated reports compiled by physicians and other medical practitioners from countries such as Colombia, Argentina, Peru, and Spain.

I adopted a basic two-stage workflow for this assignment: transcribing the Spanish and then translating it into English. Alas, the client required that the formatting be kept as close as possible to the original PDF files. Initially, I did not mind transcribing the text. The content provided excellent practice for familiarizing myself with certain expressions and terms common in different kinds of medical environments. However, the additional formatting and the large number of files made me reconsider my initial workflow approach. I knew I needed to speed up the transcription process. The answer: voice recognition software. My choice: Dragon NaturallySpeaking.

Seeking the Dragon

My first step was to go for the tried-and-true method of obtaining a free software trial, which Dragon does not offer. I considered buying an off-the-shelf copy, but local retailers such as Best Buy or Staples do not have a Spanish version for sale in the U.S. (no surprise here). After reading Dragon’s online literature, I realized I needed the Premium Version. To make a long story short, I received my copy of Dragon NaturallySpeaking Premium Version 11 (English and Spanish) in the mail and installed it. Here, I will review the Spanish side of the English-Spanish version of Premium Version 11. For this reason, software references such as menu options and screen captures will appear in Spanish with the occasional English translation. Please bear in mind that this is by no means an exhaustive review.
The installation process is quite streamlined and intuitive. After a first installation, you will need to create a user profile, either for English or for Spanish, but not for both. Next, you will need to train the software to recognize your voice. Please keep in mind that this step can take up to 30 minutes. This is not a one-off procedure, however, as the software allows you to retrain for accuracy as many times as you like.

The program opens up a top menu bar as seen in Figures 1 and 2 above. The Spanish caption in Figure 1 reads: “The microphone is asleep; say ‘to work’ or press a shortcut key to activate it.” By default, Dragon uses the + key on the numeric pad to either activate or deactivate the microphone, which is a handy feature whenever you want to pause your dictation to answer the phone, make corrections, or otherwise work on your project. Figure 2 shows the toolbar.

The first three options—Perfil (Profile), Herramientas (Tools), and Vocabulario (Vocabulary)—will be your go-to options for daily operation. After you create a user profile, you may go to Perfil > Copia de respaldo de perfil de usuario (Profile > User profile backup) to create a backup copy of your user profile.

After using the software for several months, I am happy with my investment. The transcription stage goes much faster with less physical effort, with the added advantage of having improved my translation because I now read the text beforehand. So, without further ado, here are some practical tips I gleaned from my experience.

Take the time to train the software. I know that the television ads say that Dragon is around 99% accurate. Even after training the software for 20-30 minutes at a normal reading speed, I can say that the Spanish is around 85-90% accurate. Even after you perform the initial training (which takes 20-30 minutes), you may want to retrain the software for accuracy as you go along.

Use a high-quality headset. At the start, I used the headset included in the Dragon package, which is a decent piece of hardware, but I ended up reverting to my Logitech model for better results. Remember to keep the microphone within one to two inches from your lips.

Specialized terminology? No sweat. Dragon allows you to import new terms from several sources, including e-mail or translated documents. Dragon includes the new terms in its database, which is linked to your user profile. In addition, you may add new terms as you go along, such as brand names, names of pharmaceuticals or drugs, or highly technical terms. In the example in Figure 3 above, I added epistaxis.

How do you add a term? First, you go to Vocabulario > Añadir nueva palabra o frase… (Vocabulary > Add new word or phrase…) to open a dialog box. Next, write the new word in the text box and click on Añadir (Add). The next dialog box, shown in Figure 4 on page 16, will appear. As you click on Comenzar (Start), you pronounce the new word clearly and slowly (but not too slowly). I recommend repeating the word a minimum of three times. Once you are done, click on Terminar (Finish) and return to your document to use the new word. However, be ready for homo-
phones or quasi-homophones as you train the software on new words. Dragon may render *epistaxis* as *epitafio* because these words have similar sounds, but do not let this quirk dissuade you from using the software, as it learns from your dictation over time.

Now that I have been using Dragon NaturallySpeaking Premium Version 11 for several months, the investment has paid for itself many times, as I do not have to spend time typing the Spanish originals. Does the software recognize and write my dictation as fast as I type? Not quite, but that is not the point. The main advantage of the software is its ability to allow the user to focus. On one hand, when you read from the original to type, you have to move your eyes from the original to the new document you are typing. On the other hand, when you read to dictate, your eyes focus on the text you are reading while your voice does the dictating. It is not a scientific observation, but I end my dictation sessions much less fatigued mentally and with less physical strain on my hands.

Of course, no software is perfect and no software review, however brief, will be complete without a word on problem solving. The next section deals with common challenges I have faced while using Dragon NaturallySpeaking.

**Troubleshooting**

As with any other software, Dragon has the occasional hiccup. Even with a specialized termbase containing many words I have trained the software to use, I still encounter minor problems.

- Dragon fails to recognize certain homophones (e.g., *vía* and *día*; *tubo* and *tuvo*). In such cases, it is preferable to pause the dictation...
software (press the + key on the numeric pad) and type the word.

- Dragon will occasionally recognize incorrectly a number you pronounce in a series, such as 759110436, so take your time and spell out each number clearly and distinctly to minimize this issue.

- Dragon does not distinguish between lowercase and uppercase characters unless you format them specifically. The time that it takes to do this, however, is likely to exceed the time it would take you to manually type the lowercase or uppercase characters.

If you are dissatisfied with the level of accuracy, you may adjust for speed/accuracy in the slider provided in the Opciones (Options) dialog box. Simply go to Herramientas>Opciones (Tools>Options) and drag the slider to the left (toward maximum speed) or right (toward maximum accuracy) accordingly. (See Figure 5 on page 16.)

Dragon allows you to create as many user profiles as necessary. Perhaps you want one profile for general dictation and another for medical transcription, just like I have. You can then attach vocabulary lists to each of them and edit or train them accordingly. But what if a user profile becomes corrupted? I experienced this difficulty a few weeks ago. The solution was to create a new user profile, which I named differently, and reattach the unusable profile’s vocabulary to it. Figure 6 above shows the results.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking Premium Version 11 allows the user to create user profiles for English and Spanish dictation. In Figure 6, the bottom user profile is the corrupted one, which I replaced with the one in the middle (Mario_ES-Restaurado). I have not deleted the corrupted user profile to make the point that the program will not load and operate without first loading a user profile. Now, for those translators or interpreters who are thinking, “How about creating a bilingual user profile so I can dictate in English and Spanish simultaneously?” Right now, that is not possible. You may load one or the other, but not both. The user, however, may train the software to add foreign words to his or her vocabulary list, but I would only recommend this step as an exception and not as a rule.

There Are Many Uses for a Dragon

How else can you use Dragon? With other software packages, of course, not just MS Word. I know translators who use Dragon NaturallySpeaking to dictate segments inside a computer-assisted translation tool or translation environment tool interface with acceptable results. Additionally, you may compose e-mail, create tweets, and update your Facebook status.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking Premium Version 11 is quite a reliable productivity tool for translators or interpreters who need or prefer to dictate text as part of their workflow.
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.

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Sooner or later many project managers will be asked to work on a Chinese translation project where they need to choose between Simplified or Traditional characters. To help them decide, they might have a map or chart detailing which character set is used in which part of the Chinese-speaking world. But it is not enough to consider character set alone. In Chinese, there is a conceptual distinction between the written and spoken language, so you must consider both when placing a translation job.

**Written (中文)**

Written Chinese is comprised of characters that convey meaning and sound. Chinese does not possess an alphabet, so Chinese words are not constructed with letters that indicate pronunciation. Instead, each Chinese character represents a single syllable, and Chinese words are comprised of one or more Chinese characters. Writing Chinese requires the memorization of thousands of characters, some of which are complex and contain a large number of strokes. (By “strokes,” I mean brushstrokes, or the physical lines that make up a character.)

In the 1950s and 1960s, the communist government on Mainland China developed and promoted a Simplified character system, with the goal of increasing literacy. (Former Communist leader of China Mao Zedong [1893-1976] reportedly even considered switching to Esperanto.) The number of strokes in many characters was reduced; for example, the character for “dragon” was changed from 龙 to the simpler 龙.

Simplified characters were adopted in the People’s Republic of China in 1956, but other regions held on to Traditional characters, most notably Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. It should be noted that most Chinese speakers can comprehend the majority of either character set, but they tend to be more comfortable with one over the other.

**Spoken (汉语)**

Chinese is comprised of hundreds of different dialects (e.g., Mandarin in Beijing, Cantonese in Hong Kong, Fukienese in Fujian, etc.) that are

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**Chinese Character Usage in New York City**

*By Mathew Kane*
largely mutually unintelligible but share the same written characters. These characters, however, do not necessarily mean the same thing across dialects. For example, in Mandarin the character 找 (pronounced “zhao”) means “to look for,” but in Cantonese “to look for” is written 玩 (pronounced “wan”), which means “to play” in Mandarin. So, in spite of the fact that Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong and Mandarin speakers in Taiwan both use Traditional characters, it is possible that someone who grew up in Taiwan speaking Mandarin and writing Traditional characters would not be able to make sense of a phrase in a Hong Kong newspaper written for the Cantonese dialect.

Phrasing and grammar also vary according to region. For example, even though the Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese both speak Mandarin, the Taiwanese say 不客氣 (“bu ke qi”) to express the idea of “You’re welcome,” whereas in Beijing you would say 没事儿 (“mei shi er”); if you said “mei shi er” in Taiwan, they probably would not know what you are talking about.

For these reasons, when starting a translation job involving the Chinese language, it is not enough just to determine if the target audience uses Traditional or Simplified characters. Because of differences in dialect, it is also necessary to determine the geographical location (e.g., Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Chinatown New York City, etc.) and, in some cases, the demographic makeup (e.g., age, year of entry, heritage) of the target audience.

**Mass Transit Authority Case Study**

So which Chinese character set and dialect would you use for Chinatowns throughout the United States? I faced this very question while working for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York City for my former company LinguaLinx.

The MTA subway map contains both Simplified and Traditional characters, but their printed service notices in subway stations only use Traditional characters. For most of the 20th century, New York City’s Chinatown was comprised of Cantonese speakers from areas like Hong Kong, where they write Traditional characters. Since the opening of the People’s Republic of China in 1979, however, the majority of Chinese-speaking immigrants to New York City has come from Mainland China, specifically Fujian Province, where they write Simplified characters, speak a Fuzhou dialect at home, and speak Mandarin as a second language. This is typical in Mainland China. Mandarin Chinese is taught in schools throughout the People’s Republic of China, so the vast majority of Chinese citizens speaks it, although it is not the primary language of the majority of people. As a result, Mandarin is quickly becoming the lingua franca of the Chinese-speaking world.

To help determine which character set would be most appropriate for the MTA, I mined data from the Selected American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2006-2010. Managed by the U.S. Census Bureau, the American Community Survey collects data by mail, phone, and personal interviews. The American Community Survey does not survey character usage, but does ask which language is spoken at home. However, since this is a fill-in-the-blank question, I found that this data alone was insufficient. Some respondents write “Chinese,” while others specify a dialect like Cantonese or Mandarin. “Chinese” could include any number of dialects. Moreover, as discussed previously, language alone does not indicate character usage. For instance, Cantonese is spoken in Hong Kong, where they use Traditional characters, and Guangdong (Canton) in Mainland China, where they use Simplified characters. Similarly, Mandarin is spoken in Mainland China, where they use Simplified characters, and Taiwan, where they use Traditional characters.

I decided that the best way to determine which character set and dialect are most common in New York City was to create a model designed to estimate the number of people who would use Traditional characters based on the language spoken, place of birth, as well as age and year of entry to the United States. My sample comprised Chinese speakers (those who filled out “Chinese,” “Mandarin,” “Cantonese,” and “Formosan” in the American Community Survey) living in the New York City Public Use Microdata Sample Areas (PUMAs). PUMAs are subdivisions of U.S. states that contain around 100,000 people.
Model Variables

Below are the variables that I think best predict if a Chinese speaker would use Traditional characters.

Place of birth is Hong Kong or Taiwan: Traditional characters are used in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Place of birth is New York State, age is older than 25: New York State residents who were born before 1985 most likely were raised by parents who are either from the United States or immigrated to the United States from areas where they use Traditional characters.

Place of birth is China, age is older than 72: Simplified characters were adopted in Chinese schools in 1956, so immigrants from China older than 72 would not have been taught Simplified characters in school and would use Traditional characters.

Place of birth is China, age is 62 to 72, immigrated between 1949 and 1980: It is possible that some Chinese speakers who list China as their place of birth moved to Taiwan after the communist government came to power in 1949. These people would be at least 62 years old and would probably not have learned Simplified characters because they left Mainland China before Simplified characters were introduced. Significant immigration from the People’s Republic of China to the U.S. did not begin until 1980, so the majority of Chinese-speaking immigrants to the U.S. between 1949 and 1980 would use Traditional characters.

Place of birth is Singapore, age is older than 60: Simplified characters were adopted in Singapore schools in 1969, so immigrants from Singapore older than 60 would not have been taught Simplified characters in school and would use Traditional characters.

Findings

I used the DataFerrett tool (http://dataferrett.census.gov/run.html) to mine the data from the American Community Survey and determine the total populations for each of the aforementioned variables. The populations were totaled to calculate the number of Chinese speakers that would use Traditional characters. I subtracted this number from the total population of Chinese speakers in New York City to determine the amount of Chinese speakers who would likely use Simplified characters. Alyson Slack, project manager for special projects at the Center for Economic Growth in Albany, New York, validated my data.

The results were surprising in that they indicated that long-standing assumptions about the preference for Traditional characters by ethnic Chinese living in the New York City metropolitan area may be outdated. Figure 1 above shows how the percentage breaks out for New York City as a whole. Three quarters of the population in question can be expected to prefer Simplified characters. Figure 2 on page 23 shows the breakout for areas in New York City with significant Chinese-speaking populations.

Presenting the Findings

I finished collecting my findings earlier this year and presented them in case study form to upper management at LinguaLinx. Management approved the case study and gave the green light to present the study to MTA, which at the time had been a client for about one year. The sales department handed out printed copies of my case study to key MTA decision makers during an unrelated meeting at MTA’s headquarters in New York City. During the meeting, the sales team summed up the findings and reiterated the recommendation that MTA switch from Traditional to Simplified characters for their printed service notices in New York City subway stations. The individuals from MTA said they would review the case study.

The decision to switch the character set was not taken lightly.
Community acceptance of such a significant language change is critical, so it was necessary for MTA to receive buy-in from all pertinent departments and decision makers.

After receiving the necessary approvals in July, MTA accepted my recommendation and instructed LinguaLinx to translate their service notices into Simplified instead of Traditional characters for all subway stations with significant populations of Chinese speakers. MTA creates service notices on an ongoing basis, so LinguaLinx will translate this content into Simplified Chinese continuously.

The MTA never requested that I write a case study. I did it of my own volition, and it was a surprise when LinguaLinx presented it. As a result, the case study helped strengthen the business relationship between the company and MTA, and provided LinguaLinx with a model for analyzing demographic data for other clients.

Notes
Global English (Globish) and Its Impact on the Translator
By Jeana M. Clark and Esma A. Gregor

Global English, or Globish, is a universally understood form of English that is used internationally by non-native speakers of English and, to some extent, by native English speakers when they interact with non-native speakers. Global English has achieved universal language status because it strives for neutrality, using English words and phrases generally understood throughout the English-speaking world while avoiding localisms that are too culturally specific.

The term “Globish” was made a household name by Jean-Paul Nerriere, a Frenchman and former IBM executive who developed the concept after observing the verbal exchanges among businessmen at the international meetings he attended. He concluded that non-native English speakers were able to communicate with each other more successfully than their native English-speaking colleagues because they used a type of simplified English, foregoing idiomatic phrases, figurative meanings, and ambiguities. On the other hand, Nerriere noted that native English speakers were often misunderstood or left out of these “Globish” conversations altogether because they tended to use English in a way that was too complex and subtle for non-native speakers to understand if they only had a basic command of the language. In his attempt to capture and codify the way in which non-native speakers were able to communicate so effectively and to enable others to acquire a basic but universally understood form of English quickly, he created Globish.1

Globish is based on a vocabulary limited to 1,500 words, involving a modular method for combining these words, with an emphasis on short sentences, basic syntax, active verb tense, and a particular focus on the

Globish is a perfectly useful and effective means of verbal communication, but it can be an occupational hazard for translators when it spills over into written text.
correct usage of syllable stress. In addition, users must avoid anything that could potentially cause cross-cultural confusion, such as metaphors, abbreviations, and even humor. The goal of Globish is to reach a common ground where everyone understands everyone else regardless of their native language.

**Globish as a Lingua Franca**

Globish is widely used today in business and academic circles, and has effectively become a *lingua franca*—a “bridge language” between speakers who do not share a common language. It is not surprising that Globish is popular within the business community, since *lingua francas* tend to emerge when speakers of various languages not only have the need to communicate and exchange messages, but the ability to realize an economic benefit by doing so.

History indicates that *lingua francas* come and go based on the needs of a particular era. The moment the economic benefit disappears, people cease to feel compelled to learn the language. As the language of diplomacy, for example, French was a *lingua franca* for several hundred years until the mid-20th century, but in this globalized, digital age, it has now been superseded by English. In fact, in their book *Globish the World Over*, Nerriere and co-author David Hon state that 96% of international English communication takes place with at least one non-native speaker. So what does this mean for translators?

**The Translator as a Mediator**

It is important to note that Globish is used mainly for verbal communication. However, it must be considered “non-standard” English, meaning it does not have standardized, prescriptive grammar. The dilemma here is that, in this particular case, we are technically translators from one standard language into another standard language. Because English is now functioning as a *lingua franca*, we are increasingly put in a position where we are asked to translate from Globish into standard English or from Globish into yet another language.

Globish is a perfectly useful and effective means of verbal communication, but it can be an occupational hazard for translators when it spills over into written text. Translators need to be on the lookout for telltale signs that the English text they are being asked to translate or edit is in fact non-standard English. The checklist below will help you identify certain traits of Globish in your documents.

**Telltale Signs Checklist for Non-Standard English, or “Globish”**

1. **Translation errors (mistranslation of source text meaning):**
   - **Original:** Wir sind immer noch das Schlusslicht, wir müssen uns ralhalten.
   - **Translation:** We are still the tail light, so let’s grab hold!
   - **Correct:** We still have a long way to go, so let’s dig in!

2. **Typos (often caused by language interference):**
   - **Translation:** so called
   - **Correct:** so-called

3. **Verb tense problems (look for passive voice or incorrect formulations):**
   - **Translation:** In April 2012 a SWOT analysis has been carried out.
   - **Correct:** A SWOT analysis was carried out in April 2012.

4. **Stylistic problems (very common if the text was written by a non-native English speaker):**
   - **Translation:** Product X shows a high effectiveness.
   - **Correct:** Product X is highly effective.
Global English (Globish) and Its Impact on the Translator Continued

• **Translation:** This was possible as a result of the many years of experience of Company X.

• **Correct:** Company X’s many years of experience made this possible.

5. **Syntactic problems (some language combinations are more problematic than others):** Syntax is a considerable problem for people translating from German into English. In English, the semantic focus of the sentence is usually in the beginning or the middle, whereas in German it is in the middle or at the end. The order of adverbials and adverbial phrases is also different between the two languages. For example:

• **Translation:** Through the high resting state viscosity, pigment settling speed is greatly reduced.

• **Correct:** The high resting state viscosity greatly reduces pigment settling speed.

• **Translation:** Only then we will be able to maintain our prices, by the way, too.

• **Correct:** It is only then, by the way, that we will be able to maintain our prices as well.

6. **Lexicological problems (look for those typical to your language combination):** Lexicological problems between German and English are common for many reasons. For example, German and English have a number of prepositions in common, but each language uses them differently.

• **Translation:** Our putties are widely used on the whole world.

• **Correct:** Our putties are widely used all around the world.

**Issues for the Translator**

Using the checklist above to confirm that you are indeed dealing with non-standard English is just the first step in the process. You now have to address effectively the respective issues it brings to the table. The key is to know your source language situation and understand the client’s or author’s perspective. Every culture has its own “flavor” and command of English. This, in turn, influences the translator’s or editor’s work; namely, how easy or complicated it will be to explain certain translation or stylistic issues to the client.

**Specific Situations Translators May Face**

Globish is everywhere, which means translators are going to encounter it sooner or later. The goal is to be prepared for these situations when they arise. If you find yourself being asked to use very Globish-sounding glossary terms that are exceptionally confusing or misleading, it is a good idea to discuss the matter with the client or agency. Sometimes, this situation gives you the perfect opportunity to create a glossary for that client or develop a style guide. In other situations where the terminology is not really that bad, you might decide to go with the glos-sary requested by the client and try to match the style and terminology with the linguistic environment, just as long as it is still grammatically correct and conveys the meaning effectively. You might also be asked to edit a document that has already been translated into English. If the Globish is comprehensible and you can decipher the text easily and turn it into standard English, then it is not a problem and everybody is happy. However, it gets more complicated if you have no idea what the English is supposed to be conveying or if you have been told specifically not to make any stylistic changes.

**How to Break the News to the Client**

We have come up with a way to respond to this issue in a gentle but professional manner. We simply suggest to the client that the English provided, although probably acceptable in a spoken environment in today’s international business community, does not correspond to written standard English. We then advise them to have it edited and/or retranslated in order to protect the company’s image and reputation. This same type of diplomatic and explanatory approach also works well if a client sends back a translation with revisions, but the revisions are either incorrect or contain the typical errors that users of Globish tend to make.
From Theory into Practice

Given the globalized nature of the business environment and the prevalence of Global English as a lingua franca, chances are that most of you have encountered Globish on one level or another. It is a phenomenon in the English language that cannot be ignored. On the other hand, the large number of Global English varieties, which are chiefly influenced by the native languages of its speakers, make it a highly variable, non-standardized, and, most of all, spoken phenomenon.

As professional translators, we need to be able to identify Globish in written texts, know when advocating for the use of standard English is justified, and educate our clients accordingly. Dealing with the issues and situations surrounding Globish is not an exact science by any means and might get a little sticky at times, but using the tools suggested in this article can be a great help.

Notes
4. The authors of this article are German-English translators; hence, all examples refer to the German-English language pair.
5. The classification of error types was a bit tricky; typos encompass a large variety of errors.

The key is to know your source language situation and understand the client’s or author’s perspective.

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The first part of this two-part column was published in the October issue. I hope you enjoyed it, dear readers! As promised, please read on for the second and final installment for some procedural insight into civil depositions and information about how they work from the point of view of a court interpreter. This is not an exhaustive list by any stretch of the imagination, and I might come back with a third column at some point.

1. Most civil depositions can informally be divided into three parts in addition to the admonitions portion. Before any formal questions are asked, but after the parties (the deponent and the court interpreter) have been sworn in, the deposing counsel will go over a list of rules and procedures.

2. During the admonitions portion, the deposing attorney will remind the deponent that he or she needs to tell the truth, that the oath he or she took is the same as the one sworn in court, and that lying constitutes perjury, etc. The deponent is then reminded to answer all of the questions verbally and to refrain from nodding, as that gesture will not show up in the transcript that the court reporter will compile. The deponent has to acknowledge that he or she understands all of these rules.

3. The first portion of all depositions revolves around getting a deponent’s background information. Issues that are discussed usually include full name (be sure to write these down for the court reporter), other names used, date of birth, social security number (occasionally, the other party will object to this request), immigration status (objection!), work history, previous job responsibilities, and educational background. I am always amazed at the great detail that deponents are expected to give. Mostly, the deposing attorney is trying to establish a person’s identity, but in all honesty, I do not remember what I had for lunch last Wednesday, not to mention my exact employment dates or zip codes from 10 years ago. You will get a lot of “I don’t know” and “I don’t remember” responses here.

4. The second portion of any deposition usually has to do with the __________ (motor vehicle accident, slip-and-fall, etc.) in question. After you have done a few of these, you will begin to see a clear pattern of questions. Even highly experienced attorneys will sometimes have a prepared list of questions to make sure that they do not miss anything. For car accidents, there will be a lot of questions about speed. (Where were you? Where were you going, and in which direction? How many lanes were there? When did you first see the other car? Did you have time to brace yourself? Did you talk to the driver of the other car? Did you call the ambulance? Did the police come? What was the damage to your vehicle? How did you leave the scene of the accident?) Again, many deponents will not have the answers to these questions, and sometimes the deposing attorney will press the issue, making them seem a bit like pit bulls. It is occasionally a bit painful to witness, and if the deposing attorney is too aggressive, the deponent’s attorney might object and claim that he or she is harassing the deponent.

5. The third and final part of most of the civil depositions I have done focused on the deponent’s medical treatment, including doctors visited, dates of the visits, treatment received, frequency of treatment received, medications taken and/or prescribed, length of treatment, and questions about whether the treatment has been effective. Deponents are notoriously vague in their answers to this section (as usually instructed by their counsel), but deposing attorneys have very specific questions. Oftentimes, deponents are asked to rate their pain on a scale from 1 to 10, which many are either reluctant or unable to do. This section can include some quite repetitive-sounding questions.

Do you feel ready to interpret at civil depositions? I hope you find them to be as rewarding as I do.

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Is It Better to Market by E-mail or on Paper?

(Posted by Corinne McKay on her blog, Thoughts on Translation, http://thoughtsontranslation.com.)

Over the past six months or so, I have been experimenting (sometimes with my translation partner and sometimes on my own) with cold-marketing to potential direct clients. Because a great deal of our work is in a very targeted subject area (international development), it is not hard to find potential clients, but it is often hard to know how to contact them. Here are some thoughts on whether you are better off making the initial contact by e-mail or on paper. I am not even going to touch upon cold-calling because I am the worst phone salesperson ever. Ever. Really. But if you are interested in low-stress cold-calling, The Freelancery blog has some excellent scripts from which you can work.

The great thing about e-mail marketing is that:

It is fast. If you are reading a business news article and see a tidbit that shouts “potential client” to you, you can fire off the e-mail right there.

It is less formal. You can get away with “Just wanted to tell you that I loved staying at your inn this summer; if you are ever inclined to translate your website/marketing brochure/menu into English, I would love to talk,” whereas it would seem a little weird (at least to me) to print out a paper letter with that sentence and pop it in the mail.

The recipient can easily forward the message. I would say that at least half the time I cold-contact, I do not hit the right person on the first try. Especially with larger entities, it can be hard to tell who hires freelancers for the kind of work we do. But your prospect can quickly forward your message to the right person.

It is cheap. If you are looking at a paper marketing campaign to a few hundred prospects, the paper, envelopes, business cards, stamps, etc., add up over time.

But then again …

Unsolicited marketing e-mails always feel a little spammy. The person might just delete the message, or might receive so much e-mail that they just do not have time to respond. In some countries, sending unsolicited marketing e-mails may be technically illegal, and it is never fun to break the law to find new clients.

If you do not personalize your e-mail in some way, the recipients may assume that they were auto-generated, or that you are just sending the same blanket e-mail out to thousands of potential clients. And if you do personalize them, it takes time.

So what about good old paper? On the plus side:

In an era when most people’s postal mail is 95% ads and bills, a lot of people respond really favorably to something fun or personal in the mail. I know I do when I am on the receiving end; a client recently sent me a “thank you” postcard for a large rush project, and I pinned it on my bulletin board to inspire me when I sit down to translate.

It shows a classy touch. A marketing letter with a little handwritten note at the end and a business card enclosed is kind of the anti-spam.

The recipient has something tangible to keep. If the person needs your services months or years later, it is unlikely that they will be able to locate an e-mail, but if they keep a file of business cards in their desk, you are probably still in there.

You can write more. Not many people want to read a 400-word e-mail, but you can get away with a 400-word paper letter because it is still one page.

Nice postcards and brochures appeal to people who are visual. You really do not want to send a massive PDF to someone you do not know, but you can send them a cool postcard and they will love it.

But then again…

Paper marketing campaigns are time-consuming. In the time it takes to personalize a paper letter, print it, sign it, stuff an envelope with it and mail it, you could probably send out five quick e-mails.

Paper marketing campaigns can get expensive, at least compared to e-mail. Sending out marketing letters does not cost much, but if you get into fancy postcards or brochures, you could be spending as much as a dollar per potential client just for the printing, not to mention graphic design.

Paper marketing campaigns also require more research. It is pretty easy to find an e-mail contact on someone’s website, but sometimes you have to search for the right mailing address.

Continued on p. 31
The Summer Olympics were quite a show, but they were especially exciting for our family. My brother, Alberto Salazar, a past world marathon record-holder, made a splash when the coaching of his two runner protégés, Mo Farah and Galen Rupp, paid off; the former winning gold in both the 10K and the 5K, and the latter a silver in the 10K. Their hard-earned triumph caused me to reflect on certain theoretical parallels that exist between training for an athletic career and training to become an interpreter.

Following Your Natural Aptitudes: If you want to be good at what you do, by default you should choose to engage in something that comes easily to avoid rowing against the current. If you stand out as a sprinter, for instance, you will focus on shorter running events rather than long-distance races. As an interpreter, you may decide to become a specialist in legal terminology and work for the courts, or to become a medical interpreter, or to switch gears every day by interpreting at conferences on different subjects, depending on your intellectual predilections.

Selecting the Best Coach: Once you have made the choice, find the best coach you can in the area of expertise you have identified for yourself. You may have to work with that person for a while to ensure that he or she is the right individual to mentor you. Assuming that you click with a mentor and your goals are aligned, apply yourself and learn as much as you can. Remember the axiom, “no pain, no gain,” but do not be afraid to switch mentors if you are stagnating.

Simulating the Optimal Environment: My brother operates the Oregon Project for Nike, which seeks, through the use of equipment and technology, to emulate physically the conditions in which top long-distance runners outside of the U.S. live, concentrating on factors such as climate, high altitude, and oxygen levels. Alberto’s runners live and train in this replicated environment (e.g., staying in reduced-oxygen rooms or sleeping tents, using underwater treadmills to increase training miles while reducing injuries). Likewise, interpreters-in-training must immerse themselves, to the extent possible, in the type of settings where they plan to work so that they have a realistic outlook of what it takes to achieve the skills needed to succeed. This can be accomplished by shadowing other interpreters in court or in medical settings, or by interning for a company that will allow you to attend conferences in some capacity as part of your training.

Practice—Where the Tire Hits the Road: There is no cutting corners. This is what will determine your success or lack thereof, and there are several components to it. You must be steadfast in your exercises. You cannot expect to have satisfactory results from half-hearted attempts. You must set aside the time to train and make sure you are employing the right techniques. Watching replays is key, both in the sports world as well as in the interpreting world. Thankfully, technology has advanced to a level where we can monitor the output of excellent interpreters through the Internet and pick up invaluable pointers. It is also important to have the right mental attitude despite lulls in your enthusiasm, to do visualization exercises just like all athletes, to use the right gear, and to have the right nutrition plan. For interpreters, using the right equipment can mean dedicated glossaries, dictionaries, computers, or simultaneous interpreting equipment. If you do not practice with the tools available, you are working at a disadvantage compared to colleagues who aim to be at the top of their game.

A Man Is Known by the Company He Keeps: If you wish to improve in your chosen career, then you must keep your spirits high, remain on track, and associate with positive, like-minded people who enjoy the same activity. For the athlete as well as the interpreter, this means spending time with committed individuals who will support your goals, be it through professional running clubs or inter-

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interpreting associations that strive to develop the interests of their members through a forum that will benefit the collective in an efficient way that is difficult to attain individually.

Do Not Rest on Your Laurels: Lastly, never become complacent. Always be on the lookout for ways to expand your skill set and help others. I am inspired by my sibling, who won three consecutive New York Marathons and a Boston Marathon in the 1980s. The Rookie, as he was called, delivered on a prediction that he would set a world record in the New York City Marathon in 1981, breaking the 12-year-old world marathon record with a run time of 2:08.13. He followed that up, 14 years later, with a win at the Comrades Ultramarathon (56 miles) in South Africa. Presently, he devotes himself to sharing his accumulated expertise with today’s up and coming athletes, leading them to victory.

As interpreters, we have many options available to follow suit, from improving our own competence, to providing support and assistance to those colleagues interested in our help. Pitch in and become involved, because there is a lot to be said for giving back!

Notes
Dennis McKenna’s *Criminal Court Dictionary/English-Spanish/Español-Ingles* will be of use to a broad spectrum of translators, interpreters, attorneys, and others who work with Spanish and English, as well as an invaluable tool for Spanish-language court interpreters practicing in the United States. McKenna states on the dictionary’s back cover that, “... this convenient edition provides legal and crime-related terms, available nowhere else, within the covers of just one clear, accurate, and practical book.” His opus delivers on this promise to an impressive degree.

This dictionary is chock full of legal terms relating to criminal procedure, so all linguists who work with Spanish, English, and criminal court terminology should find it beneficial. It also contains an extremely rich array of colloquial, slang, and crime-related terminology, which is critical to persons who interpret, transcribe, and/or translate proceedings, defendant or witness interviews, tape transcriptions, or other communications in which this type of language crops up regularly.

Following a brief introduction and a list of abbreviations, you will find approximately 9,000 entries divided into two sections (English-Spanish and Spanish-English), of which the former is about 50% longer than the latter. It is not clear why the title contains the phrase “Español-Inglés” (in Spanish), whereas the second half of the dictionary is called “Spanish-English” within the body of the work.

The English-Spanish section includes most of the legal terminology used regularly in U.S. criminal court proceedings. A sampling of entries is listed here. (Please note that in the examples given in this review the symbol “=" means “defined as.”)

“abiding conviction” = convicción perdurable

“judgment of acquittal” = fallo absolutorio, sentencia absolutoria

“adversarial system of justice” = sistema judicial contencioso, sistema judicial acusatorio

“crime of moral turpitude” = delito de vileza moral, delito de conducta inmoral

“deferred entry of judgment (DEJ)” = resolución judicial postergada, acuerdo para retirar los cargos después de un periodo de prueba

“entrapment” = delito inducido, inducción/incitación a la comisión de un delito, inducción dolosa

“evidentiary stage (of a criminal case)” = fase probatoria [sic: this should be fase probatoria] (del proceso penal)

A number of entries contain helpful explanations, which are generally inserted in brackets. For example:

“affirmative defense” = defensa de fondo [sin negar los hechos en que se basa la acusación, esta defensa mantiene que no constituye un delito]

“affirmative statute” = ley afirmativa [ley que ordena una conducta determinada en vez de prohibir alguna conducta]

“diversion (program)” = (programa de) desviación, (Mex) tratamiento en libertad, tratamiento de deshabitación o desintoxicación [Desviar la causa del sistema judicial hacia un programa de rehabilitación o desha-
bituación de drogas (o de otro tipo) en el cual el acusado se compromete a cumplir con una serie [sic: this should be serie] de condiciones durante un periodo determinado y después del fallo condenatorio será borrado de su expediente ...

“plea agreement” = (oral) acuerdo condenatorio, (written) convenio declaratorio [entre la fiscalía y la defensa para la declaración de culpabilidad]

This dictionary also includes a host of law enforcement terms, such as “breathalyzer” = alcoholímetro and “cop a plea” = declararse culpable de un delito menos grave (“take a deal”), that judiciary interpreters need to have on the tip of their tongues in both languages.

Information on regional Spanish-language terminology is detailed and extensive in the case of Mexican Spanish. For example:

“constitutional right(s)” = derecho(s) constitucional(es), (Mex) garantías individuales

“cruel and unusual punishment” = castigo cruel e excepcional, pena cruel e inusual, (Mex/Leg) penas inusitadas y trascendentales

“down payment” = depósito, pago inicial, (Mex) enganche

In addition, a great many Mexican Spanish slang terms and phrases are defined that are useful to court interpreters who interpret for Mexicans.

Areas for Improvement

Three areas in which this dictionary is less than entirely satisfactory are: 1) filler words (general terms that need not be included in a specialized dictionary); 2) information on non-Mexican varieties of Spanish; and 3) immigration terminology.

Filler Words

The following are examples of entries addressing terms that are probably general enough to be considered filler words:

“daughter-in-law” = nuela
“death” = muerte, defunción
“et. al.” = (Latin) y otros
“factor” = elemento, factor
“fax” = fax; (v.) mandar un fax
“fiancée” = prometida, novia
“firefighter” = bombera
“follow” = seguir (instrucciones, etc.)

On both a theoretical and a practical level, a valid question is where one should draw the line between specialized and general terminology. Since criminal court matters can touch on practically all aspects of human existence, it can be argued that there is no clear-cut boundary between “criminal court” and “general” language, so the above terms should not be considered filler words but necessary entries in a criminal court dictionary. Naturally, one can also advance the argument that the terms/meanings listed above are sufficiently general to be left to general dictionaries to define, so they need not take up valuable space in a dictionary that readers believe is specialized.

Regional Terms

Regional Spanish terms and phrases used outside of Mexico are considerably less well represented in this dictionary than are their Mexican counterparts. For example, let’s examine the entry “sidewalk” = acera, (Mex) banqueta, (C.A.) andén. The entry does not mention that banqueta is also used in this sense in Guatemala; that andén is not used throughout Central America but, rather, within that region, primarily in El Salvador; that outside of Central America, andén is also frequently used in Colombia; and that vereda is used in all Spanish American countries that lie south of Colombia. Although sidewalks invariably come up in descriptions of incidents that occur on streets, one may also question whether this term pertains to criminal court terminology or whether it is more properly assigned to general terminology, in which case it need not be included in McKenna’s dictionary.

In another example, the entry for “police” = policía; (Mex/inf) la chota, placas, la tira, la jura does not mention the fact that la chota is also used in El Salvador. It also does not mention other informal equivalents such as la cana (Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina), la chonta (Guatemala), la jara (Cuba, Puerto Rico), and la fiama (Cuba). And the entry for “prostitute” = prostituta, (inf/pej) puta; (Mex/inf/pej) talonera, guila, huila omits regional synonyms such as cuero (Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico), flauta (Bolivia), fleje (Puerto Rico), fletera and jinetera (Cuba), loca (Peru, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina), patín (Chile), peperecha (Guatemala), trotona (Spain), and yira, yira, and yiranta (Argentina, Uruguay).

It should be noted, however, that the U.S. census figures released in 2006 indicate that Hispanics and people of Mexican origin account for 64% of Hispanics living in the U.S., and they most likely make up an even higher percentage of Hispanics in Texas,
California, and many other Western states. Therefore, at least to the extent to which court interpreters practicing in the U.S. are the book’s primary target audience, the extensive dialectal information on Mexican Spanish that McKenna provides in this dictionary is extremely useful.

**Immigration Terminology**

The immigration consequences of U.S. criminal court proceedings are of the utmost importance to defendants who are either lawful permanent residents or undocumented, as so many have only too painfully come to learn after entering into a plea agreement that their criminal defense attorney, most often a public defender, convinced them was a good deal. This issue is alluded to in McKenna’s realistic and witty definition of “dump truck”: “... *abogado defensor que nunca va a juicio porque aconseja a su cliente aceptar cualquier arreglo con la fiscalía ...”

Unfortunately, some of the terminology and references contained in this dictionary that relate to immigration issues are outdated and/or inaccurate. For example, we have “INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) = Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización, ya conocido como el Servicio de Ciudadanía e Inmigración de Estados Unidos” [emphasis added], (inf) la “migra” >> *Department of Homeland Security*. The INS ceased to exist in 2003 when the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created. DHS consists of several agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE, generally pronounced like ice) and Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS, pronounced c-i-s). Of these two agencies, it is ICE, not CIS, that assumed many of the functions of the former INS relating to the enforcement of immigration laws and the prosecution of immigration violations. Therefore, in an entry such as “El Centro (INS detention center)” = (n.) *Centro de Detención de El Centro (California)*, the term “INS” should be changed to “DHS” or “ICE” and should read “DHS detention center” or “ICE detention center.”

**Overall Evaluation**

Despite these minor quibbles, whose validity in some cases may be subject to debate, I highly recommend Dennis McKenna’s *Criminal Court Dictionary/English-Spanish/Español-Ingles*. With a veritable treasure trove of information, the dictionary is an invaluable tool kit for court interpreters and others who deal with Spanish-English criminal court terminology.
Dictionary of Mexicanismos / Slang, Colloquialisms, and Expressions Used in Mexico (Second Edition)

Reviewed by: Andre Moskowitz

Author: Dennis McKenna

Publisher: Adelfa Books www.adelfabooks.com

Publication date: 2006

ISBN: 978-0-97608001-2-1

Price: $24.95, plus $5.75 shipping and handling

Available from: InTrans Book Service intransbooks.com

Dennis McKenna’s Dictionary of Mexicanismos / Slang, Colloquialisms, and Expressions Used in Mexico (Second Edition) contains a smorgasbord of Mexican slang terms and phrases not found in the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española or other general Spanish-language dictionaries, and this alone will make it useful to those whose professional, social, or cultural activities make knowing the ins and outs of Mexican lingo advantageous or de rigueur. This review’s primary focus, however, will be on the dictionary’s treatment of more mainstream Mexican Spanish terminology.

The dictionary is divided into a Spanish-English section, consisting of about 4,200 entries, followed by a much shorter English-Spanish section with about 1,100 entries. The Spanish-English section translates the Mexican Spanish headwords (terms placed at the beginning of dictionary entries, called lemas in Spanish) with their U.S. English equivalents. The English-Spanish section, which functions as an index, goes in the opposite direction. The headwords of all the entries are in boldface and the text is easy to read.

Defining “Mexicanisms”

A practical and theoretical issue is how to define the term mexicanismo or “Mexicanism,” which is something McKenna appears to do in the first sentence of the dictionary’s preface: “Mexicanismos are words and colloquial expressions that are unique to Mexico” [emphasis on unique added]. Despite this stated premise, a great many terms and expressions defined in McKenna’s dictionary are used in several different Spanish-speaking countries. Some are even used in a majority of the Spanish-speaking countries, often, though not always, with the regional specification “(LatAm).”

A more advantageous inclusion criterion, and one that McKenna may have consciously or unconsciously used in many cases, would be to define a mexicanismo as a term used in less than 50% of the Spanish-speaking countries (i.e., in nine or fewer), with Mexico being one of those countries. This would allow a lexicographer compiling a Mexican Spanish dictionary to include regionalisms used in a minority of Spanish-speaking countries, one of which is Mexico. It would also mean that such a dictionary would include a large number of non-general Spanish terms (i.e., regionally marked linguistic elements) that are unfamiliar to a broad range of non-Mexican Spanish speakers. To put it another way, it would allow those of us who are not Mexicans or are not intimately familiar with Mexican Spanish to have a reference tool that provides us with terms and phrases we need to know in order to communicate effectively with Mexicans. Although this criterion can be difficult to apply since it requires the lexicographer compiling the dictionary to have conducted dialectal research on the Spanish language from a global perspective, it will be the standard used in this review to determine whether or not a term should be included in McKenna’s dictionary.

I examined the larger Spanish-English section and tested it on a more or less random sample of 50 regional terms commonly used in Mexico that begin with the letters a, b, or c. Below are two lists. The first contains Mexican regionalisms that are included in McKenna’s dictionary, and the second contains those that are not.

Mexican Regionalisms Defined in McKenna’s Dictionary of Mexicanismos

acordeón: cheat sheet
acta de nacimiento: birth certificate

afanador: janitor

agujeta: shoelace
Observation: There is no entry for cinta, which is used in several northern Mexican states for “shoelace.”

alberca: swimming pool

albur: off-color remark or pun involving a double entendre, generally with crude sexual connotations

alto: stop sign || red light
Observation: The phrase pasarse un alto (‘to run a stop sign’) is also listed.

¡ándale!: go ahead! || keep going! || hurry up! || yeah, sure. || really! || right on! || exactly!

apagador: (light) switch

aventón: lift, ride in a car || push, shove
Observation: Raite, used to mean “lift, ride a car,” is also an entry.

banqueta: sidewalk

bardo: stone or masonry wall

betabel: beet

bocina: speaker (e.g., of a stereo) || receiver, handset (of a telephone)
Observation: McKenna characterizes bocina (‘receiver’) as Snd (Standard) usage (i.e., General Spanish usage), but the existence of auricular and tubo (‘receiver’) suggests that bocina (‘receiver’) is regional rather than majority usage.

bolero: shoe shine boy

botana: snack, appetizer, hors d’oeuvres
Observation: The use of botana (‘person who is the butt of a joke’) is also referenced, but the verb botaneo (‘to eat snacks or appetizers’) is missing and should be an entry.

briago: drunk
Observation: The dictionary lists this term only as an adjective, but briago (‘drunkard’) can also be a noun.

bueno: hello (used when answering the telephone)

buró: nightstand

cacahuata: peanut

cachucha: (baseball) cap

cairel: corkscrew shaped curl of hair, ringlet

cajeta: (Mexican) dulce de leche

cajuela: trunk of a car

camellón: median, center divider, traffic island

camión: bus

carriola: baby carriage, stroller

cascarita: pickup game (e.g., of soccer)

cerillo: match (for lighting a fire) || boy who bags groceries (at a supermarket)
Observation: The first usage of this entry has the regional specification “(also C.A.),” which implies that cerillo (‘match’) is used in Central America. However, fósforo is the preferred term for this item in all Spanish-speaking countries with two notable exceptions: Mexico (cerillo) and Spain (cerilla).

chabacano: apricot || tacky, bad taste, common
Observation: The second usage, “tacky, bad taste,” is listed in the dictionary as Snd usage (i.e., non-regional usage), but the term also appears in the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española without any regional specification. However, this usage appears to be far from universal.

chamarra: jacket

charola: tray || badge (of a police officer or other official)

chicharo: pea

chino: curly (referring to hair)
Observation: The dictionary does not list chino (‘curler’) or ponerse chinito (‘to get goose bumps’).

chipote: bump (on a person’s head)

chongo: hair worn in a bun

ciudad perdida: shantytown, slum, favela
Observation: Paracaidista (‘squatter’) is also an entry.

colonia: neighborhood, residential area, section of a city

corcholeta: cap (of a bottle)

¡córrele!: go for it!
Observation: ¡Córrele! should be translated as “hurry up!” or “move it!” rather than “go for it!”.

cruda: hangover

cruzo: hung over
cuate: guy || buddy || twin

cubeta: pail, bucket

**Mexican Regionalisms Not Defined in McKenna’s Dictionary of Mexicanismos**

Missing from McKenna’s dictionary are the following regionally weighted terms, also beginning with the letters a, b, or c.

**ayuntamiento**: city hall || city council

*Observation:* In other countries “city hall” is referred to as the alcaldía, intendencia, or municipalidad, while “city council” is called the consejo municipal or corporación municipal. McKenna’s dictionary has an entry for presidencia municipal, another Mexican synonym of “city hall,” and its related term, presidente municipal (“mayor”), although palacio municipal (“city hall”) is missing.

**bastilla**: hem

*Observation:* This is called a bajo, basta, bota, botamanga, botapié, falso, or ruedo elsewhere, and/or by its General Spanish equivalent, dobladillo. The Mexican term valenciana (“type of hem that is folded outwards, French style”) is also missing.

**broche**: barrette, hair clip

*Observation:* This is called a bincha/ vincha, gancho, hebilla, horquilla, prensapelo, or presilla elsewhere.

cachondo: horny

*Observation:* Equivalents used elsewhere are alborotado, azado, arrecho, bellaco, berrincho, birrondo, cachudo, calentón, caliente, embramado, quesudo, recho, salido, veraneado, or volado. Although our repertoire in English is no doubt not limited to merely “horny” and “randy,” we would probably be hard-pressed to come up with as impressive an array of colloquial regional synonyms. If so, what does that tell us?

claxon: horn (of an automobile)

*Observation:* This is referred to as a bocina, clauso, corneta, fotuto, or pito elsewhere.

**comida**: lunch

*Observation:* The General Spanish equivalent is almuerzo. Comer (“to have lunch”) is also missing. The dictionary lists almuerzo (“breakfast”), although in many regions of Mexico almuerzo is a late breakfast or mid-morning snack, often eaten in addition to desayuno. McKenna also lists comida corrida (“meal consisting of several items sold at a set price”).

**Overall Evaluation**

One can argue that the six missing terms listed above are all basic enough to be included in a dictionary that addresses Mexican regional usage. Yet one should not be too critical. Of the 50 Mexican regionalisms assessed here, 44 are entries in McKenna’s dictionary, and almost all of these are translated correctly. This is an impressive proportion by almost any dictionary standard, and one that could be higher if a different sample of Mexican regionalisms were selected, or if we factored in the sub-issues addressed above. Overall, Dennis McKenna’s dictionary is one of the best of its kind. Since it has a large number of Mexican regionalisms that are translated accurately, I highly recommend it.

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**Scam Alert Websites**

Federal Bureau of Investigation
The Internet Crime Complaint Center

National White Collar Crime Center
www.nw3c.org
I cannot find my most recent issue of this magazine listing the members who have achieved ATA certification in a language pair, but I warmly congratulate the first individuals to pass the English-Swedish certification exam. I am well aware of the hard work it took to make certification exams available in this language pair. Kudos all around to ATA’s Certification Committee and to the many dedicated volunteers for making this happen!

New Queries

(English-Swedish 11-12.1) There is no way that the Translation Inquirer is going to present the entire tapeworm patent sentence for this query, but “bucket head end” is the tricky term here. Abridged, it looks like this: “... wherein the at least one pressure sensor includes a bucket head end pressure sensor electrically coupled to the electronic controller and adapted to produce a bucket head end pressure signal indicative of the pressure at the head end of the bucket cylinder ...” Can anyone give this a try?

(German-English 11-12.2) In a context of coronary angiography, what could the abbreviation prox. kl. RIM mean? The final acronym might possibly mean ramus intermedium, but that is just a guess. The translator posing the query was particular vexed that is just a guess. The translator posing this query had no way that the Translation Inquirer is going to present the entire tapeworm patent sentence for this query, but “bucket head end” is the tricky term here. Abridged, it looks like this: “... wherein the at least one pressure sensor includes a bucket head end pressure sensor electrically coupled to the electronic controller and adapted to produce a bucket head end pressure signal indicative of the pressure at the head end of the bucket cylinder ...” Can anyone give this a try?

(English-Swedish 11-12.3) It seems that no easy solution is available to discover what is meant by Durchlaufgeländer in this mechanical engineering query. Here is some context: Durchlaufgeländer von den Bolzen schieben und nach oben abheben; das zur Sorte passende Durchlaufgeländer einsetzen und auf die Bolzen schieben. English is acceptable as an answer, although the original query did not involve English.

(Norwegian-English 11-12.5) The risk in deciding to become a translator is that you will eventually encounter words like the one in bold print in this query: Den riskørette årspremien, inkludert administrasjonskostnader og administrasjonsreservepremie, og engangspremier ved pensjonstilfelles innreden, skal i en fellesordning utnevnes i forhold til pensjonsgrunnlaget.

(New Queries)

(Italian-Croatian [English] 11-12.4) It would seem that we have too much information for this query; actually, too much context. But the legal term causing the trouble is tribunale di riesame, and I will quote almost the first half of the paragraph provided, in the expectation that it will yield enough clues: Nel diritto processuale penale italiano, il riesame, previsto e disciplinato dall’ar. 309 del c.p.p., è un mezzo d’impugnazione concesso al solo destinatario di una misura cautelare coercitiva e a suo difensore. Segue ad una richiesta dall’indagato o dal suo difensore. L’organo competente è il tribunale del riesame. Sounds like a court-like body. English is acceptable as an answer, although the original query did not involve English.

(Portuguese-Spanish [English] 11-12.8) In the world of minerals and gems, English is acceptable as an answer to rendering carro grelha, although the original query did not involve English. The (presumably continental) Portuguese original reads: O empregado XXXX, mecânico montador, com auxílio de dois outros empregados realizava manualmente o ajuste do eixo da roda de abaxamento do carro grelha, durante a rotação do eixo teve sua mão esquerda prensada entre o eixo e a parte fixa do chute.

(Russian-English 11-12.9) The Translation Inquirer is absolutely certain that forensic handwriting has never been the subject of a query before on his watch. Here it is: форма движения при выполнении правой части надстроочной петли росчерка. The final five words pose the difficulty.

(Ukrainian-English 11-12.10) The adjective and noun in the lengthy geological sentence below are what caused the translator who posed this query to have a problem: Перська (P) система представлена низьким відділом. Нижньоперські осадові утворення повністю знищені передтриасовим розмивом на всіх припідняттях ділянках і мають розвиток у повному обсязі лише на крилах структур та в прогинах, які їх розділяють.
Replies to Old Queries
(English-Polish 6-12.3) (cookies): Christine Pawlowski searched in an information-technology dictionary and found ciasteczko as the singular, so it follows that ciasteczka has to be the proper plural.

(English-Spanish 8-12.3) (mid-term survival): Gema Aparicio believes that this is best expressed as supervivencia a medio plazo.

(Russian-English 8-12.11) (перекос штампов, сдвиг осей): Marie J. Hall reports that the former is “misalignment of dies” or “stamps,” and the latter is “shift” or “displacement of axles (or pins).”

Please do not be disappointed if your reply is not here. I am not eager to present to the membership a column with as few replies as we had a month ago, so I have held back four very good e-mails in the hope that they will adorn the next issue. Remember, patience is a virtue. (cito)

E-mail queries and responses by the first of each month to jdecker@uplink.net (subject line: The Translation Inquirer). Generous assistance from Per Dohler, proofreader, is gratefully acknowledged.

**ATA Scholarly Monograph Series XVII**

**From the Classroom to the Courtroom: A Guide to Interpreting in the U.S. Justice System**

Edited by Elena M. de Jongh

John Benjamins Publishing Company

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

As readers of this magazine know all too well, translators and interpreters are among the most under-appreciated professionals around. But two recent books aim to change this. Both are about the importance of translation and interpreting to civilization, and they might succeed in changing perceptions if they achieve a readership wider than the translation and interpreting community itself.

The books are *Is That A Fish In Your Ear?* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2011) and *Found in Translation* (New York: Perigee/Penguin USA, 2012). The first is subtitled “Translation and the Meaning of Everything” and the second is subtitled “How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms The World.” The two books complement each other. The first, by David Bellos, director of the Program in Translation and Intercultural Communication at Princeton University, attempts nothing less than to explain how translation can be equated to both meaning and the human condition. The second, by Nataly Kelly, chief research officer at Common Sense Advisory, a market research firm dedicated to language services and technology, and Jost Zetzsche, a professional English-German translator and a fellow columnist for this magazine (“GeekSpeak”), has real-world stories about the many important things individual translators do (including Ronnie Apter and me).

The fish in the first title is the Babel fish, the fictional universal translator you stick in your ear described in *A Hitchhiker’s Guide To The Galaxy* by Douglas Adams. While Kelly and Zetzsche state that translation “prevents wars” (xiii), Adams imagines that the accurate translations of the Babel fish caused more wars than anything else in history.

Both nonfiction books are written with a light touch, thereby providing grist for this column. Reviews will undoubtedly appear elsewhere, so I will only be presenting some of the funny bits here.

Bellos devotes a whole chapter to the translation of humor. Here is his example, somewhat shortened by me, of a joke that is easily adaptable to different languages and cultures:

Stalin and Roosevelt, arguing about whose bodyguard was more loyal, ordered their bodyguards to jump out of a 15th-story window. Roosevelt’s bodyguard refused, saying, “I’m thinking of my family’s future.” Stalin’s bodyguard jumped to his death. “Why did he do that?” Roosevelt asked. “He was also thinking of his family’s future,” replied Stalin. (274)

As an example of a joke that is harder to translate, Bellos describes a visiting card mentioned in Georges Perec’s *Life: A User’s Manual*: “Adolf Hitler: *Foureur*” (279). *Foureur*, the French word for “furrier,” is a play on Hitler’s actual German title, *Führer*, meaning “leader.” Bellos’ solution is “Adolf Hitler: German *Lieder,*” where *Lieder* means “songs” and is a play on “leader.”

Many of the funny bits in *Found in Translation* involve either mistranslations or the additions or changes the translator or interpreter made to make the meaning clear.

For example, when Nataly Kelly was interpreting romantic telephone calls between an Ohio man and a Colombia woman, the closest the man came to saying what he meant was, “Do you remember … when we couldn’t say goodbye at the end of the trip the way we wanted to?” This left the Colombia woman in the dark until Kelly added, “… because you were having your period?” (125).

The book explains why Sierra Mist soda is not sold in Germany, and why Clairoi’s Mist Stick did not sell well there either. The reason: “Mist” in German means “manure” (139).

Kelly and Zetzsche give this real-world example of a text that represents a brain-busting translation problem:

A lavender-lovely Fergie asks us to enter a new kind of dreamscape, to feel the “Yes, we can!” of tomorrow, and to push forward on behalf of...
every man, woman, and child affected by HIV/AIDS. (142)

Mistranslations can do many strange things, according to Kelly and Zetzsche, including the creation of a new character in a video game. A particular kind of blow, the Rising Dragon Punch, was mistranslated in the 1991 arcade version of the Japanese video game Street Fighter II as a new character named Sheng Long. Rumors from some gamers that they had actually found this nonexistent character, together with Electronic Gaming Monthly’s detailed description of how to find him in the April 1992 issue, later revealed to be an April Fool’s gag, cost many players many fruitless hours of searching (181-182).

Another bit from Found in Translation concerns the fact that, as every tourist knows, signs in fractured English are rife in China. Despite a campaign before the 2008 Beijing Olympics to purge the city of such signs, a year after the Olympics tourists could still read, and take pictures of, signs reading, “Do not put toilet pepper in toilet,” and, “Fire extinguisher box” (on a fire extinguisher box) (197).

Upcoming Events

January 3-6, 2013
Modern Language Association
128th Annual Convention
Boston, MA
www.mla.org/convention

January 18-20, 2013
International Medical Interpreters Association
Annual Conference
Miami Beach, FL
www.imiaweb.org/conferences

January 25-27, 2013
ATA Translation Company
Division Conference
13th ATA-TCD Conference
Orlando, FL
www.ata-tcd.com

May 17-19, 2013
National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators
34th Annual Conference
St. Louis, MO
www.najit.org

Now Available in Russian and Spanish!
Translation, Getting it Right

Since its launch in the U.K. in 2001, more than 175,000 copies of Translation, Getting it Right have been distributed in print format. This prize-winning mini-guide is for translation buyers interested in spending their budget wisely—it is the perfect client education tool. Now you can download the guide in two more languages:

Russian
www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right_trans_ru.pdf

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Translation: Getting it Right is available in seven other languages: Catalan, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese. Translation into Chinese, Japanese, and Greek is underway.

Translation: Getting it Right is available in seven other languages: Catalan, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese. Translation into Chinese, Japanese, and Greek is underway.
The following language services providers have been named among the 5,000 fastest growing private companies in the U.S. by *Inc.* magazine.

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<th>Language Services Provider</th>
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<tr>
<td>1-Stop Translation USA</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
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<td>CETRA, Inc.</td>
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<td>Language Services Associates</td>
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<td>Cohoes, NY</td>
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<td>U.S. Translation Company</td>
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The *Inc.* 5000 list represents companies that have had significant revenue growth over three consecutive years, are independent and privately held, and are based in the United States.

**New Certified Members**

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

**German into English**
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- Kelly R. Neudorfer
  - Tübingen, Germany
- Kenneth A. Richstad
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  - Sultan, WA
- Neil A. Stephens
  - Fletcher, NC

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