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**Tony Beckwith** was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, spent his formative years in Montevideo, Uruguay, then set off to see the world. He came to Texas in 1980 and currently lives in Austin, where he works as a writer, translator, poet, and cartoonist. Contact: tony@tonybeckwith.com.

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**Giles Watson** is a full-time freelance Italian-English translator. He has been the translation coordinator and editor for Gambino Rosso’s Italian Wines (Vini d’Italia) guide since 2001. In addition, he has been translating for the Corriere della Sera on a daily basis since 2003. He has collaborated with Italian writer Beppe Severgnini, initially as an advisor on Severgnini’s L’inglese, lezioni semierte and subsequently as the translator of An Italian in America and Mammo Mia! Berlusconi’s Italy Explained to Posteity and Friends Abroad. He has a degree in modern and medieval languages from the University of Cambridge. Contact: gileswatson@gmail.com.

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As an umbrella group working to assist other groups in their efforts to bring much needed language services to the powerless and to help the powerful appreciate the importance of language services, ATA has placed the power of language at the core of its mission. A few recent events reminded me of this amazing power and of the importance of our everyday work as linguists.

In March of this year, I represented ATA at the conference of the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) in Miami. As an event that focuses on technology and business management, GALA’s conference brought together some 250 owners and representatives of translation and localization companies. The majority of program sessions and exhibits focused on machine translation and cloud-based tools for processing large amounts of text in multiple languages. The lively conversations with company owners from all over the world provided new insight on the business of language, in which freelance contractors are considered just one part of a large supply chain. It was a learning experience to see my work as a freelancer from the perspective of project managers and company owners and to explore tools such as GeoWorkz from the buyer side. The work in a single language combination that fills my entire workday is just one part of a large supply chain.

In the same conference, a presentation by Maya Hess about the nonprofit organization Red T highlighted a completely different area of application for language in translation that is equally tied to questions of power. Red T, which was founded to protect translators and interpreters in high-risk settings, maintains a database of incidents in which linguists were attacked in various ways for doing their work. The vision of the organization is to have linguists working in conflict zones designated as humanitarian personnel, wearing a red T to show their protected status in the same manner as Red Cross staff.

Such protected-person status, however, has to go hand in hand with a paradigm shift in how translators and interpreters are perceived in these contexts,” says Hess. “As it stands now, linguists in war zones and detention camps are confronted with varying degrees of distrust. They are labeled traitors for collaborating with foreign armies and are under threat from all sides.”

As I learned next, the same systems that drive up the output capacity of translation companies can also be used in a different context. The international nonprofit organization Translators without Borders links translators to non-governmental organizations involved in health, nutrition, and education. The organization currently translates about nine million words a year, but believes the use of an open digital platform and additional organizational resources may allow for an annual volume of 10 million words to meet the heavy demand. “Knowledge is power,” says the organization’s founder, Lori Thicke. “It saves lives, lifts people out of poverty, ensures better health and nutrition, and creates and maintains economies—as long as it’s in the right language.” ATA could not have said it better.
As a teacher for the next generation of translators and interpreters, professionalism is a common theme in all of my classes. I bring my students articles from *The ATA Chronicle*, share discussions from the ATA Business Practices list, and refresh the curriculum with tidbits I inevitably pick up from ATA’s Annual Conference. And like all good teachers, I try to model the good habits I want students to develop: honing translation skills every day, but also developing good professional habits.

Our reading list includes standard offerings from our translator and interpreter colleagues, both theoretical and practical, but my students also study selections from the business world. These works universally encourage readers to maximize their investment of time and money by making sure that connections and networking opportunities happen. Over the years, I have learned that there are certain things you can do to increase the likelihood of those serendipitous connections.

1. **Stay in the conference hotel.** While planning to attend my first ATA conference, I thought that I would save money by staying in a hotel just across the street. I did not reckon with how much time it would take to go between hotels, how heavy my bag would get by the end of the day, and how much I would envy those folks who had a chance to run upstairs to freshen up quickly. A missed connection is a missed opportunity. Underestimating the time it would take to run back and forth to my hotel meant I missed meeting up with colleagues, which lead to staying in by myself one evening. No surprise, then, that it was those colleagues who were called first, their names firmly planted in their client’s mind over coffee and Mississippi mud pie.

2. **Spring for that exorbitantly priced drink.** You are chatting with a fellow attendee in the session room as you fill out the evaluation form. Walking out, she mentions that she is meeting up with some colleagues in the hotel bar and extends an invitation to join them. The penny-pincher devil on your shoulder tells you that the markup on that glass of wine makes it more expensive than an entire bottle from Trader Joe’s. But listen to the angel on your other shoulder: you are not buying wine, you are creating an opportunity to connect.

3. **Upgrade to business class.** Not only will you have a little bit more leg room and less stress, with the added bonus of special lanes for security clearance and boarding, the people seated next to you are much more likely to be business travelers—exactly the kind of people with whom you want to connect. Note that airlines frequently offer upgrades to business class for a relatively low amount at check-in, usually starting around $50 (depending on the length of the trip).

At first glance, all this may seem like reckless spending. I would put to you that it is a sound investment in your professional development and business. And it is not just me: Uncle Sam agrees, and reminds you to save your receipts for your business taxes. The investment of being in the center of the action, and the time spent lingering over a Chablis will pay off in spades in the years to come.

Now is the time to make your travel arrangements. Book the flights and reserve your hotel room—at ATA’s discounted rate. If you are looking to share a room (a networking opportunity in pajamas!), be sure to check out the roommate matching blog, linked from the conference site (http://ata roommate-sanantonio.blogspot.com). I look forward to running into you in the lobby, hallways, and bar of the conference hotel in San Antonio!
The U.S. is under cyber attack, every minute of every day. That’s why cyberspace has become today’s new front line. What you know can make a difference at the National Security Agency. Whether it’s collecting foreign intelligence or preventing foreign adversaries from accessing U.S. secrets, you can protect the nation by putting your intelligence to work. Explore technology that’s years ahead of the private sector. Plus exciting career fields, paid internships, co-op and scholarship opportunities. See how you can be a part of our tradition of excellence and help the nation stay a step ahead of the cyber threat.

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

Far from Ordinary

KNOWING MATTERS

WHERE INTELLIGENCE GOES TO WORK®
ATA’s online Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services and Directory of Language Services Companies are accessed daily by clients looking for contractors. While anyone can search the directories for free, only ATA members are featured.

These profiles are a golden opportunity to market your services. Over 60% of the members report getting a job through their online directory profile.

Make the time to update your profile.

- Review the more than 125 areas of specialization offered in the online directory. Then look back over the past 12 months and consider whether any of your services expanded your expertise into a new specialty that can be added to your profile. (For your reference, the results of the “2012 Top 10 Searches” below show which areas of specialization are accessed most frequently.)

- Be sure to include details of your services in the Additional Information field of the questionnaire. Buyers do use the Keyword Search, particularly for dialects and more specific areas of expertise, to find the skill set they need for their particular job.

- Finally, be sure to update the Tools section of your profile. We have heard from company owners that individuals list “None” when they really do use some of the programs that owners prefer.

Do not miss out on simple fixes like these to get the most out of your directory listing.

Special note to members new to ATA or to freelancing: a profile in the online directory is the kind of targeted marketing translators and interpreters need. It is a no-cost benefit of your ATA membership—but it is not automatic. To get your profile listed in the directory, you need to complete an online questionnaire. See www.atanet.org/onlinedirectories/update_profile_ind.php.

In comparing the results for the past three years for individuals—the Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services—the top five language combinations have not changed. In the next five, Chinese>English has gone from not being listed in 2010 to number seven in 2012. In addi-

### 2012 Top 10 Searches in ATA’s Online Directories

**Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services**

(6,685 profiles as of April 16, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Language Combination</th>
<th>By Area of Specialization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. English&gt;Spanish</td>
<td>1. Medicine (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Spanish&gt;English</td>
<td>2. Law (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. English&gt;French</td>
<td>3. Business (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. English&gt;Chinese</td>
<td>4. Pharmaceuticals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. English&gt;Japanese</td>
<td>5. Engineering (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chinese&gt;English</td>
<td>7. Patents, trademarks, and copyrights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. English&gt;Russian</td>
<td>8. Contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. English&gt;Korean</td>
<td>10. Software localization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Directory of Language Services Companies**

(465 profiles as of April 16, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Language Combination</th>
<th>By Area of Specialization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Spanish&gt;English</td>
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<td>2. English&gt;Spanish</td>
<td>2. Law (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chinese&gt;English</td>
<td>3. Business (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Russian&gt;English</td>
<td>4. Arts and Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. English&gt;French</td>
<td>(General)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. English&gt;French</td>
<td>5. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. French&gt;English</td>
<td>6. Engineering (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. All&gt;English</td>
<td>7. Immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Arabic&gt;English</td>
<td>9. Patents, trademarks, and copyrights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Pharmaceuticals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tation, English→Arabic made the top 10 for the first time, bumping German→English from the list. (This was the first time German→English did not make the list.)

As for areas of specialization, the top five for individuals has not changed, although “Pharmaceuticals” and “Engineering (General)” have traded places. As for the next five in 2012, the only change was that “Software localization” bumped “Industry & Technology (General)” from the list.

In comparing the results for the past three years for companies—the Directory of Language Services Companies—there was little change among the top 10 language combinations except that Arabic→English bumped Portuguese→English from the list.

As for areas of specialization, “Patents, trademarks, & copyrights” and “Pharmaceuticals” bumped “Economics & finance” and “Computers (General)” from the top 10.

To get the most out of your marketing efforts and your ATA membership, update your profile today.
Persistent uncertainty regarding the global economy and heightened anxiety concerning the economic situation in the Eurozone has increased the demand for the right information at the right time. This means that more financial-related information needs to be translated in an accurate and timely manner. In order to be successful, financial translators need to be aware of the significant developments in the industries they serve.

What do the current business conditions mean for financial translators? In an attempt to answer this question, I will address some of the most relevant developments affecting 10 key sectors within the financial industry. For each sector, I will offer a brief assessment of the potential volume of work available, the complexity of the work involved, the amount of reliable information available for further research, and how fast each sector is growing.

I would like to make four important points before moving forward. First, while the content of this article is relatively specialized, I have tried to make it as straightforward as possible so that the information is applicable to a wide range of readers. Second, it is important to bear in mind that the list of sectors and the topics covered here is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, I have based the information on my 14 years of experience as a financial translator and as an active reader of the financial press and media. Third, I am using the concept of financial translation in its broadest sense, therefore referring to the translation of documents of a financial, business, economic, and commercial nature. Finally, while most of the concepts explored here have a global reach, I have focused the content on developments affecting the U.S. and the European Union.

1. Accounting

Accounting documents such as financial statements represent a significant source of work for financial translators. For example, according to Deloitte, financial statements have doubled in length over the past 16 years, and are now 52% longer than in 2005. One of the chief developments in the accounting industry, and a pivotal driver of growth in this sector, is the gradual adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) on a worldwide basis as the “accounting language” to be used in the preparation of public company financial statements. Once implemented globally, IFRS would provide a core set of accounting standards that could serve as a framework for financial reporting. Around 120 nations and reporting jurisdictions now permit
or require IFRS for domestic listed companies. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission released a preliminary plan that would require U.S. public companies to report under international accounting rules no earlier than 2015.\(^3\) Currently, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) remain the standard in the U.S., but there is a formal U.S. GAAP-IFRS convergence program in place that has resulted in ongoing changes to current standards. As such, financial translators will need to keep informed of the terms being adopted in the new accounting standards and include the “official terms” in their translations of financial statements.

In regards to the implications for financial translators, the potential volume of work generated by the use of IFRS is very high because more and more countries are adopting these standards as their “accounting language” in financial statements. The level of complexity of such standards (and therefore the language used) is also considered very high. Translators need to find the official taxonomy in their target languages to ensure that their translated documents reflect “official” usage. The challenge is that the amount of reliable information available for this sector is considered relatively low, since only the IFRS Foundation (through the International Accounting Standards Board) and the European Union (applicable for EU companies only) publish the official terminology and the official translations in their respective local languages. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that new standards are issued on a yearly basis, so terminology evolves rapidly.

### 2. Auditing

Within the European Union (EU), the European Commission has proposed far-reaching reforms to the auditing profession in the wake of the global financial crisis. The proposals have two main objectives:

1) To reduce concentration in the market for audits through new requirements around audit tendering and auditor appointment.

2) To address perceived threats to auditor independence resulting from audit firm rotation and limits on non-audit services.

In the U.S., similar reforms are being adopted through the implementation of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which will be explored further in Section 7 on page 13.\(^4\)

While these reforms may not result in significant linguistic changes for financial translators, the potential work-related implications they will generate for translators will be high. Auditing firms, which are important purchasers of translation services, will be transformed if some of these reforms are adopted. For example, new companies could be created due to restrictions on non-audit services. In addition, mandatory audit firm rotation could mean that translators’ long-term working relationships with certain clients will be interrupted.

The level of complexity of these proposed reforms is considered low. The volume of reliable information available is extensive, since these reforms are being given wide coverage in the financial press. This is not considered a rapidly evolving area, as most of these reforms have to be debated carefully and will take years to implement.

### 3. Banking

The banking sector is an obvious source of work for financial translators, as it has been at the center of the current economic crisis. In response to deficiencies in banking regulation revealed by the crisis, one of the key international developments in the banking industry has been the introduction of Basel III, issued by the Bank for International Settlements. Basel III is a global regulatory framework designed to create more resilient banks and banking systems. It was agreed upon by members of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision in 2010-11, and is scheduled to be introduced beginning in 2013 until 2019.\(^5\) Proposed measures include implementing capital adequacy rules, conducting risk assessments through appropriate scenario analysis and stress testing, and working to improve price transparency and market liquidity. (For a complete overview, see www.bis.org/publ/bcbs206.pdf.) It is hoped that this framework will effectively triple the size of the capital reserves that the world’s banks must hold against losses. As a result, thousands of pages are being written...
The economic slowdown has affected, in one way or another, virtually all types of businesses regardless of size, location, or industry in which they operate.

4. Business Services

The economic slowdown has affected, in one way or another, virtually all types of businesses regardless of size, location, or industry in which they operate. As a result, businesses worldwide have required professional advice to try and overcome the challenges involved, ranging from liquidity shortages and downsizing programs to regulatory advice. As such, companies providing consulting and advisory services are a significant source of work for financial translators. The scope of services these companies provide is as wide-ranging as the economy itself, so a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this article. Hence, I have selected two areas that have been featured prevalently in the past few years in connection with the current economic climate: 1) restructuring (reorganizing the structure of a company as a response to the crisis, bankruptcy, or mergers and acquisitions [M&A] activities), and 2) forensic services (fraud prevention, detection, and investigation).

5. International Trade

Business transactions among companies trading internationally and their consumers who speak different languages have traditionally been an essential source of translation work. Globalization continues unabated, so the flow of material needing translation is not expected to end any time soon. Two of the most interesting developments in the wide-ranging concept of international trade are: 1) the development of the so-called second wave of emerging countries as potential commercial powerhouses, and 2) the uneven development of sustainability.

The level of complexity within the field of international trade can be considered medium on the basis that its main purpose is for the buyer and seller to agree quickly and successfully on the main terms and conditions of their transaction. The potential volume of work should be considered high. The reason is that international trade volume continues to grow, even in the current economic climate (14.5% in 2010 and 6.5% in 2011, according to the World Trade Organization). The availability of information can be considered medium-high, since there are plenty of official statistics and other resource material in this field, although what is available may also depend on the specific company or industry. This is also considered a rapidly evolving sector, especially in areas such as retail and technology, since customers’ likes and
dislikes change very quickly. For example, in the past five years we have seen the rise and fall of companies such as Yahoo! and RIM (manufacturer of Blackberry).

6. International Institutions

International institutions (such as the United Nations and institutions of the EU) tend to be large employers of in-house translators and significant buyers of translation. The current financial and political climate has put some of these institutions at the center of media focus, including the role the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank, and the EU played in the Eurozone crisis. This has resulted in endless pages being translated, both for the media and for financial institutions, and this volume is expected to continue.

The level of complexity of translation work in this area can be considered medium-high, in particular in relation to the Eurozone crisis. The potential volume of work should also be considered high, although access to this work is not as open as in the private market, as it is filtered through various tendering processes depending on the institution. The availability of information can be considered low-medium due to the fact that it has to be obtained from the relevant institution’s website and publications. Also, this is not considered a rapidly evolving area because these institutions tend to be highly bureaucratic, so there is plenty of red tape involved.

7. Financial Services

The financial services sector—understood here as an umbrella term to include areas such as asset management, stock brokerage, and investment fund management, as well as other banking, intermediation, consumer finance, and foreign exchange services—represents the essence of the financial industry. Due to its international nature, this sector is a significant source of translation work.

Both the EU and the U.S. have reacted in response to the recent financial crisis. In October 2011, the European Commission published legislative proposals to reform the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID). These proposals represent a comprehensive and profound set of reforms that, if implemented, would lead to a reshaping across the EU of the financial markets and also of the products and services that banks and investment firms provide. The proposals are scheduled for implementation at the end of 2015. In the U.S., the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was passed in July 2010 in order to improve accountability and transparency in the financial system. It is designed to protect the American taxpayer by ending bailouts and to protect consumers from abusive financial services practices.

The level of complexity of the translation work in this area can be considered high, largely due to the opaque nature of traditional financial services. The potential volume of work should also be considered high due to its international nature and the high prevalence of financial services at all levels. The availability of reliable information can be considered medium, as it can be obtained from both official financial institutions and private entities. This is not a rapidly evolving area because both reforms are highly political and bureaucratic.

8. Insurance

Insurance documents are considered to be some of the most complex and challenging for financial translators. One of the major developments in the industry is the introduction of Solvency II (also known as Basel for insurers), which primarily concerns the amount of capital that EU insurance companies must hold to reduce the risk of insolvency. In the U.S., the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act also has significant implications for the insurance industry, including the creation of the Federal Insurance Office (FIO) to monitor all aspects of the insurance industry and to identify gaps in the state-based regulatory system. Finally, the adoption of IFRS has also affected the industry, with new accounting rules for insurers, including proposed changes such as IFRS 4 Phase II – Insurance Contracts, IFRS 9 – Financial Instruments, as well as other corresponding proposals in the U.S., all of which are highly complex.

The potential volume of work in this area can be considered medium, perhaps because it is less international than other financial sectors. The level of complexity of the work is undoubtedly high, involving plenty of specialized terms and complicated
calculations. The reliability of the information available is considered low due to its opaque nature. The insurance industry is not considered a field that evolves rapidly because both the terminology and the nature of the business tend to be long-term.

9. Investment Management

The mention of the investment management sector here refers mainly to the areas of asset and fund management (i.e., the professional management of various assets in order to meet specified investment goals for the benefit of investors). Investment funds generate a significant amount of work for translators due to the need to keep investors informed on a timely and ongoing basis. Since July 2011, the EU’s Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities IV directive requires investment funds to produce crucial investor information documents, which replace simplified prospectuses. Investor documents must be produced for each share class of each fund, and in at least one national language of each country in which the fund is marketed. In the U.S., the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act also requires numerous investment advisers, hedge funds, and private equity firms to be subject to these new registration requirements.

The potential volume of work in this area can be considered high due to the international nature of investors. This type of work is also relatively complex, with plenty of industry-specific terms. The volume of reliable information available is considered medium due to its relatively high level of presence and its opaque nature. This is considered a rapidly evolving sector because of its intangible nature and increased marketing.

10. Public Sector

The public sector is that portion of society controlled by national, state or provincial, and local governments. Although national public sector bodies (e.g., agencies responsible for providing such services as social programs and urban planning) and governments may not initially appear to be prime financial translation buyers, the current economic situation means that they are increasingly subject to international reputation and are dependent upon international financial investors. This explains the increase in financial information being generated and translated by them. In relation to the current economic climate, it is important to highlight that, while the effects of the global financial crisis hit the private sector full force in 2008, it took another three years before the public sector began to feel the pain. As a result of this “delay” in addressing the crisis, most governments are now trying to reduce their deficits in various ways and are more eager than ever, especially in the Eurozone, to let the international community know about their initiatives and achievements. The result is an increased demand for translation.

The level of complexity of the initiatives being implemented by national governments can be considered medium-high, especially those relating to the Eurozone crisis. The potential volume of work available can also be considered high, although access to work with government institutions is not as open as in the private market because jobs are filtered through various tendering processes. The availability of information can be considered low-medium, as it has to be obtained from the relevant government body. This is also not a rapidly evolving sector because governments tend to be highly bureaucratic, which means there is plenty of red tape involved. The initiatives proposed also tend to be of a long-term nature.

Summing Up

Significant developments within the global economy carry a number of implications for financial translators. By providing an overview of some of the “hot topics” affecting 10 sectors that make up the backbone of the financial translation industry, I have tried to identify useful areas for additional focus. Doing so will help translators tackle future assignments in a more confident and accurate manner.

Notes


International institutions (such as the United Nations and institutions of the European Union) tend to be large employers of in-house translators and significant buyers of translation.

Smoking Guns: Looking for Evidence and Overcoming Hurdles in Legal Document Review and Translation
Presenter: Gail Tanaka | Duration: 60 minutes | CE Point(s): 1
June 18, 2013 | 12 Noon U.S. Eastern Daylight

Working as an intellectual property translator can be both daunting and rewarding all in the same day. The sheer volume of documents that require review and the variety of technology with which the linguist must become familiar can be very demanding. But when the “smoking gun” is uncovered, all the effort becomes worthwhile. An astute linguist with a good eye for valuable information can be an essential part of any legal case. Attendees will learn:

- The linguist’s role in the discovery process
- Basic fundamentals in preparing for document review
- Tips for training one’s eyes to identify useful documents more efficiently
- Communication techniques for dealing with clients
- Ways to overcome hurdles encountered in the document review process

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Can’t attend? Register now and a link to the on-demand version will be sent to you following the live event. For more information, visit www.atanet.org/webinars.
Just over a decade ago, I wrote a piece on wine translation called “Notes on Notes” for Tradurre, the newsletter of ATA’s Italian Language Division.1 It was intended as an introduction to the translation of wine descriptions and reviews, which is a relatively rich source of work requiring a bit of technical knowledge and the ability to analyze a text’s rhetoric (the force of its language) and reproduce its original intent in the target language.

After working with a fair number of translators as the editor of Gambero Rosso’s Italian Wines (Vini d’Italia) guide every year since the article was published, I think it might be useful to highlight some areas that seem to require my editorial intervention with particular frequency. Some of the strategies discussed here can also be useful for other types of translation.

Before we move on, there are a few general points to be made about translating in this sector.

• First, the language of wine has its own rhetoric. As in other linguistic genres, that rhetoric is not the same in English and Italian. The main differences are culture-related and involve underlying stylistic expectations, but wine-related elements also play an important part in the choices a translator makes. Sector-specific vocabulary can be hard to spot without some prior knowledge.

• Second, it is clear that wine professionals who translate usually produce better work than translation professionals who work with wine texts. At least in my experience, the former are more confident with wine-related styles, which they already use when writing directly in the target language, while the latter tend to have a more restricted range of translation options at their disposal and are more likely to misconstrue the original. Obviously, translators improve with experience,2 but neophytes often assume that “any-
thing goes,” particularly when it comes to translating tasting notes.

- Third, it is important to read translations out loud. The English should ring true, which will not be the case if the organization of thought in the Italian is followed too slavishly. Naturally, no ideas expressed in the original should be removed or added in the course of translation: equivalent content should be delivered with equivalent force.

**Format of Wine Descriptions**

An important factor to keep in mind when translating is that a wine’s description follows the sequence of its sensory examination (“appearance-nose-palate” or “sight-smell-taste”). The meaning of a term can change depending on the stage of sensory examination to which it refers. For example, the noun/adjective stem *intens-* can refer to visual examination, and is best rendered as “depth.” Here are two versions of the same passage taken from the Italian and English editions of *Italian Wines* from 2008:

**Vini d’Italia:** La novità, che quest’anno andrà a rimandare la già consistente gamma dei vini prodotti, è il Monferrato Rosso Macchieferro 2005, prodotto da uve albarossa al 90% e nebbiolo. Stupisce l’intensità di colore …

**Italian Wines:** This year, that range acquired even more flesh with the new Monferrato Rosso Macchieferro ’05, made from albarossa with ten percent nebbiolo. It has amazing depth of colour …

However, *intens-* can also refer to the wine’s nose (i.e., its smell), in which case, “intense” or “pervasive” might be more appropriate in the English translation:

**Vini d’Italia:** Barbera d’Asti Superiore Nizza, un prodotto che ha stoffa e grande struttura, supportata da profumi intensi di frutta rossa matura e di spezie dolci.

**Italian Wines:** Barbera d’Asti Superiore Nizza again showed very well, gaining Two Glasses. It’s a wine of great structure and substance, given a lift by *intense* aromas of ripe red berry fruit and sweet spices.

Similarly, the term *articolazione,* which refers to the clarity with which the wine’s various aromas can be distinguished, may crop up in either the “nose” or the “palate” section of a description. “Complexity” or “aroma separation” are possibilities in both cases, while “flavo(u)r separation” is an option in palate descriptions only.

The translation options for sensory evaluation descriptors suggested on my website (Watson’s Wine Glossary: www.watson.it) attempt to call attention to these sensory examination-related distinctions.

**Culture-Related Differences**

In broad-brush terms, Italian wine writers tend to be slightly less specific in their use of descriptors than their English peers. Category expressions like *frutta bianca* (“white-fleshed fruit[s]”), for example, are used more frequently than in English, which tends to prefer to name individual aromatics (“apple-like,” “pears and apples”). This is one of the reasons a translation from Italian is likely to be less effective than a description expressed directly in English.

Wine writing in the U.S. also tends, or tended, to have more formal stylistic expectations and to be less linguistically inventive than writing produced in the U.K. but Internet self-publishing is blurring the edges fast. Wine writing, like many other kinds of writing, also tends to be more formal and less linguistically adventurous in Italian than in English. Of course, all of these observations are empirical: none is a hard and fast rule.

There are other secondary points to consider. Some English-language wine writers, particularly in the U.S., have a habit of making normally uncountable wine-related concepts countable. Let’s look at another passage from the 2008 edition of *Italian Wines*:

**Vini d’Italia:** L’alcol è in netta evidenza e questo è forse l’unico limite.

**Italian Wines:**

- The only quibble is an alcohol that raises its head a bit much. (American translator’s draft)
- The only quibble is that the alcohol raises its head a bit much. (Published version)
In broad-brush terms, Italian wine writers tend to be slightly less specific in their use of descriptors than their English-speaking peers.

2006 edition of Italian Wines:

Vini d’Italia: In attesa della Barbera d’Asti Superiore La Cappelletta 2005, ancora in affinamento al momento delle nostre degustazioni, dobbiamo registrare il buon comportamento della Barbera Barisél, la Barbera base che si fa apprezzare grazie alla freschezza e alla vena acida, supportata da una valida struttura.

Italian Wines: Barbera d’Asti Superiore La Cappelletta ’05 was still ageing at the time of our tastings, but the standard Barbera Barisél showed excellently with freshness, a good swath of acidity and sound structure.

Italian Twos and English Threes

A crucial part of making translations readable is rearranging the adjective strings that crop up with unfailing frequency in descriptions of wines. Italian and English writers tend to group the ideas expressed in these phrases differently. Writers in Italian tend to prefer pairs, or pairs of pairs, and writers in English tend to favor triplets. This phenomenon is not limited to adjective strings. In general, Italian likes to base its discourse on balanced pairs of ideas (1+1) to imply solidity. Italian writers continue to value, and their readers expect, syntactical solidity and pyramidal hierarchies, which can appear dull if transposed into English. This is why writers in English, particularly of marketing texts, tend to prefer triplets (1+1+1), often extending the final element so that the rhythm suggests pace. The rhythm of the triplet suggests something that is “moving forward.” However, the momentum of English-style triplets tends to sound agitated if overused in Italian. Of course, this is not a hard and fast rule—triplets can be found in Italian and pairs in English—but the respective baseline expectations, as well as the effect of the rhetorical device, are different. From the Italian>English translator’s point of view, turning adjective pairs into triplets is one of the ways in which the target text can be reformulated to enhance musicality and facilitate comprehension. Here is an example from a 2009 issue of the English-language wine magazine Decanter:

Sweet, supple, full bouquet. Spiced black fruits with a winning freshness on the palate. Long, clear and really persistent. A wine of lovely abundance. (1+1+1), (1+1+1)

Note that the tonic rhythm (dum, dum, dum-di-dum) is common to many such English triplets (as in “mád, bàd, and dàngéròus to knòw”). Here are two pairs from a 2006 issue of Vini d’Italia that were reclassified as one attributive plus a predicative triplet in Italian Wines:

Continued on p. 20
Lexique de la Vigne et du Vin — Français — Italiano — Español — Deutsch — Português — English — Русский
(The standard multilingual wine dictionary. It is out of print, but well worth tracking down.)

(This source is thorough and accessible, even to non-scientists.)

(The book’s easy-to-use alphabetical organization contains a wealth of useful information.)

(A readable account of how wine is made. It is particularly useful if your science background is sketchy.)

(A complete and accurate resource.)

(A general text with a good section on vine diseases.)

(A source for process-related phrases in several languages.)

(Contains brief explanations in Italian of a wide range of wine terms.)

There are also good English and Italian translations of a standard French work on wine and tasting, which may be useful, especially when you are starting out:


And finally, VinotoWine (V2W: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vinotowine), the Yahoo! group originally set up for Italian Wines translators, is still active. To join, request an invitation through my website (www.watson.it) or write to me at gileswatson@gmail.com.
**Vini d’Italia:** È un vino dal colore dorato carico, dai profumi opulenti di confettura d’albicocca, fichi secchi ed erbe della macchia mediterranea, che in bocca è grasso e intensamente dolce, misurato e godibile come sempre. (1+1), (1+1)

**Italian Wines:** Its dark gold introduces opulent aromas of apricot jam, dried figs and the herbs of the Mediterranean scrubland. The well-judged palate is rich, intensely sweet and as enjoyable as ever. (1), (1+1+1)

Often, the (1+1) pair pattern is brought to a close by doubling or otherwise extending the second element in the final pair (1+[1+1]). Here is an example from a 2011 issue of Italian Wines:

**Vini d’Italia:** Ci convince di più il Pinot Nero Briglhof ’07, fresco nei profumi e snello e scorrevole al palato. (1+[1+1])

**Italian Wines:** The ’07 Pinot Nero Briglhof is more convincing with its fresh nose and slim-bodied, supple palate.

If translated literally, sentences like the ones above will seem clunky (try reading “fresh on the nose and slim and supple on the palate” out loud). However, the pattern is very common, to the point where at times editing Italian Wines seems to consist mainly of removing conjunctions from, as well as rearranging, paired adjective strings.

The following example, taken from a 2011 issue of Italian Wines, features a triplet in Italian with comments arranged in the three stages of tasting (the wine’s appearance is described first, then its nose, and finally its palate). The adjective pair in the nose section (marasca matura e licorizia) is followed directly by another pair describing the palate (morbido e succoso), which is a pattern that would sound weak if copied in English. In this case, the solution was to tweak the rhythm by turning one of the adjectives into an adverb.

**Vini d’Italia:** Il Refosco ’07 ha un colore vivace, profuma di marasca matura e licorizia ed è morbido e succoso al palato dello Schioppettino ’07 ...

**Italian Wines:** The ’07 Refosco’s vibrant hue frames ripe morello cherry and liquorice while the palate is every bit as juicily soft-textured as the ’07 Schioppettino ...

If this brief overview has whetted your appetite for wine translation, the box on page 19 lists some references you might enjoy as you leaf through some of the many English- and Italian-language wine translations.

**Notes**


2. Translating in a new sector is a little like foraging for mushrooms: make your initial expeditions with someone who knows more than you do; catalogue your finds carefully; only use what you are absolutely sure of; and remember that training and study are life-savers.


4. Here is another example of making uncountable concepts countable. It was googled more or less at random and sounds odd to U.K. ears: “Our nonprofit customers receive a five-dollar value for every dollar they invest in our services.” Taken from the Community Development page of the Federal Reserve of St. Louis website (http://bit.ly/StLouis-Federal-Reserve).
Carlos Fuentes died in Mexico City on May 15, 2012. He was 83. He had lived the fullest of lives, and was widely regarded as one of the grand old men of Latin American letters. With his passing, a major chapter in the literature of the Spanish-speaking world comes to an end.

Fuentes once told National Public Radio that when he was a boy living in the U.S., his father, a career diplomat, taught him:

… the history, geography, the values of Mexico. Then I went and saw the real country and this created a conflict in me … In the tension between my imagination and reality, my literary possibilities as a novelist were born … I see criticism as our way of being optimist in a growing nation such as Mexico. To abstain from criticism is, I think, a way of being pessimistic; to engage in criticism is to be concerned with the matters at hand and with the country.

I met Fuentes briefly in 1997, when he came to address the American Literary Translators Association Conference and the Texas Book Fair. He was that quintessential Latin American figure—the public intellectual. He was an articulate force in social, political, and academic circles, well endowed with the courage of his convictions, which he expressed with a natural urbanity and sparkle that made him a welcome guest on interview shows all over the world. As a journalist, he was provocative and known to wield “a fearsome pen.” During his visit, I wondered what it might be like to translate his books and mused on the many ways there might be to prepare for an opportunity of that kind.

News of his death made me think of his legacy of words and ideas, and of his penchant for promoting his fellow writers. As I looked at the long list of his works, my eyes hovered over the names of the translators who have introduced him to the English-speaking world over the past 50 years. I began to think of Fuentes in terms of those who knew him and his

― The ATA Chronicle May 2013
work rather better than most, and what they remembered about translating his stories, essays, and novels. Three of them graciously agreed to be interviewed for this article: Alfred Mac Adam,¹ Suzanne Jill Levine,² and Margaret Sayers Peden.³

Alfred Mac Adam first collaborated with Fuentes in 1984 on the book *Christopher Unborn*, and remembers accepting the assignment “with tremendous misgivings”:

> After all, the novel is long, unimaginably complex, and contains a huge range of styles, including long passages in the local slang of Mexico City. My Spanish, my English, and my sanity would all be put to the test. This was unlike anything I’d ever translated in my life, but the honor of translating the author of *The Death of Artemio Cruz* was an opportunity I would never turn down.”⁴

Indeed, what a magnet! And not without immediate rewards. The project included a trip to Mexico with Fuentes and the editor from the publishing house for a one-week marathon editing session in a secluded country house. Mac Adam says the collaboration was a shock for Fuentes:

> Our daily reading exercise was actually the first time he’d ever gone over his Spanish original with an editor. The editor—as we know that person in U.S. publishing—had only recently come into existence in the Spanish-speaking world. In the past, it was simply assumed that the author would watch over his own work. Because of the editor’s suggestions, Carlos found himself making changes in the English text that he wished he could have made to the original, paring and deleting to make the narrative more fluid. Producing the translation actually changed the author’s perception of the original.

For most translators, such a close working relationship with the author is the exception rather than the rule, but it was not unusual when working with Carlos Fuentes.

Suzanne Jill Levine translated Fuentes’ *Holy Place* in 1972. She was not quite 25 years old at the time, and the writer must have recognized a familiar precocity in the young translator. They became friends as they collaborated on the translation, and the correspondence between them is a fertile source of insights into their process. In a letter from Mexico City in November 1971, Fuentes says that Levine makes him, “read like Henry James.” He goes on to say:

> I have only one basic desire: that the Claudia-Mito dialogues should be a lot harder, rougher, biting, more vulgar. As long as he narrates in the first person, the Jamesian tone with baroque overtones is just perfect; when the mother and son engage in verbal battle, there should be (as in the Spanish original) a marked difference; Claudia, particularly, should be much more bitchy and almost gangster-like in her speech: like something out of Raymond Chandler or Ross MacDonald.

Regarding how it felt to have Fuentes coaching from the sidelines, Levine says:

> I loved Carlos’ guidance when translating *Holy Place*. He told me to make Claudia’s quips more Raymond Chandler-esque, which was excellent advice, as he was doing a takeoff, in those sections, on the hardboiled American roman noir; indeed, one of the books that most influenced him in its style and treatment of social and political corruption was Dashiell Hammett’s *Red Harvest*.

Levine, a life-long academic and prolific translator of Latin American writers, met Fuentes in 1969 through her partner and mentor Emir Rodríguez Monegal, the Uruguayan scholar and literary critic. Monegal founded the literary magazine *Mundo Nuevo* that was published in Spanish in Paris and contributed to the “boom” in Latin American literature that spanned the 1960s and 1970s. Monegal and Fuentes were close friends, and thanks to their efforts *Mundo Nuevo* introduced unknown writers to a wider audience. In 1966, for example, the magazine published a chapter of Gabriel García Márquez’s *Cien Años de Soledad*, the now-legendary novel. Fuentes and Monegal were key figures in 20th-century Latin American literature because they facilitated a literary dialogue between North and South America at a very difficult time. Literature and politics were uneasy partners in a complicated relationship, and initiatives such as *Mundo Nuevo*...
provided a channel for dialogue. It was always about the dialogue.

Levine, who was at Columbia University writing her MA thesis on Gabriel García Márquez at the time, remembers having lunch with Márquez, Fuentes, and Monegal in Barcelona during a trip to Europe in the summer of 1970. She says Fuentes was very generous in his support of “Gabo” (Gabriel) and other writers, which is a quality that is always mentioned when people talk about Carlos Fuentes. Levine refers to Fuentes’ generosity of spirit as, “an expression of the grass roots of politics in the world of literature; he understood that writers need defenders, they need champions.” Levine says that what interested her most about this book as a translator was the shrill dialogue, the conversations with unspoken tensions beneath.

A translator must obviously be skilled in working with dialogue, especially when it includes a lot of slang. Fuentes was prone to put slang expressions into his characters’ mouths. Mac Adam, who translated six of Fuentes’ books, remembers this aspect of the work:

The major challenge was his vast vocabulary in Spanish and his ability to make puns in several languages. Keeping up with that was hard. Translating slang is also difficult, especially if the slang in question is from another era. What do you do—try to replicate 1960s Mexico City slang in some kind of New York 1960s slang? Impossible.

When Fuentes came to Texas, I interviewed him for an Austin newspaper and asked which books gave him the most satisfaction. With no hesitation he said Terra Nostra. “It is the hardest to read. Many readers shy away from it, but my best readers are the readers of Terra Nostra.”

One reason people shy away from it is that it is a long book, and I wondered what steps a translator would take to keep track of things when working on a book of that size. Margaret Sayers Peden translated it in 1976, so I asked her if she made a special effort, for the sake of consistency, to keep track of the way she translated particular words that reappeared throughout the work. Sayers Peden says she did, adding: “I also believe that the same word, given the fact that words are slippery and treacherous, needs to be translated differently within different contexts.”

Sayers Peden went back to school in 1962 to get her master’s degree, but claims to have done nothing literary or academic before then. As she puts it, she was: “drawn to translating by forces I still don’t understand. But once started, I wasn’t going to be stopped … It never dawned on me that I couldn’t translate anything I wanted.”

As she evolved as a literary translator she realized that she had, “a very persistent flaw. I wanted to stay too close to the Spanish. That was something very difficult for me to unlearn.”

That process of “unlearning” sounds like an excellent way to develop the flexibility a translator requires to handle the endless subtleties of language and meaning. As Sayers Peden explains, “problems are essentially the same across the genres. There’s music in prose, information to be communicated in poetry.” She went on to translate six of Fuentes’ books, including The Old Gringo, which was made into a movie.

So, what was it like working with Fuentes? Mac Adam says that:

After working on Christopher Unborn, I became Carlos’ regular translator. Meaning that when he had one of his manuscripts (he usually wrote in longhand) transcribed—by his daughter from his first marriage (to the actress Rita Macedo)—he would have a copy sent to me. I would then get right to work on it so the translation would be out in a timely fashion. It was like having a second job. For a couple of decades he was a part of my life, so his words were ringing in my ears constantly.

Levine’s correspondence with Fuentes tells many stories, with many enticing sidetracks. A relevant item, however, that gives us some idea of how Fuentes approached the collaboration, is a request for clarification on a word that elicits this answer: “Escuínche is the Mexican equivalent of the Rio de la Plata’s pibe or the Chilean cabro. From the Nahuatl itzcuintle, a very small hairless dog. ‘Brat’ will do.” In response to another query, Fuentes writes: “… Actually, Chole is a nickname for women called Soledad.” He then adds, in his trademark tongue-in-cheek style: “Cien años de Chole.”

Levine describes the relationship between writer and translator this way:
The relationship an author establishes with the translator is different from that with scholars and critics; authors may be willing to open up to translators in ways they would be reluctant to do with critics and scholars. There is a more intimate relationship at times, which may have to do with the shared experience of the materiality of writing.5

As translators we are not only doing what Sayers Peden describes as “bringing something new to people who wouldn’t have it otherwise.” We are also flowing the other way and sojourning in a time and place created by a writer as we describe it in another language. In this case, the writer was Carlos Fuentes, who will be greatly missed by his readers and his translators.

Notes
1. Alfred Mac Adam, Columbia University.
2. Suzanne Jill Levine, University of California at Santa Barbara.
3. Margaret Sayers Peden was unexpectedly unavailable at the last minute and unable to participate in the interview. She is quoted here from “The Intimate Presence of the Other: An Interview with Margaret Sayers Peden by James Hoggard,” for Translation Review, Volume 56, 1998.
Certification Forum

By David Stephenson
ATA Certification Committee Deputy Chair

Eight Tips for Passing ATA’s Certification Exam

1. **Plan Ahead:** Ideally, you should begin preparing at least six months prior to the sitting. There is a registration deadline for each sitting, and ATA Headquarters will need time to confirm that you satisfy the eligibility requirements. If you decide to complete a practice test, please order it well in advance of the actual exam sitting, since it will also take time to be graded. The graders are volunteers (not staff members) who are active translators living around the globe, so please allow 6-8 weeks for receipt of the evaluation.

2. **Watch Celia Bohannon’s Free Webinar from July 2011:** “Preparing to Take the ATA Certification Exam” is a free one-hour presentation that highlights many practical tips for preparing for the exam. Topics include: how to approach eligibility requirements; what to do with the practice test results; and how to train for taking the exam. Celia has been grading exams since 1981. Over the years, she has graded hundreds of exams and practice tests. Since 1997, she has coordinated and conducted the grader training sessions held at ATA’s Annual Conference and at the Language Chairs Annual Meeting. See www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar93_certification.php.

3. **Do Your Research:** The section on certification on ATA’s website (www.atanet.org/certification/index.php) contains a wealth of information about how the exam is created, administered, and graded. Read as much of the material as possible and do not hesitate to contact ATA Headquarters with any questions.

4. **Take One or More Practice Tests:** A set of practice tests is available for each certification language pair. This is a highly effective, affordable way to gauge your chances on the exam and to see the passages “up close.” Practice sets are retired exam passages, and a marked copy of your work is returned to you. See the February 2013 issue of The ATA Chronicle for details (www.atanet.org/certification/chronicle_cert_practicetest.pdf). Please keep in mind that if you pass the practice test, you will not necessarily pass the certification examination, but if you do not pass the practice test, chances are high that you will fail the exam.

5. **Practice Handwriting:** ATA’s Certification Program is offering a limited number of keyboarded exams in 2013, but most candidates will still write their exams by hand. For most people, this is not a common, day-to-day activity, so advance practice with writing by hand will be helpful. The webinar mentioned earlier includes helpful tips in this regard.

6. **Review Your Dictionaries:** Since electronic/web resources cannot (yet) be used for the exam, make sure you have adequate print resources to take with you to the sitting. At the very least, you should have a good general bilingual dictionary, a monolingual target-language dictionary and/or style guide, and a good “general technical” or “general legal/business” dictionary, if that exists for your language pair. Consider borrowing references from colleagues or a library. However, very specialized reference materials are not needed since graders edit out highly specialized terminology when choosing passages.

7. **Pay Close Attention to the Translation Instructions:** Each passage comes with instructions specifying the source of the text as well as the purpose, audience, and place of publication of the translation. This provides context for approaching the translation, which could influence your choice of style, register, or even terminology.

8. **Proofread Your Work:** During the exam sitting, try to leave at least 15 minutes per passage to review your work before handing it in. Look for careless errors or omissions and make sure the translation flows and reads as if it had originally been written in the target language. Finally, spelling and punctuation do matter!

Good luck!
Whether we like it or not, translation standards are coming our way. In my last column in the September 2012 issue (page 30), I mentioned that an international standard for certifying translation providers is around the corner. However, a few standards are already here.

Perhaps the most common translation standard available is EN15038, created by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) in 2006, with which many translators working with European clients may already be familiar. There is also a U.S. standard for translation providers, ASTM F2575, available from the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). You can purchase copies of these standards from the links below. However, the standard that is currently being developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), ISO 17100, will eventually become the de facto standard for translation providers around the globe.

These standards provide a template for “best practices” for translation providers, in terms of defining project specifications, selecting vendors, organizing the translation process, and resolving problems. For language people, however, all of the different numbers can be overwhelming. What does it mean? What will you actually have to do?

First, standards are actually here to help you—whether you are an individual translator working with an end client or a large multinational. They are intended to clarify the translation process for all parties involved: the translator, the agency, and the buyer. Standards do not tell you how to run your business. You can modify or create your work processes as needed in order to prove that you are meeting the relevant standard.

For example, a standard may require that a translator’s skills be confirmed in some way. This requirement could be satisfied by keeping records of a translator’s education level or experience in the industry, or having the individual pass a sample translation test. Another example of a requirement might involve using a separate reviser for all translations, as suggested in various standards. This could be documented by having the reviser complete a sign-off form or by recording the various phases of a translation (draft, revised, final) using a defined file naming system.

Most of this is pretty much a no-brainer for a lot of us, but it is important to remember that you actually need to IMPLEMENT this system by making sure that all of your employees and vendors follow the rules you establish. Getting the cooperation from everyone in the business is critical. One rogue project manager...
One of the many challenges translators face is a poorly written source text. This is a tricky subject, and as with most business-related issues, there are no easy answers, but read on for my thoughts on source texts and the role of the translator.

We are not the language police. Stick to your role. The client has hired you to perform a specific service, which is translation, so you should focus on that (of course, there are always exceptions). Hiring a translator who then critiques your source text is a bit like hiring an architect who comes to your house to talk about the new backyard porch and then points out that you have poor interior decorating skills. If the client asks for feedback on the source text, that is a different story. Some of my trusted clients do want me to compile a list of potential errors in the source text, and I usually put together a matter-of-fact list and refrain from making any unsolicited comments. However, many clients might value feedback about the source text, and might even see you as an important part of the proofing process. Unfortunately, you do not have a crystal ball and might not always know what clients want, so err on the side of caution and be polite and nonjudgmental when pointing out any potential mistakes.

Read the entire source document before you accept a project. If you feel that the source text is so incomprehensible that you cannot possibly translate it, then decline the project, and do so politely. If it is a long-time client, you might want to point out some of the shortcomings of the source text, but before you say these things with iron-clad conviction, check with a trusted colleague to get a second opinion on your opinion.

Consider the possibility that you might be wrong. Translators might not fully understand some of the sentences in the source text, and there is nothing wrong with that. This is where the international networks of linguists come in—we help each other! It is part of our job to dissect very complex documents and to produce a linguistic equivalent in the target language. However, consider this—perhaps a translator does not fully understand the source text (or a portion thereof), not because it is so poorly written, but because the translator has not completely kept up with current usage in his or her source language. Translators must consider the possibility that this might be the case, especially if it has been a number of years since they lived in a country in which their source language is spoken.

Source texts are almost never perfect (unless you get very lucky). Expecting the perfect source text (easy to read, no strange abbreviations and acronyms, no formatting issues, perfectly written) is analogous to a certified public accountant who expects her client to be obsessed with Excel spreadsheets. Poorly written source texts will be a big part of your professional life. Look on the bright side—any grammatical or style issues can usually be eliminated by translating the text!

Research before you ask/comment. Before you comment on a source text, do some research. Google a few lines and see if your client is the author. If so, then you must really use kid gloves. I heard about a colleague who told a client that the source text was “terrible,” only to be informed that the client, a highly respected economist, had written the text herself. My hunch is that the colleague was not familiar with the highly specific way of writing for academic journals, but tried to shift the blame to the source text, which brings me to the next point.

Stick to your areas of expertise. There is a reason I do not translate documents for the pharmaceutical industry: I am not qualified. Source texts in this area would not make sense to me, not because they are poorly written, but because I lack the expertise to understand them.

I very certainly do not have all of the answers, but above anything, I try to remember that we are in the customer service business. Without clients, all our knowledge is worthless.
I am sure many of you have encountered the stunning black and white photograph *Man Feeding Swans in the Snow* in the past few weeks. (See page 29 if you have not.) The photo has gone viral, with millions of views worldwide. I can only imagine that you were as awed as I was by the image captured by Polish photographer Marcin Ryczek. The composition is so simple and yet so striking. It is a modern-day *yin* and *yang*, with its colors and its striking juxtaposition of the sheltering blanket of snow against the cold and chilly waters. In short, it is one of those images that one could spend pages and pages writing about.

But aside from the philosophy and aesthetics, there was one more aspect of the photograph that really struck me. Despite all of the huge advancements in photographic technology, this black and white image is very, very simple. And while I assume that the photographer used a digital camera, it does not appear to be technologically manipulated or enhanced, yet it still strikes us with its exquisite beauty and power.

This provides a classic starting point to write about a misconception in our field that I think is very widespread—namely, that every development in translation technology should find uniform application.

Can you imagine anyone looking at *Man Feeding Swans in the Snow* and complaining that so little technology was used in the image? Or suggesting that making it into a color image or using some Photoshop shenanigans would have properly jazzed it up a bit? The very idea sounds hideous and just as crazy as declaring that all translation should be done with the utmost that technology has to offer.

By and large, the ongoing development in translation technology is relatively linear, meaning that—as it usually works with technology development—each building block is placed one by one on top of more building blocks.

But it is important to understand that this does not mean that every one of us translators—the main actors of this industry—are compelled to adopt each of these blocks as if bound to them by some strange fate. True, we are well off if we understand each of the new translation technology developments so we can assess their usefulness to us, but it should be the *usefulness* and not the mere *existence* of a technology that makes us want to adopt it. In fact, I think the market even requires some of us to limit ourselves to working with technologies that have been around for a long time (such as nothing but personal computers, electronic communications systems, and Internet access). Others will need to work with the latest technologies of today and tomorrow. Still others—the majority, in fact—will fall somewhere in between.

We serve a highly diverse market. To be more exact: we serve many markets with very naturally divergent needs. We need to find the technically best way to serve the very niche for which we supply translation. Since we often serve several niches, we might have to equip ourselves with slightly different technology for each. And if the latest in technology does not fit one or any of the markets to which we cater, it might just not fit. Period.

The Translation Automation User Society (TAUS), recently published the *Translation Technology Landscape Report* (download it free at http://tinyurl.com/TAUSReport) that matches the development of translation technology with different eras of our industry. According to the report, the
1980s were the Translation era, during which the industry focused on documents that were translated without any technology. The 1990s were the era of Localization, in which the focus was on software translation with translation memory and terminology software. The 2000s were the era of Globalization and featured the simship (simultaneous shipment) of products in many languages, achieved with the help of translation management systems. In the 2010s, the era of Integration (by the way, that is right now), the focus is on integration into enterprise systems achieved with machine translation and advanced leveraging. Looking ahead to the 2020s, the era of Convergence, TAUS predicts that translation will be embedded in every app and on every screen, bringing real-time customized machine translation to fruition.

At what point did I lose you?

Do not worry—apparently I am also a few years behind.

Do all of these analytics come out of thin air? Well, some of them might stand on pretty shaky ground, but where they are all wrong is in the assumption that our whole industry is heading that way.

Granted, many larger clients have been using translation management systems these past few years. Are these your clients? Some of you will answer in the affirmative, certainly, myself included. But does this mean that our industry as a whole has reached or will ever reach that era? No, because it clearly does not make sense for so many clients and projects to have such massive systems. The same is true for technologies like machine translation in its various forms. Machine translation has already carved out an important place for itself, and that space will continue to grow. If you want to work with that technology, whether as a post-editor or by helping to develop or implement these systems, great. There should be plenty of work for you if you know how to market yourself adequately and have the needed skill set.

If you choose to take an earlier exit from the technology development highway, however, you will find that there are plenty of opportunities at virtually every stage. And if you change your mind, it is never too late to find a feeder road and get right back on the highway.

Man Feeding Swans in the Snow speaks to all of us, partly because the photographer chose a technology that suited his objective. It is the same as good translation aided by technology that is appropriate, useful, and precisely suited to its purpose.
Newcomers and students: what do they need to know? Many beginning and aspiring freelancers struggle during their first months and years in the business, despite a strong demand for more translators and interpreters. Our experts offer tips on what every new freelancer must do in order to succeed.

Ray Reyes: Chief Executive Officer and Chief Strategist, Latitudes Consulting

So, you have chosen to be a translator? You have finished school, compiled your transcripts, and joined ATA. You consider yourself to be highly skilled and quality conscious. You are motivated, energized, and excited to be a part of connecting the world through translation. Sounds great, now what? It is time to build your business. Without experience, referrals, or clients, how do you market yourself? First, there is not a secret sauce or silver bullet, there are not any short cuts, or easy ways to fast-track your business. One proven way to being a successful translator can be found in this formula; Proficiency x Activity = Success. It may sound simple, but it is anything but simple. If it were, every translator would have a thriving, successful business. Always remember, before you can be a great translator you have to be proficient at getting clients.

Let’s look at how to become proficient. As the world of translation becomes more and more competitive you have to be able to stand out from the crowd. Companies find value in specialists. For example, do not just focus on an industry. Specialize! Find an industry niche and become an expert! Show value! Because there is NO value (or money) in being a jack-of-all-trades. Once you have identified your niche, then you have to get active. Be creative with your marketing activities. Here are some ideas: submit articles to your target industry’s publications on how translation affects their business; blog about how translations are used in your target niche; or find an association to join and volunteer to contribute to its newsletter. And do not wait for the phone to ring—reach out to your target customers and share your passion for helping them solve a problem. Finally, you will have to submit lots of samples (and, being a newbie, probably unpaid samples). But being an expert in your niche will help prospects overlook your lack of experience. Just remember, if it were easy, everyone would be successful.

Susanne van Eyl: English>German translator and coordinator of ATA’s Mentoring Program

Few things are more important for translators in today’s world than their behavior in two key areas: 1) within a translation team, and 2) on an e-mail listserv. Both forums can directly affect a translator’s professional future positively or negatively. Let me explain.

Translators working on a team with an editor and proofreader will greatly foster the success of a project if they hand over their part of the project on time, cooperate with other team members (including the project manager), and adhere to glossaries and directions. And let’s not forget the importance of handing in good work. The other team members will remember this and recommend these colleagues for other jobs when the occasion arises. Even in situations where the teams are anonymous, the client will know how well a team worked and make sure to hire all members for other jobs.

Translators who engage in discussions on the e-mail forums provided by ATA or other organizations can greatly enhance their careers by making sure that all contributions are courteous, knowledgeable, and to the point. For example, I have often recommended people on ATA’s German Language Division listserv who have shown great expertise in areas where I am not competent. I will say to a client that I have never worked with X because she and I do not share the same expertise, but that I have been impressed with her answers on the e-mail listserv and that they may want to talk to her and see if they get the same impression. The feedback has been good every time.

Translation jobs are often passed on through word of mouth, so being in good rapport with your colleagues can benefit your career. The same word of mouth can be detrimental to someone who is difficult to work with, hands in projects late or full of errors, or who comes across as uncooperative.

Chris Durban: French>English translator and author of The Prosperous Translator

Translators who are just starting out can obsess about “marketing” and “branding” and the like. Sure, positioning is important, but you also need something to sell. So I advise newcomers and students to focus on behavior(s) that develop and consolidate core translation skills.

1. For students: nowadays most reputable programs require intern-
ships. But do not stop there. From year one, contact professional translators (through ATA or local groups) and set up job shadowing gigs (days or even half-days) during vacations, afternoons off, weekends, whenever. Observe, listen, and learn.

2. Hit the road: there is no substitute for living in your source-language country for at least a year (more if possible). So do it: during your student years and immediately after. No procrastinating— the logistics become far more complex as you get older.

3. These days, most translators are self-employed. It is exhilarating, but can be daunting for folks with a 9-to-5 mindset. So buckle down and get your head around it. And remember, junior members of other professions log (far) more than 40 hours a week as they get under way; be prepared to do the same.

4. Read a business daily. Regardless of your current or potential specialization, you will discover who is doing what and where the budgets are. Investing 30 to 60 minutes a day will help you identify areas that need your skills (along with useful skills to develop).

5. Avoid whiners and victims. Do not engage; they will sap your energy.

6. As a translator, you must write better than 97% of the population. So practice. Sign up for Daily Writing Tips (www.dailywritingtips.com) or any one of the dozens (hundreds?) of other similar services. Read about writing, but do not stop there: write. A diary. A blog. Real letters to your mom and dad, grandma, or favorite teacher(s). Forcing yourself to write every day exercises essential muscles.

Join the Discussion on ATA’s LinkedIn Group

Want to contribute your viewpoint? It’s easy. ATA members can join the discussion by logging on to the Association’s LinkedIn group (www.atanet.org/linkedin.php). Just look for the “Please Discuss” thread.

who likes to do things “my way” can spoil the entire effort.

For the well-organized business, writing down all of your business practices in a “Quality Manual” may not actually take that long. However, you need to allot time to collect the evidence of your system. For instance, your quality manual says that unsatisfactory translations are sent to a third party, but it may take a while before you have a case where this happens. There are lots of templates available online to help you write the procedures and create a quality manual.

A good idea is to seek the assistance of a quality “registrar.” A registrar is a company that conducts the audit and grants the certification on behalf of ISO, CEN, or another standards organization. They operate independently and are subject to their own standard of practice, ISO 17021. The registrar will provide one or more “auditors,” who will actually review your existing quality documentation and perhaps visit your office to talk to your staff to ensure that you are indeed practicing what you preach. If they are satisfied with what they see, they will issue the “Certificate of Compliance.” If not, they will likely issue a list of “non-conformities” you will need to address before they return. A good registrar may agree to review your existing documentation before performing the actual “Quality Audit,” which can save you a lot of money in advance. A quick web search will likely reveal many such registrars in your neighborhood, which can also save you money.

For many, standards may seem like a needless paper chase; trying to fit a “word business” into a numbered template. And there may be many buyers that really do not care whether you are certified or not, but those are the same buyers who are likely to get their maintenance crew to do the translations or resort to automatic translation. The translation standards being created today will help educate the public that there is a better way, a standard way, of conducting the language business.
In life, I feel it is our duty to fulfill our potential as human beings. Correspondingly, in our work we must strive to nurture our latent talents to achieve all that we can in our chosen field. At each stage of our journey, we must cultivate the personal and professional values that will allow us to achieve the greatest success and personal satisfaction. I am speaking here of responsibility, to ourselves, to those around us, and to our future. The following are a few pointers to illustrate my argument.

Enjoy where you are now. Do not stop trying until you feel comfortable with what you have attained. Working toward an ultimate goal will never be easy. The important thing is to appreciate and enjoy where you are now in your journey; that is, assuming you are trying to improve yourself and not resting on your laurels. You need to be careful not to live thinking only of the future, of a time when you expect to have accomplished more. As the classic oldie “Turn! Turn! Turn!” by the Byrds says, there is “a time for every purpose.” By following that advice, you will avert the frustration that comes from wasting a lot of time and energy comparing where you are now to where you think you should be. This energy could be employed more productively by improving your present situation. There are things over which you have little control, and there is no guarantee there will even be a future. That being said, for the most part, things do have a habit of working out in the end.

Be truthful. You must endeavor to do each assignment to the best of your ability, being truthful to yourself and to others regarding your efforts. Always try to do more than is expected, expressing the creativity and diversity of your natural talents.

Use your judgment. Carefully weigh each decision you make. Do not be contentious with those around you, whether clients or coworkers. Do not bring up issues if they are truly unimportant, especially if doing so could hurt your relationship with others and does not fulfill a viable purpose.

Remember, at the end of the day, we are all interconnected although we may not realize it. I remember this concept being driven home in business school. The simple example used was a shirt: the department store that sells the shirt is in one location, the thread used to make the shirt in another, while the parts are sewn together and assembled somewhere else. People from all over the world whom we will never know collaborate to make many of the items we use every day. The similarity I see to our lives is that nothing happens randomly. The world shapes our lives. We learn life lessons from the people we least expect would teach us, whether we are aware of it or not. This means we must make the most of our interactions with others, since we never know when a life lesson will present itself. When we happen to be working with people we like, we should enjoy the experience. Likewise, when dealing with someone we dislike for whatever reason, we need to try to turn it into a positive interaction (complaining wastes time). They have been put on our path for a reason, and it is up to us to figure out what we should learn from them. That is why it is so important that we help care for each other. We all have a unique and valuable role to play on earth as well as in our sphere of business. If we were able to connect the dots, we would already know our purpose, not only for ourselves but for others as well. A rising awareness, in time, will help us to recognize these truths.

Learn to observe your own actions. Yoga teaches that one of the signposts that we are advancing in consciousness is that we begin to detach and to witness our actions as we are performing them, and can thus modify them for the better. In a similar fashion, when you reach a certain level of proficiency in interpreting, you begin to witness your own renditions live, in both consecutive or simultaneous, and can begin to focus on improving them in real time.

In short, it is our responsibility to attempt continuously to make our lives the best they can be (and, consequently, our careers). Doing so will be beneficial not only for ourselves, but for our environment on all levels. As Abraham Lincoln said, “You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.”

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**María Cristina de la Vega**

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María Cristina de la Vega is certified as a Spanish <> English interpreter by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the State of Florida, and the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. She is the president of ProTranslating, Inc., a language services provider in Florida. She blogs at http://mariacristinadelavegamusings.wordpress.com.
Blog Trekker

Why Do Some Freelance Translators Fail?

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

I am not a great “tough love” advice-dispenser, but I am going to give it a try. I work with a lot of beginning translators in my online course. When I follow up with students over the months and years after they finish the course, or when I talk to beginning/aspiring translators in general, some of them have “made it” as freelancers and some of them have not. When thinking about advice for translation newcomers and translation students, I have unscientifically identified a few pitfalls that can cause serious problems for people who are in the freelance launch phase. I am sure that readers have great tips and anecdotes, too, so feel free to contact me at corinne@translatewrite.com!

Expecting too much return from too little marketing effort. I get a lot of inquiries from beginning freelancers who are “very discouraged because they’ve applied to over 30 translation companies and received no work.” I know I have said this a few (hundred) times before, but here it is again. During my first year as a freelancer, I applied to over 400 translation companies. Then I sent every single company that responded positively a handwritten note with a business card, thanking them for their response and letting them know that I looked forward to working with them in the future.

Expecting the startup phase to be shorter than it is. I think that six months is the bare minimum that anyone can expect—two months to look for work, two months to do the work, and two months to get paid. A year is probably more realistic, and I think that most freelancers reach “cruising speed” after about three years.

Having weak language skills. As often stated by Chris Durban, author of The Prosperous Translator (http://prosperoustranslator.com) it is hard to develop the linguistic and cultural competence that a translator needs without spending at least a year in your source language country(ies). And do not hang out with speakers of your target language the whole time you are there!

Not putting yourself out there. I get it: you are not good with strangers, you do not want creepy exes finding your address online, and so forth. But the simple truth of freelancing is that people cannot hire you if they cannot find you. They cannot refer work to you if they do not know who you are. So whether it is in person or online, or preferably both, you have to come out of hiding.

Getting stuck on the low rate treadmill. This is a tough one. Most beginning translators do not set out to be underpaid, but working is better than not working, and you have to start somewhere if you want to break into the industry. Many beginning freelancers tell themselves that in a few months or years, they will trade up to better-paying clients. But if you are translating 10 hours a day just to pay the bills, it is hard to find that time, so you are more likely to stick with the low-paying bird in the hand.

Remaining in denial about how much work it is to be self-employed. A wise self-employed person once said that being an entrepreneur means working 60 hours a week for yourself so that you do not have to work 40 hours a week for someone else. I am a firm believer in avoiding perpetual overtime, but the essence of this statement is true. I recently gave a talk on self-publishing, after which many of the attendees commented that the idea sounded intriguing, but “like a lot of work.” Um … yeah! It is a lot of work, but I am more interested in putting that work into my own project than into lining a traditional publisher’s pockets. The same is true of being a freelancer. It is a lot of work! Did we mention that it is a lot of work? But the ability to make your own decisions and take responsibility for your own future makes it worth it.

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Dizionario Combinatorio Compatto Italiano

Reviewed by: Roberto Crivello

Author: Vincenzo Lo Cascio

Publisher: John Benjamins Publishing Company

Publication date: 2012

Number of pages: 668

Number of entries: 3,000


Price: $59.00

Available from: AbeBooks.co.uk (paperback) benjamins.com (paperback and e-book platforms)

The Dizionario Combinatorio Compatto Italiano is a portable dictionary (6¾ x 9¼ inches, 1-3/8 inches thick). The typeface is legible but a little too small; one point size bigger would have helped. The paper is of good quality, but due to its size and binding, the dictionary will shut on itself unless it is opened right in the middle. If you want to read the definitions carefully while using both hands for another purpose (as I was doing while typing this review), you will need to put a heavy object over the pages to keep the dictionary from closing. Of course, this will not matter if you just need to look up an entry quickly, but having the dictionary in the e-book format would be almost essential if you plan to use it as a daily reference.

Content

The entries are in Italian only, but the introduction is written in both English and Italian. As stated in the introduction, the dictionary is intended to help non-Italian speakers with an advanced linguistic competence find the appropriate word combinations for communicating in Italian. The introduction also states that the dictionary can be useful for native speakers who want to improve their lexical choices when writing in and speaking Italian.

Many will use this as a dictionary of collocations. Even though in linguistics collocations are considered to be only one of the word classes (such as nouns, adjectives, etc.) that give structure to a combination of words, the distinction between classes is subtle. Therefore, for general purposes, we can use the term “collocations” to refer to the “combinations” that are included in the dictionary. As many of you know, a collocation is a sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. The main feature of a collocation is that the link between the two components is unpredictable. For example, in the collocation bandire un concorso (to announce a competition), the reason for choosing bandire over other possible verbs, such as lanciare (to launch) or avviare (to start), cannot be deducted from the base (concorso) alone, so the expression needs to be learned separately.

Since command of a language is linked directly to the ability to associate its terms with each other correctly, a good knowledge of collocations, together with the knowledge of grammar and syntax, is necessary to express yourself correctly and to be understood easily. Collocations crop up all the time, and often translators do not even realize that they are not just translating words but also adapting collocations. For example, the word order of the collocation “black and white” (as in, “a black and white printer”) is reversed when it is translated into Italian, becoming bianco e nero (“una stampante in bianco e nero”).

This dictionary is a welcome addition to the landscape of linguistic resources and is useful not just to non-Italian speakers, but also to Italian speakers and to translators. Translators are constantly subject to linguistic “contamination” (interference from the source language). If they are not careful, they might end up reproducing collocations literally—maybe not in simple cases like “black and white” above, but in more subtle cases such as “last but not least.” (Depending on the context, this can be translated in a very different way than the standard ultimo ma non da meno or similar expressions that you find in English>Italian dictionaries.) Sometimes a translator might know that.
“you just don’t say it this way,” but might have a hard time thinking of the right collocation. This is where consulting a dictionary of collocations can help refresh your knowledge on the subject.

Coverage

The dictionary’s introduction is detailed and does a good job explaining that words have their combinatorial preferences. For example, for a word like pane (bread) we can have un tozzo (a piece), but we cannot use un tozzo in combination with carne (meat) or formaggio (cheese). We should use un tocco instead.

The introduction goes on to explain that a verb does not combine with all adverbs but only with a few of them, based on its semantic compatibility. For example, arrivare (to arrive) does not combine with velocemente (fast), even though in some contexts the combination is allowed, such as in a construction like arrivare velocemente alla soluzione (to quickly arrive at a solution). Explanations and other useful examples are given for all of the eight grammatical categories in which the word combinations of the dictionary are classified: adjective, adverb, prepositional phrase, noun, preposition, quantifier, verb, and idioms. I recommend reading the entire introduction carefully, especially if you are unfamiliar with collocations.

Due to the large number of collocations that exist in any language, you cannot include every possible collocation for every entry. Let’s look at some examples. If we look up carne (meat), mentioned previously, in the quantifier category we find fetta di carne (steak), pezzo di carne (piece of meat), taglio di carne (cut of meat), and tocco di carne (chunk of meat). A native speaker can easily think of a few more quantifiers: striscia di carne (jerky), involtino di carne (roulade), and, on the gory side, even brandello di carne (strip of flesh).

Now let’s evaluate a less common term, facciata. The proper meaning of facciata is “front” (as in, the front of a building), and its figurative meaning is “appearances.” For the figurative meaning, we find in the dictionary four combinations in the verb category: giudicare dalla facciata (to judge by appearances); guardare oltre la facciata (to look beyond appearances); mostrare un interesse di facciata (to show feigned interest); and restare alla facciata (to go not beyond appearances). Again, a native speaker could think of other collocations, such as nascondersi dietro una facciata (to hide behind a façade) and ostentare una facciata (to feign).

As a third and final example, we can look up offesa (offense/insult/charge) in the adjective category, where we find: atroce (heinous); gratuita (uncalled for); grave (serious); imperdonabile (unforgivable); ingiusta (unfair); involontaria (accidental); leggera/lieve (minor); mortale (mortal); personale (personal); and plateale (manifest). Again, there are other combinations: cocente (bitter); insopportabile (intolerable); sanguinosa (deadly); and invendicata (unavenged).

Usefulness

This dictionary is the second of three books of this type arriving on the Italian market. (Until a few years ago, no dictionary of collocations was available in Italian.) It follows the Dizionario delle Combinazioni Lessicali by Francesco Urzi, published in 2009, and predates by a few months the Dizionario delle collocazioni by Paola Tiberii. Both dictionaries claim to have more than 6,000 entries, which is double the number of entries in the Dizionario Combinatorio. However, there is a more extensive (and much more expensive) two-volume edition of the Dizionario Combinatorio with 6,500 entries, which would put it on the same level as the Urzi and Tiberii dictionaries.

As previously mentioned, the fact that there are missing combinations for entries in the Dizionario Combinatorio is inevitable, but this does not diminish its usefulness for the intended audience. But in a resource where the more entries you can insert the better, optimal use of space would be paramount, and in this respect, I think that the space could have been used more efficiently.

The introduction states that an explanation in square brackets will be provided when, “... word combinations may be difficult to understand […] especially when […] figurative.” While it could be difficult for a foreign speaker to understand a figurative combination, this is usually not the case for a native speaker. Moreover, along with the definition, each entry includes information on hyphenation. A native speaker who uses a dictionary of collocations is usually only interested in the word combinations, and the more the better. In fact, the dictionaries by Francesco Urzi and Paola Tiberii do not provide definitions or hyphenations for the entries or explanations of the collocations. We can only imagine how many more entries and collocations could have been crammed in the 668 pages of the Dizionario Combinatorio had it followed similar criteria for space optimization. As such, I think this dictionary, while generally useful, is much more useful for a foreigner than a native speaker.

Finally, I think it would have been beneficial to issue a general “warning” or “guideline” about the use of collo-

Continued on p. 39
Here on my desk is a Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch that has never lived up to its promise of usefulness in my business, and therefore is in very good condition. I am willing to part with it for only the cost of postage. Before you jump at this opportunity, be aware that it is a monolingual German dictionary. The first person to respond by e-mail will be able to claim it.

New Queries

(English->French 5-13.1) In the world of betting and gaming, what are “pair combinations?” Here is some context: “Bets can be placed for straight, boxed, back-up, pair, and wheel combinations.” What are they, and is there any cogent way to express this in French?

(English->Hebrew 5-13.2) The gerund “wayfinding” is a stumbling block for a colleague trying to render this phrase into Hebrew: “I also like the idea of wayfinding on an entrance, indicating where to continue on the journey.” Is it synonymous with “mapping?” If so, that should make the task easier.

(English->Spanish 5-13.3) “Stowaway” would be an intriguing word to translate into Spanish, even without a technical meaning. In this case, though, it is computer-related: “Choose among precision laser mice, spill-resistant keyboards, and devices with tiny, nanosized stowaway receivers.” What can be made of this?

(German->Italian [English] 5-13.4) A company’s VIN has to be officially posted somewhere on or in the car. The colleague posing this query wonders about the phrase Folie geklebt, im Motorraum, ww. am Pfosten A under the description Anbringung des Fabrikschilds. It sounds as if there are two alternative locations. English is acceptable as an answer, although the original query did not involve English.

(German->Russian [English] 5-13.5) What is going on with the vehicle cab in the phrase Fahrerhaus aufkippen/ abkippen? What does this refer to, and what would be good Russian for it? Although the original query did not involve English, I will not quote the entire paragraph, but the colleague posing the query is concerned about the two words in bold print: По заданию Компании Исполнитель обязуется оказывать услуги по ... сопровождению наклонно-направленного бурения, сопровождению отработки долот, оказанию управляющих услуг. That should be enough. As might be surmised, the passage is part of a contract.

(Italian->English 5-13.6) Originating from a request for information by the Polizia Giudiziaria, mezzo breve seems to imply a “short meeting,” but the colleague posing the query wonders if there are any nuances she has failed to get. Here is a bit of context: ... facendo seguito al colloquio mezzo breve appena intercorso con il vostro Sig. XXX, sono a richiedere. Can anyone nail it down definitively?

(Italian->English 5-13.7) In a patent, zero angolare proved difficult. The translator posing the query quotes this text: Metodo di identificazione di uno zero angolare del profilo a camma di una lavastoviglie secondo una qualunque delle rivendicazioni, detto metodo essendo caratterizzato dal fatto di comprendere le fasi di. This passage is followed by a series of steps concerning an electric motor. Who can help?

(Polish->English 5-13.8) In an arts-and-crafts context, with no possibility of getting more specific than that, przedmiotowy versus podmiotowy proved difficult. To encourage clarification, I present the entire paragraph: Prace te są szczegółowym tego wyrazem [doznań i obserwacji natury] w ich dwojakim sensie: jako natura naturata i natura naturans (stworzona w rozumieniu przedmiotowym i tworząca w rozumieniu podmiotowym). What is the difference?

(Russian->English 5-13.9) I will not quote the entire paragraph, but the colleague posing the query is concerned about the two words in bold print: По заданию Компании Исполнитель обязуется оказывать услуги по ... сопровождению наклонно-направленного бурения, сопровождению отработки долот, оказанию управляющих услуг. That should be enough. As might be surmised, the passage is part of a contract.

(Spanish->English 5-13.11) Two terms apparently exist for forms of clearing through crop cuttings: guachapeado and casqueado. Can anyone explain the difference between the two terms? Perhaps this bit of context will help: Mano de obra, se expresa en jornales (8 horas de trabajo) en el mantenimiento del cultivo, básicamente por la limpieza, se distinguen tres tipos de limpiezas, cada una de ellas cubre un área distinta: a) casqueado: XXX m² por cada jorunal; b) guachapeado: XXX m² por cada jorunal; c) brotado: XXX m² por cada jorunal.” Aside from explaining the difference between guachapeado and casqueado, the term in bold also caused problems. Any information would be appreciated.
Replies to Old Queries

(English->French 2-13.2) (combining peas): Bruno Sterckeman affirms that this is the act of harvesting field peas using a combine harvester. Like other grains, field peas are ready to be harvested when they are dry. It may be useful to call these *pois secs* to keep them distinct from *petits pois* (green peas), but the term in question is translated as *moissonner des pois* or *récolter des pois*.

(English->German 2-13.3) (dimple): In a welding context, says Roland Greifer, this most likely is *Gräbchenbildung*, meaning that one or more small indentations show up in the weld seam or spot weld. Some of the reasons for the occurrence of this are described on the Autobodystore.com forums (http://bit.ly/Autobodystore-dimple).

(English->Portuguese 3-13.12) (non-overlapping shift): For Edmea McCarty, this is *turno consecutivo, produção em série*.

(English->German 2-13.7) (alter-themes Himmel): Margarite Heintz Montez, who has a family Bible from 1848, suggests “ancient everlasting firmament” for this, the last word seeming to be more popular than “Heaven” in older tomes.

(English->Italian [English] 2-13.8) (Bremerlaufleistung): The description given, says Cynthia Klohr, is of a hot water heater unit that is generally used to heat apartments or single-family homes and to provide hot water for household purposes. The thermostat is placed between the existing controls and the boiler, and supervises and optimizes the number of times the flame switches on (*Bremerstarts*). It also monitors the boiler’s continual performance, which is the *Bremerlaufleistung* in question. Roland Greifer states that the term refers to the burner’s operating performance.

(English->Portuguese 3-13.11) (Calidad A): Margarite Heintz Montez says that this is best rendered as “Class A” or “Grade A,” assuming that the salary scale at this establishment has grades of B, C, etc.

(Spanish->English 3-13.11) (RLI, CPT): Verónica Flores, a new member from Cedar Park, Texas, believes that the latter is an abbreviation for Cantador Público Titulado, the accounting degree that is the equivalent of “Certified Public Accountant” in English.

Thanks for all your contributions. Keep ‘em coming!

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<td>Spanish into English</td>
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Upcoming Events

June 1-2, 2013
Japanese Association of Translators
24th Annual International Japanese-English Translation Conference
Honolulu, HI
http://ijet.jat.org

June 14-15, 2013
InterpretAmerica
4th North American Summit on Interpreting
Reston, VA
www.interpretamerica.net

June 19, 2013
Iowa Interpreters & Translators Association
9th Annual Conference
Des Moines, IA
www.iitanet.org

August 1-3, 2013
Nebraska Association for Translators & Interpreters
14th Annual Regional Conference “Opening Doors to the World Through Language”
Omaha, NE
www.natihq.org

September 13-15, 2013
Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters & Translators
11th Annual Conference
Memphis, TN
www.tapit.org

November 6-9, 2013
American Translators Association
54th Annual Conference
San Antonio, TX
www.atanet.org/conf/2013
English speakers have long complained about wretched translations of theatrical material, but English is not the only language into which bad theatrical translations are made. I thank Ricardo García for mentioning to me a PhD thesis by Anjana Martínez Tejerina on *La traducción para el doblaje del humor basado en la polisemia: Los hermanos Marx cruzan el charco* (“The Translation for the Dubbing of Humor Based on Polysemy: The Marx Brothers Cross the Pond” [i.e., The Atlantic Ocean]). Tejerina is a professional movie subtitler who received her PhD from the Universidad de Alicante in 2006, and then continued her studies in screen translation at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Her thesis was based on polysemy, in the double sense of the word: *la polisemia hace que grouchome se moje de la vida en matrimonio, un detalle sutil que se pierde en la traducción.* [“Marriage” indicates as much the ceremony of marriage as the matrimonial state per se. So, the polysemy means that Groucho is making fun of married life, a subtle detail that is lost in the translation.]

Alas, to lose one third of the jokes is only slightly less bad than losing one of the three principal Marx Brothers! Spaniards are not the only people who miss a lot in American films if they are not fluent in English, and subtitling can be just as bad as dubbing. And more can be missed than jokes.

According to *ATA Newsbriefs* of October 2009, a Swedish doctoral thesis by University of Gothenburg student Jenny Mattsson argues that:

discourse particles are often very important to the understanding of American films, but are rarely translated for use in subtitles. Mattsson says that discourse particles, such as “well,” “you know,” “I mean,” and “like,” are words and expressions that can have different functions in a language depending on the context in which they are used. She says that these words can be used to give structure to the spoken language. The space and time limitations of subtitling mean that much of the original dialogue tends to be abbreviated. Mattsson’s thesis shows that most instances of discourse particles in films are not translated into subtitles, which can cause nuances in the dialogue to be missed by audiences. Some of the nuances may be

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Submit items for future columns via e-mail to mnh18@columbia.edu (that is 18, not el-8) or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 2222 Westview Drive, Nashville, TN 37212-4123. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.
particular importance to the audience’s understanding and opinion of characters and events in films. The thesis shows that creative solutions can be used to translate discourse particles, and that English and Swedish can be used to express the same functions, but in different ways. Mattsson says even the most difficult-to-define words and expressions in English have Swedish equivalents.

More recently, ATA Newsbriefs of July 2012 ran excerpts from “More Than Words: How Some Movies Wind Up With Lousy Subtitles,” by David Wagner, posted by National Public Radio Online (Washington, DC) on June 28, 2012. In the online article, Wagner states:

When Alice’s flamingo-cum-croquet mallet was translated as a “flamenco,” I’d had enough.

Everybody makes mistakes, but whoever was responsible for the error-ridden subtitles nearly ruined my viewing of Alice, Jan Svankmajer’s otherwise delightful adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.

The principal reason for bad subtitling, according to Wagner, is the same one that people in all branches of translation complain about. “You get what you pay for,” and many film producers are simply not willing to pay for good translations. They want the time required to produce a good translation, or even to allow for the most elementary proofreading that would catch obvious “typos, punctuation gaffes, and head-scratching translation choices.” Thus, an otherwise good film can be utterly ruined.

Beyond the considerations of time and money, some film producers’ choices are just senseless.

For reasons I still don’t fully understand, home video companies often commission new subtitles for DVD releases, paying for rushed, cut-rate translations instead of using the perfectly decent ones that already exist from theatrical runs …

Even more incomprehensibly, subtitlers aren’t necessarily working with the original dialogue. In worst-case scenarios, they might be creating subtitles from an already-dubbed film. There’s been speculation that this might have been the problem with one widely mocked DVD box set of Akira Kurosawa films. Perhaps, the theory goes, the subtitles are based off Chinese dub tracks rather than the original Japanese lines. And perhaps that explains why, according to one online analysis, what the British Film Institute version subtitles as “I saw an old woman in the forest,” this version subtitles as “I met a monster in the spider bush.” Or how, similarly, “Keep away from me, you stink” becomes “Get away, you are of crope smell.”

And, more times than not, with dubbing and subtitling as with all other translations, the good ones are not praised because they are not noticed. The bad ones bring down the wrath of the public on the entire translation profession.
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