The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

The ATA CHRONICLE

Taking Advantage of ATA’s Client Outreach Kit
Educating the “Uneducated” Client
Losing Your Best Customer—and Thriving!

With this issue:
From the President
Caitilin Walsh
president@atanet.org

All of the Above

The mission of ATA is to benefit translators and interpreters by promoting recognition of their societal and commercial value, facilitating communication among all its members, establishing standards of competence and ethics, and educating both its members and the public.

ATA’s mission statement is clear in what we want to accomplish. While addressing the mission—the how—is not specified, it is entrusted to our Board of Directors, to key volunteers, and to members themselves. As in any healthy association, this “how” is the subject of much discussion, which is often quite passionate. ATA has long operated on the premise that there is no single “best” activity, and that our members, association, and clients are best served by several complementary programs.

ATA’s public relations (PR) media outreach is probably the most visible manifestation of our efforts to promote recognition, and, to a certain extent, to educate the public about what we do and why it’s needed.

- Certification dovetails into this. While at first glance certification appears to benefit the individuals who attain it, the credential provides our PR efforts with a branding point—a clear signal of professionalism that can be easily communicated and recognized by the public.

- Our advocacy and lobbying activities vaunt the societal value of our services, helping create a market, for example, by backing laws and regulations that require the use of professionals in the courts and health care system.

- Standards are a fundamental activity that supports our mission by codifying best practices and signaling clear expectations to the market.

- Our client and school outreach programs (also part of our PR efforts) empower our members to educate the public about what we do and to reinforce the message that a professional is needed when it comes to language services.

ATA’s PR inbox has been stuffed lately with media requests for information and quotes from ATA in response to reports that the translation and interpreting industry is predicted to be the fastest-growing career over the next five years.1

These calls and e-mails are a direct result of the work done over the past nine months to rebuild our PR program in a way that provides a solid foundation for sustainable growth by restructuring the PR Committee, identifying and funding consultants, and training a cadre of spokespersons. (See the article about ATA’s PR projects on page 7 of the May 2015 issue.)

Spreading our message is not limited to official spokespersons. Indeed, we as members have a responsibility (reflected in our Code of Ethics and Professional Practice) to promote the same professional standards we want associated with the title of interpreter and translator. To foster that commitment, our conference team has put together several activities, including a session on using the freshly revamped client outreach materials to grow your own business (see page 14 of this issue), as well as speaker training by Jan Fox, an engaging Emmy award winner who has been working intensely with our spokespersons. Jan will also bring her flair to a closing keynote to help transform conference connections and learning into real value, both for your own benefit as well as for the benefit of all.

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American Translators Association
The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

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Our Authors
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Advertising Directory

39 Kilgray Translation Technologies
www.memoQ.com

33 Landmark Audio Technologies
www.LandmarkFm.com

37 Lighthouse
www.lighthouseonline.com

17 National Security Agency
www.nsa.gov

40 SDL
www.sdl.com/studio2015

10 University of Illinois
ma.translationandinterpreting.illinois.edu
Shedding New Light on Old Favorites

It’s been a long time since ATA held its Annual Conference in Miami—since 1985 to be exact. A lot has changed, both in Miami and in terms of the conference. ATA’s 56th Annual Conference will be held November 4-7 at the Hyatt Regency Miami. This year, the conference will see new light shed on some old ideas, which will help attendees get more exposure and more benefits!

Wi-Fi: The language services industry has undergone many changes over the years. As the pace of the industry heats up, many translators and interpreters have to be available online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Fortunately, this year we are able to offer free Wi-Fi throughout the entire conference venue. No more hunting for the Wi-Fi zone to check your e-mail during the breaks. Most importantly, it will offer session presenters the ability to get online and improve the quality of their sessions. Now everyone will be able to use the Conference App throughout the conference to find the next session, connect with colleagues, and complete session surveys online.

Résumé Exchange: In addition to networking with colleagues, ATA’s Annual Conference allows translators and interpreters the chance to connect with agencies and other individuals looking to hire linguists. In addition to being able to create a personal profile with your own information on the Conference App, we’re bringing back the Résumé Exchange this year, which allows translators and interpreters to get a little face-to-face time and drop off paper résumés and business cards to agency recruiters and other interested parties. This popular event will be more structured and in a little larger room than last year.

Brainstorm Networking: Also back this year is the highly successful Brainstorm Networking event that debuted in Chicago last year. Brainstorm Networking is a fun, interactive gathering where you get the chance to meet other colleagues while tackling common challenges that translators, interpreters, and others in our industry face each day. It’s a chance to gain new friends, new colleagues, and new insights.

Book Splash: After a long hiatus, the Book Splash is being brought back this year. This event showcases authors and translators highlighting and signing their books. In addition to translated works, business-related books designed for freelance translators and interpreters will be available. Come and meet the authors that you’ve all heard about over the years and on the web!

Keynote Speaker: This year, we’re also bringing back a closing keynote speaker. In keeping with the theme of getting exposure, we’re pleased to welcome four-time Emmy winner Jan Fox to the conference. Jan is a former news reporter with over 30 years of experience and an expert in getting your message across to the public and to your clients. In addition to an inspirational closing keynote, Jan will be offering a practical session on public speaking with tips that will be sure to impress both her audience and yours.

Welcome Celebration: We put a new twist on an old favorite this year as well. Both the old Welcome Reception and the Division Open House will be merged into one large room, creating one large party we’re calling the Welcome Celebration! The tables for the various divisions will be integrated into the party right from the start—no more moving from room to room. The party also starts a half-hour earlier this year so that you can find your colleagues, have a drink and some food, and still head out for more Miami fun in the evening.

ATA Totes: After giving out several thousand totes that end up being discarded, back in your closet, or dropped off at local charities, ATA will be selling its own, high-quality tote at an affordable price that will hold your laptop, résumé, or other documents both at the conference or after. It’s a great souvenir that’s sure to become the must-have item at the conference.

The Sessions: This year we had another bumper crop of session proposals, which made choosing the best ones difficult. We were fortunate to be able to find the right mix of new sessions along with other tried-and-true sessions. As you can see from the Preliminary Program included with this issue, the conference provides a great overview of the past, present, and future of the language services industry. Come and see what’s in store!

So, whether you’re a veteran attendee of the conference or this is your first time, you’ll be sure to find some old treasures along with new discoveries to enjoy. I look forward to seeing you there!
ATA Annual Conference:
The Preliminary Program for ATA’s 56th Annual Conference is included with this issue of The ATA Chronicle. This is your first chance to check out the more than 200 sessions and events planned for the meeting in Miami, Florida, November 4-7, 2015. You’ll also want to read President-elect David Rumsey’s column on page 5 to find out more about what’s new this year—including free Wi-Fi. Registration is open, so why wait? Register now at www.atanet.org/conf/2015!

Win a Free Night’s Stay at the Conference Hotel: You could be one of five conference attendees to win a free night’s stay at the Hyatt Regency Miami! Reserve your hotel room now and you’ll automatically be entered to win. You’ll find details online at www.atanet.org/conf/2015/win.htm.

Association for Machine Translation in the Americas Summit XV: The Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA) was established in 1991 as a forum for researchers, developers, and users of the technology. AMTA’s biennial conference brings together key players to discuss the role of machine translation in big data, workflow optimization, and translation services. This year, AMTA’s 15th Summit will be held at the Hyatt Regency Miami immediately preceding ATA’s Annual Conference. ATA members can register for the Summit at the discounted AMTA member rate. For more information, please see www.amtaweb.org/mt-summit-xv.

ATA Webinars on Demand: If traveling to ATA’s Annual Conference is not an option, please take a look at continuing education that you can do in your home or office. ATA now offers more than 50 webinars on demand, and ATA-certified members earn continuing education points for watching. To see the full menu of webinars and to order, please go to www.atanet.org/webinars.

Active Membership Review: If you’re not already an ATA voting member—that is, if you have not passed a certification exam or gone through active membership review—become one today. Have your voice heard. Go through Active Membership Review. It’s a quick, free online process to show your dedication to translation and interpreting. Sign up today and vote this fall. For more information and to register, please go to www.atanet.org/member_ship/memb_review_online.php.

New ATA Member-to-Member Provider! NYA Communications is the newest ATA Member-to-Member Program provider. The company offers ATA members a discount on its online course The A to Z of Freelance Translation, which covers everything from getting started to obtaining repeat business. Award-winning German<>English freelance translator Nicole Adams designed the course to teach translators how to avoid the mistakes she made in setting up and running her business. ATA’s Member-to-Member Program provides a way for members to offer discounts on services related to translation and interpreting. Please join me in welcoming NYA Communications! Look for all of the Member-to-Member providers on ATA’s website at www.atanet.org/member_provider.

Reminder: The ATA Chronicle will change to a bimonthly schedule with this issue. At the same time, Newsbriefs, ATA’s online e-newsletter, will move to a twice a month schedule to give you a fast take on the latest translation and interpreting news. The next issue of The ATA Chronicle will be the September/October edition.
Money Matters: The Story Behind Numbers and Board Decisions

By Ted R. Wozniak, ATA Treasurer, and Evelyn Yang Garland, Member of the Finance and Audit Committee and ATA’s Board of Directors

As pointed out in the FY2013-2014 Treasurer’s Report in the March issue, our overall financial performance was not entirely satisfactory. More recent data from July 1, 2014 through January 31, 2015 confirmed our previous concern about the financial performance of the Association. The pie charts on page 8 show the average share of revenues and expenses for the Association’s activities for the past three fiscal years (FY11/12-FY13/14).

The overall trend is positive, yet it is moving slower than what we would like to see. As a result, the Board made a series of decisions at the April meeting to bring the Association on a more solid financial footing. These decisions aim to achieve one or more of the following three purposes: cutting costs, increasing revenue, and reducing financial risks. The following will explain how these decisions work together to further improve ATA’s financial position, all while preserving or improving the member experience.

Annual Conference

Among ATA programs, the largest expense item is ATA’s Annual Conference. Thanks to the detailed cost analysis conducted over the past two years, we have been able to get a clearer picture of the true cost of organizing the conference, including overhead costs for staff time. Over the past three years, the Annual Conference generated $652k in revenue annually on average, but incurred $713k in expenses after overhead allocations, thus resulting in an average shortfall of $61k each year. This shortfall in conference revenues was partially “paid for” or subsidized by membership dues from those who did not attend the conference. The Board believes that this is not fair to the entire membership and should not continue in the future. Therefore, the conference registration fee will be raised gradually starting with this year’s conference in Miami. To add more value to the conference, the Board has been working with the conference organizers to improve the conference experience. For example, free Wi-Fi will be provided throughout the conference area. This way, the Annual Conference can cover all of its costs and be a better event for all.

The ATA Chronicle

The second largest expense item among programs is the Chronicle, accounting for $493k of the Association’s expenses, or 18%. The revenue generated from the Chronicle is minimal (i.e., $97k, or 3.5% of the Association’s total revenue on average). The Chronicle is a concrete benefit that all members receive, so it should arguably be subsidized with membership dues. The problem was that the magazine consumed too large a portion of what ATA collected in dues (i.e., $0.23 of each $1.00 in dues). After hearing the report from the Chronicle Review Task Force, which was appointed in November 2014, the Board has decided to adopt the Task Force’s recommendation to reduce the number of issues per year from 11 to 6 and to keep the print edition. This is accompanied by a plan to soliciting bids from additional vendors and to utilize cutting-edge technologies for delivering the digital edition of the magazine, while still keeping the total cost of producing and delivering the magazine lower than before. An Editorial Board has also been created, which will help to expand the variety of articles in the magazine.

Membership Dues Policy

Another decision made at the April Board meeting was to establish a Membership Dues Policy that ties dues increases to inflation. In the past, dues increases had been voted on by the Board every few years. (See the chart on page 9.) The overall effect of these “leaps” in dues kept ATA’s revenue from dues roughly in line with changes in the consumer price index (CPI) over the past 20 years (see chart). As retrospective calculation shows, if 20 years ago ATA had decided to tie dues increases to inflation, each member would have paid a few dollars less overall, but the Association would have received the due increases earlier, which would have put us on better footing during the lean years.

The new policy on dues is consistent with best practice. It would calculate membership dues each year based on the CPI-U (All Urban Consumers) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics on March 31 of each year for the previous year,
Money Matters: The Story Behind Numbers and Board Decisions Continued

Figure 1: Average Revenue Share
FY11/12–FY13/14

- Dues—61%
- Conference—24%
- Certification—7%
- Professional Development—1%
- Other Revenue—1%
- Divisions and Misc.—2%

*Publications revenue comprising 0.2% not displayed.

Figure 2: Average Expense Share
FY11/12–FY13/14

- Conference—26%
- General and Administrative—26%
- Member Services—8%
- Publications—3%
- Professional Development—2%
- Other Revenue—1%
- Divisions—3%
- Certifications—12%
- Chronicle—18%
- Board Meetings & Officers and Directors—2%

For example, on March 31, 2015, the CPI-U reported a -0.1% decline for the past 12 months. That means that there is no automatic dues increase on January 1, 2016. From a financial perspective, the new policy provides more certainty for the Association and its members because the dues are calculated each year based on a published index, rather than voted on at irregular intervals. For the Association, the new policy would also guarantee that the income from dues at least keeps up with inflation, and the regularity of dues increases make long-term budgeting easier.

Certification
The Board also continued its analysis of the decision that would allow non-members to take ATA’s certification exam. This analysis included new information revealed from the recent financial review of ATA’s major programs (The ATA Chronicle, certification, Annual Conference, and professional development) and the Member Value Survey. In a nutshell, all of the major programs were found to be operating at a deficit after the Association’s overhead had been allocated to them. With this in mind, the Board has decided that rather than setting an arbitrary date for opening the certification exam to non-members, the opening should be contingent upon meeting defined financial and logistical conditions. The rationale behind this decision is that the Association needs a stronger financial foundation before it takes on additional financial risks in the near term, such as the risks brought about by a major change in the Certification Program. The Board remains committed to opening up the certification exam to non-members once these conditions are met.

Other Investments
The Board fully understands the importance of long-term investments in areas such as public relations and professional development for the membership, about which members care deeply. As an example, the budget for public relations has been doubled to approximately $50k for fiscal year 2015-2016 (July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016) as requested by the Public Relations Committee. Investments in other programs and infrastructure for the Association will be considered as finances improve.

Conclusion
ATA’s Board of Directors made a series of deci-
sions at the April Board meeting. While these decisions involve a wide range of activities and policies, they are all part of the overarching effort to strengthen ATA’s finances. This effort should accelerate the Association’s move to a more desirable financial position, where it can pursue its long-term goals to better serve the members. The reapportioning of expenses will also bring about positive developments in the short term, such as free Wi-Fi throughout the Annual Conference venue and a significantly enhanced digital version of *The ATA Chronicle*.

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**ATA Webinars On-Demand**

- Pricing Strategies for Translators and Interpreters (Judy Jenner)
- Getting Started as a Freelance Translator (Corinne McKay)
- Revisers: Invisible But Important (Jonathan Hine)
- Working with Direct Clients (Corinne McKay, Chris Durban)
- Translating Civil Procedure from Spanish into English (Tom West)
- New International Payment Options (Eve Bodeux)

To learn more, please visit [www.atanet.org/webinars](http://www.atanet.org/webinars) today
ATA President Meets with Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of International and Foreign Language Education, U.S. Department of Education

From Left: Sharon Fechter (immediate past president, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, and dean of humanities, Montgomery College); Jim Stegkal (ATA Past President and CEO, Cetra Language Solutions); Kende Jourdenais (dean of the Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation, and Language Education, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey); Bill Rivers (executive director, Joint National Committee for Languages—National Council for Language and International Studies); Kristin Quinlan (CEO, Certified Languages International); Caitlin Walsh (ATA President); Mohamed Abdel-Kader (deputy assistant secretary for the Office of International and Foreign Language Education, U.S. Department of Education); Lenore Yaffe Garcia (senior director for the Office of International and Foreign Language Education, U.S. Department of Education); Dan Davidson (president, American Councils for International Education)

ATA President Caitlin Walsh joined top-level language education stakeholders after a meeting with Mohamed Abdel-Kader, the deputy assistant secretary for the Office of International and Foreign Language Education at the U.S. Department of Education. The meeting was part of the Joint National Committee for Languages—National Council for Language and International Studies Advocacy Day, held in Washington, DC on May 7-8, 2015. It provided an opportunity to reinforce ATA’s message about the importance of funding and supporting language education in the face of the widening disparity between predicted growth in the translation and interpreting industry and declining programs and enrollment in language programs. This was positioned as an issue of both global competitiveness and national security.

ATA Member-to-Member Discounts

Are you an ATA member who wants to save money? See what discounts your fellow members can offer through ATA’s Member-to-Member Discount Program! www.atanet.org/member_provider

- NYA Communications
- The Tool Kit
- Payment Practices
- Translate Write
- Intralingo
- The Translator’s Tool Box
- Getting Started as a Freelance Translator
- Translation Office 3000

To participate in the program or to learn about the benefits, contact ATA Member Benefits and Project Development Manager Mary David at mary@atanet.org.
Letters to the Editor

Translations for Legal Evidence

I have two comments concerning the article “Best Practices in Translations for Legal Evidence: How to Protect Yourself and Your Clients,” which appeared in the April issue.

1. Martin Cross describes ways to recognize translations for evidence, but neglects to mention the clearest sign: Bates numbers on the bottom of each page, often accompanied by the notation “Confidential” and/or “For attorney’s eyes only.” This marks the pages as the product of discovery and indicates that these pages are at least being considered as evidence.

2. The author also addresses “editorial suggestions” by clients (i.e., attorneys). While these can in fact flag errors and should be taken seriously by the translator, it is not unknown for an attorney who has some knowledge of the language in question to ask, “Couldn’t this mean --- ?” In other words, the attorney would like to use the document to bolster his case and wants the translation to reflect this. For example, the word “cautioned” appears in the English translation, but the attorney suggests that the translator change it to “warned.” In this situation, the translator must give serious consideration as to whether the suggested translation is an acceptable word choice. If so, he may acquiesce to the change. If “cautioned” is not an appropriate choice, then under no circumstances should the translator fall for intimations that the attorney knows better or that this is a “legal issue.”

Eve E. Hecht
Elizabeth, NJ

Martin Cross Responds

Eve Hecht brings up two good points in her letter.

With regard to markings such as Bates numbers, while these are indeed clear indicators that the translation is likely to be used for evidence, it’s worth keeping in mind that translations are often ordered before discovery, so the absence of Bates numbers or other typical indicators of the document being used in a legal dispute does not necessarily mean that the translation will not be used for evidence.

I definitely agree that suggestions from clients are another area where translators must be the final arbitrator. It is the translator who signs the certification, so the judgment rests with the translator.

Martin Cross
Seattle, WA

ATA’s 56th Annual Conference
November 4-7, 2015
Miami, Florida

The Preliminary Program for ATA’s 56th Annual Conference is included with this issue of The ATA Chronicle. For more information on the conference’s outstanding networking opportunities and educational sessions, please be sure to check out ATA President-elect and Conference Organizer David Rumsey’s column (page 5), as well as ATA’s conference page: www.atanet.org/conf/2015.
Big changes are coming to The ATA Chronicle! After five months of intensive work, the Chronicle Revamp Task Force submitted its final report of recommendations to ATA’s Board of Directors at the April 2015 meeting in Alexandria. The task force’s report was very well received by the Board, and the revamp of the magazine is now well underway. Task force member Jeff Alfonso and task force chairperson Corinne McKay give us an overview of the task force’s process and what changes are in store.

Jeff Alfonso: At ATA’s Board meeting in Chicago in November 2014, Corinne proposed a task force to investigate ways to improve and update the Chronicle while also finding ways to save money. After the Board approved the task force and its members (ATA Director Chris Durban, current Chronicle proofreader and ATA Active member Sandra Burns Thomson, ATA Past President Thomas L. West III, plus me, and Corinne), our five-month process began.

Corinne McKay: ATA Treasurer Ted Wozniak’s cost analysis of the Chronicle showed us that the magazine was consuming 23% of ATA’s dues revenue. Although the Chronicle is a significant benefit to our members—and it’s a benefit that is provided equally to every member across the board—the task force felt that we could cut the magazine’s budget significantly while maintaining most of the benefit to our members. This seemed like a win-win: money and staff time could be freed up for other programs, while our members could continue to receive the magazine, but with a wider choice of formats and a wider range of content.

JA: Phase I had us taking off in sprint-like fashion once Corinne e-mailed “Chronicle task force: it’s a go!” We started gathering information. We began interviewing a diverse group—our focus group—from
within the membership to get their opinions about the *Chronicle*. We wanted to learn what they loved and what they didn’t. It was also important to obtain suggestions and ideas to improve the *Chronicle*.

Our first joint task was creating the focus group interview questions. This was a process that went through many versions until we all felt it was ready. Our focus group interviews were mostly done over the phone. We found that the conversations led to brilliant ideas that we would not have achieved otherwise. While all this was going on, ATA Headquarters sent a reader survey to every ATA member to gather even more information.

**CM:** From the get-go, we took an “everything is on the table” approach. For example, we asked our focus group members to rate every column in the magazine and tell us whether it should continue in its current form, continue in a different form, or be discontinued. We asked our interviewees what adjectives came to mind when they thought of the *Chronicle*. In addition, we asked them to rate a long list of potential changes to the *Chronicle*.

**JA:** It was clear that many members wanted additional meatier, more advanced articles and that, overall, they preferred to see the front cover photo reflect one of the articles in the magazine. (You may have already noticed this change, which began with the March 2015 issue.)

In Phase II, we reviewed other translation industry magazines, including the *ITI Bulletin* (a frequent winner of the prize for best periodical at the FIT Congress), *The Linguist*, various ATA chapter magazines, and magazines from other associations outside of our industry. This gave us more ideas about what to include in the revamped *Chronicle*, as well as what worked and what didn’t in a real-life practical sense.

**CM:** In Phase II, we started to get a clearer idea of what the new *Chronicle* could be. First, we saw that many associations are moving away from producing a print publication every month and are combining less frequent print issues with an enhanced online version. We also saw that many associations include much more coverage of association issues than ATA has done traditionally (e.g., upcoming big decisions, what events and conferences the officers have attended on behalf of the association, what the board of directors is working on, what key issues the association is facing). Based on feedback from our members, we felt that some of these changes could work for us as well. At every stage we tried to focus on ways to save money while either maintaining or improving the benefits that our members get from the *Chronicle*.

**JA:** Phase III had us combine all of the information we had gathered. At this juncture, there were some very clear changes we could all support. Next, we had to mix everything together in a cohesive plan that we would recommend to ATA’s Board. We considered everything from content, design, style guides, advertising, digital options, the editing process, and much more.

Phase IV involved preparing our detailed recommendations for the Board, with individual task force members working on specific components of the plan. For example, one of my focus group interviewees had suggested an app as an option for the online version of the magazine, and I was assigned to look into the best digital options. I solicited proposals from numerous vendors and included the other task force members in the associated demos and conference calls so they could remain informed and we could maintain consensus.

**CM:** In the end, the task force made 16 specific recommendations for revamping the *Chronicle*. We divided these into recommendations with and without budget implications. Our main cost-control recommendation was to publish the magazine six times per year (instead of the current 11 times) beginning in July 2015. Don’t worry—the print edition of the *Chronicle* isn’t going anywhere; we’ll just be publishing it less frequently. Our main content-improvement recommendation was that an Editorial Board be formed to provide the editor with additional ideas for content and with author contacts. We also included many other recommendations: for example, that the magazine include more photographs of ATA events and ATA members, that Board members take turns writing a “From the Boardroom” column to keep members updated about what the Board is working on, and that we create a better way to archive articles so that they are easier to find online.

**JA:** All members of the task force contributed their part to the final recommendations. Corinne incorporated everything and sent it back to us for review. There were at least five drafts before we were all satisfied with the final report.

The final report was presented to the Board at its April meeting. Once again, I was very anxious for their decision. The Board unanimously approved both of our action requests: 1) the magazine will be published six times per year beginning in July 2015, and 2) an Editorial Board will be created to provide guidance regarding the magazine’s content. I look forward to seeing how the other recommendations will be implemented.

Participating in the task force was a fantastic journey. I learned a lot about publishing, my fellow colleagues, and collaboration.

**CM:** I’m thrilled with the outcome of the task force’s work because it shows that it’s possible to attack and solve some of the thorniest issues within ATA. The *Chronicle* was often seen as a huge expense with no clear solution. By bringing together an energetic, motivated group of people and asking ATA members for their input, we saw that we could not only decrease the *Chronicle*’s budget significantly, but we could also use the revamp to serve our members better through improved content and more modern delivery methods.
Presenting to Potential Clients: You and ATA’s Client Outreach Kit

By Stephanie Tramdack Cash and Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo

Perhaps you’ve worked with direct clients and would like to improve your approach to them. Or maybe you’re thinking about the rewards of working directly with buyers of translation or interpreting services, but you’d like some pointers on how to wade in. Either way, ATA’s Client Outreach Kit is for you.
What Is the Client Outreach Kit?
ATA’s Client Outreach Kit will give you the tools you need to attract direct clients by positioning yourself as a resource for translation and interpreting buyers and users. The core of the kit is a fully customizable PowerPoint presentation that you can use when speaking to potential clients—at chamber of commerce meetings, trade association events, professional seminars, brownbag lunches at local law firms, or any other venue that would draw the kind of client for which you are looking.

The kit also includes a set of practical, stand-alone Skills Modules to help you make the most of the core PowerPoint presentation. Topics include writing and delivering an elevator speech, developing effective public speaking habits, getting invited to speak, writing your own introduction, and handling question-and-answer sessions effectively. Modules are available as PDF files.

The kit was developed several years ago by a team of volunteers, including Chris Durban, Lillian Clementi, Dorothee Racette, and Ellen Banker. In 2014, we refreshed the kit, making small updates that allow you to use it more easily in your own presentations to clients. In November, we presented the updated version to a lively crowd of attendees at ATA’s Annual Conference in Chicago.

Tips for Increasing the Effectiveness of Your Client Outreach Presentation

The kit (currently only available in English) is designed so that you can use the PowerPoint as is, or extract from it and tailor it to your audience. Here are some highlights from the kit, plus some suggestions we’ve added.

Buy into your own product/service and your own presentation. As obvious as this may sound, you need to internalize the values you’re presenting. This takes time. Perusing ATA’s Client Outreach Kit will help you do this. You might simply read through the kit a number of times, at brief intervals, and jot down your thoughts as you go along. This will help you “inhabit” the text and make it your own. Expand on the points that have the most to do with your audience. They will feel you are speaking straight to them on behalf of yourself and your profession, not mouthing a canned speech.

Practice your talk, ideally with a patient friend who will give you feedback. If you plan to use the PowerPoint, ask if you can meet with a tech support professional at the place where you’re speaking ahead of time. Arrive well in advance of the start time, allowing plenty of time for set-up and troubleshooting. This will make a big difference in your appearance of confidence and control. Bring a printout of your presentation just in case, so you can sail along even if there is a last-minute glitch.

Keep your posture loose, not rigid. Practice this ahead of time, as often as you can think of it, whether you’re around people or not.

Try to start out with a humorous translation anecdote—they abound in our profession! But keep in mind that the idea is to create something positive out of the funny-yet-scary thing that could happen in translation (or when interpreting) if not carried out professionally. Shift the potential client from fearing how a translation or interpretation could go wrong to looking forward to capturing a vast landscape of opportunity by hiring a professional interpreter or translator. This will involve discussing reasons to translate/interpret in the first place, with a focus on the audience’s industry.

From that set-up, move to the all-important reasons for using a professional translator or interpreter, as opposed to using cheap or free in-house solutions. This is also the time to expand on the need to work closely in a true team effort with translators or interpreters—to make the result context-appropriate and to ensure that it serves the intended purpose.

Point out that the buyer of a text translated (or interpreted) into a foreign language really has no way to judge the quality. This is an opportunity to refer translation buyers to ATA’s client education publications Translation: Getting it Right, Interpreting: Getting it Right, and Translation: Buying a Non-commodity, all found on ATA’s website.

Discuss the need to plan ahead. Points you should include are the importance of assessing specific needs for a translator or an interpreter, considering the intended use of the translated text, the source and target languages, and the need to review the final translated text. Emphasize the need to hire a professional—not just any bilingual—and to spend wisely (e.g., perhaps not translating as much as originally intended). It is also crucial to tell your audience to listen to the translator’s or interpreter’s advice. This would also be a good place to provide helpful information on how to evaluate vendors’ claims. For example, you can point out the need for experience and that professional
translators should always work into their native languages.

**Be very careful about keeping your talk to the time allotted.** We could all go on talking forever about our profession, but your professional image suffers if you don’t keep within the time allotted for your presentation. This is where your practice session(s) with a friend will help. Time yourself.

Another point you might want to consider is to think about all that goes on when you’re not at the podium. Be aware that you do your best marketing when you are completely relaxed and not even thinking about “pitching.” It’s who you are, personally and professionally, that will attract people to you. Put your best foot forward and let the real you shine through. And remember: a formal presentation may lead to good business, but your sincere interest in others is the best, most natural form of marketing. Practice listening to the needs and concerns of others. Learn to draw people out on the real business problems they face. You’ll be surprised by what happens when you go to a business, professional, or community event with the mindset of taking part and learning about other people. This is real marketing, in the best sense of the word. The actions that result from this mindset will also help you get invited to speak in the first place.

**We Want to Hear from You!**

Send us your stories! We’re interested in hearing about your own marketing experiences with the Client Outreach Kit, including what works and what might need rethinking. ATA’s Public Relations Committee would like to save such anecdotes for use in our PR efforts. Please send them to us at www.atanet.org/client_outreach/feedback.php. We wish you much success as you reach out!

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**Related Links**

- **Client Outreach Kit**
  www.atanet.org/client_outreach/index.php

- **Client Outreach Kit Feedback Form**
  www.atanet.org/client_outreach/feedback.php

- **Interpreting: Getting it Right**
  www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right_int.php

- **Translation: Getting it Right**
  www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right_tran.php

- **Translation: Buying a Non-commodity**
  www.atanet.org/docs/translation_buying_guide.pdf

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**ATA 56th Annual Conference Continuing Education Credit Information**

For complete information: www.atanet.org/conf/2015/ce_credit.htm
inspired THINKING

When in the office, NSA language analysts develop new perspectives on the dialect and nuance of foreign language, on the context and cultural overtones of language translation.

We draw our inspiration from our work, our colleagues and our lives. During downtime we create music and paintings. We run marathons and climb mountains, read academic journals and top 10 fiction.

Each of us expands our horizons in our own unique way and makes connections between things never connected before.

At the National Security Agency, we are inspired to create, inspired to invent, inspired to protect.

U.S. citizenship is required. NSA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants for employment are considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or status as a parent.

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

APPLY TODAY
Because of the nature of our work, we translators are fated to work with clients who may not always understand what we do and often push our skills and resilience to the limit. But while some may think that difficult clients top the list of challenges translators face in the exercise of their work and business-building activities, that title is actually held by someone else: the “uneducated” client.

Appreciation: The Difference that Matters
Working with difficult clients (those with tight deadlines, last-minute changes, multiple-review-round habits, etc.) can be taxing, but as long as those clients know what translation entails, time and hard work will likely lead to a mutually trusting relationship. This is one where the client appreciates (both literally and figuratively) what the translator does, and where the translator may trust the client not to jeopardize the quality of his or her work or reputation.

Working with “uneducated” clients (who may also be difficult clients) proves a tougher challenge with deeper ramifications. By definition, “uneducated” clients lack knowledge and understanding about what translation is, what translators do, and the challenges of intercultural communication. As a result, they are less likely than most to prepare their texts for translation, make reasonable demands, understand the choices made during translation, involve us in their projects, value our work and feedback, or treat us as partners in the quest for the perfect final text. Therefore, if we ever hope to establish a mutually trusting and beneficial relationship with these clients, education is key.

The Challenge
While client education is part of our job description and we should always be prepared and willing to provide as much information as needed, educating “uneducated” clients may take more time, patience, and effort than we have to give.

However, armed with the right tools, these clients also present an interesting challenge and an opportunity to change the perception the world has of us and our work. Doing so is not without difficulty.

One cannot fail to acknowledge that not all “uneducated” clients are created equal. There are instances when a translator will need to arm himself or herself not only with patience, but with a great deal of stoicism and humor to deal with the situation. This is even more true if that client has no intention of getting “educated,” thinks he already knows all there is to know, or enters the relationship thinking that translators are nothing more than glorified bilingual typists.

But let’s not get ahead of ourselves. The following discusses the different types of “uneducated” clients and how to deal with each effectively.

The Blank-Canvas Client
The Blank-Canvas Client is new to translation and, in my experience, tends to be monolingual. He has no
or little preconceived ideas about language, intercultural communication, or translation in general. This most often stems from a lack of interest in or need for our services. Or his curiosity may have led him to try his hand at a game of “Google Translate back-and-forth,” which is when he realized that things are not as simple as they look. (This is probably what convinced him to hire a professional translator in the first place!)

To a translator, the Blank-Canvas Client is as much a challenge as an opportunity to learn. Indeed, explaining the basics of our trade forces us to take a closer look at things, simplify ideas (perhaps even challenge some), and improve the way we do things when it comes to including our clients in the decision-making process.

As mentioned previously, the Blank-Canvas Client has no preconceived ideas about our work. Educating him gives us an opportunity to promote professional translation and share bona fide knowledge that will benefit not only us but the translation industry as a whole—hence the need to do it right.

The main challenge we face when educating the Blank-Canvas Client is to provide him with enough information, but not to a degree where he becomes confused with too much of it. The good news is that streamlined help is available in the form of ATA’s Translation: Getting it Right (available online as a free PDF), a guide that provides clients who are new to translation with basic, valuable information about the translation process, what to expect, and how to prepare their texts for translation. (An equally valuable resource is ATA’s Interpreting: Getting it Right.)

Educating the Blank-Canvas Client starts with providing him with a copy of Translation: Getting it Right, explaining that it will clarify the translation process and help him get the most out of his translation budget. (That latter point should guarantee that he reads it!) After familiarizing himself with the guide’s contents, the client should have a better understanding of the basics of translation, including the following:

- Not all translations (or translators) are created equal.
- Translation takes as much time as writing.
- Translation is about “exporting” concepts and ideas across cultures, not transposing words.
- An inquisitive translator is good news.
- Typography varies from one language to the next.

Naturally, as you work on more projects with your client and questions/challenges arise, you may need to go into detail about one point or another or address other issues. Provided that your message is clear and consistent, the Blank-Canvas Client will in time become an educated client who understands what you do and trusts you. You’ll also be in a better position to exchange ideas without fear of confusing him or jeopardizing the quality of your work. The same is achievable with our next type of uneducated client, but it will take much more time and effort.

The Biased Client

Just like the Blank-Canvas Client, the Biased Client is often (although not always) monolingual and may be new to translation. But unlike his quick-learning counterpart, he believes strongly in some widely-held translation myths that will take time and effort to dispel. While it is always useful to share Translation: Getting it Right with the Biased Client, you will also need to spend a considerable amount of time dispelling moderately-to-deeply ingrained dangerous misconceptions about translation. Dangerous misconceptions are those that have the potential of deeply and negatively affecting your relationship with your clients and the quality of your work, so it’s important to have an answer ready when specific concerns come up. Most dangerous misconceptions derive from one myth: that translation is about replacing word A in the source language with word B in the target language. Clients who believe that translation is simply about replacing words will generally think that:

- Translation is a fast and simple process.
- Anyone who speaks a foreign language or is bilingual can translate
- Machine translations are as good as human translations.
- There’s only one possible translation for every text.
- Back translation is a good indicator of the quality of a translation.
- Source and target copy are similar in length and structure.

To the Biased Client, translation is easy, fast, and predictable, and any bilingual person is as valuable and knowledgeable as the next. Hence the importance of quickly,
clearly, and consistently disproving the following dangerous misconceptions one at a time:

Translation is a fast and simple process. Answer: Translation is an elaborate deconstruction-reconstruction process that consists of interpreting words and ideas and “exporting” them into another language and culture. That process is as complex and time-consuming as writing (i.e., not typing, but actually writing creative/technical copy). It is also a process that may take longer depending on the level of creativity, complexity, or technicality of the text. My experience has been that professional translators will translate around 250-350 words per hour. Delivery time may be hastened, but not without sacrificing quality, accuracy, or consistency.

Anyone who speaks a foreign language or is bilingual can translate. Answer: There is more to translating than understanding and being able to speak another language. Just as being able to speak/write English doesn’t make you a writer, being able to speak a language doesn’t make you a translator. Professional translators are skilled writers with the language skills, subject-matter expertise, and the socio-cultural knowledge needed to produce an accurate text that reads well in the target language and with which target readers can relate. Even the skills required to interpret or teach another language are different than the set of skills required to translate (and vice versa).

Anyone who speaks a foreign language or is bilingual can review translations. Answer: The decisions made by the professional translator during the translation process are based on numerous factors: interpretation, style, lexical choices, research, available space, errors in the source copy, background material and reference copy, etc. Unless the reviewer is also a linguist and is aware of all the factors that the translator had to consider during translation, the edits made to the text may harm it instead of improve it.

Machine translations are as good as human translations. Answer: While automated translation has come a long way and may be helpful to get the gist of simple texts, raw computer output is unviable as a finished printed product. Machine translation programs typically translate sentences word for word, failing to take context, sense, or style into account. These programs do not distinguish between different meanings of the same word. They cannot analyze technical terminology.

There is only one possible translation for every text. Answer: Translating is not about transposing words, but about expressing ideas into another language. Any idea can be phrased in many different ways. A translation may vary based on interpretation, lexical choice, style, context, available space, target readers, and many other factors. Ask 10 professional translators to translate the same sentence, and chances are you’ll get 10 different translations—all of which may be correct.

Back translation is a good indicator of the quality of a translation. Answer: A back-translation is intended only to ensure that a translation’s original meaning has been conveyed correctly. Because translation depends on many factors (lexical choices, style, etc.), a back translation will not result in a text that is identical to the source text, and therefore cannot be used as the sole indicator of the quality of a translation.

Source and target copy are similar in length and structure. Answer: Different languages follow different grammar, semantic, phrase construction, punctuation, and typography rules, which results in many differences between source and target texts, including differences in length and structure/layout. When working with language pairs with a significant difference in length, it is unlikely that same-length translation can be achieved—at least not without sacrificing content, style, or some other element of the original text. Since phrase construction differs from one language to the next, it is also unlikely that the source and target texts can be laid out exactly the same way.

Regardless of how much your client learns to appreciate you as a professional over time, it may take much repetition for the facts above to replace the preconceived ideas that have anchored themselves in his “pre-educated mind.” Though some situations can try your endurance, it is important to be patient and strive to provide clear, consistent answers. In really desperate situations, remember: a good sense of humor goes a long way, and it’s always better to laugh (at situations, never at clients) than pull your hair out.

Even after working with the same Biased Client for many years, you might still get unexpected surprises! Here are a few real-life examples that prove that even the most hopeless-looking situations are not without moments of humor:

Client: We need this in three days, but send it before if you can (concerning a 150,000-word, brand-new-content text).

Client: We noticed that the three-line burst in this ad didn’t follow the same order as the original text, but it must for artistic purposes, so we’ve moved words around (and published it without checking with you first).

Client: There’s a problem with the translation you provided. We double-checked it with Google Translate, and it doesn’t say what we want.

Situations like those might feel discouraging, especially if you’ve been working with (and educating) your client for a while, but provided that your message is consistent and you have nerves of steel, there’s hope.
that your client will one day understand enough about translation to trust you and allow you to do the same. Unfortunately, the same cannot always be said of our last type of “uneducated” client.

The Recalcitrant Client

The Recalcitrant Client (who could as easily have been called the Know-Better Client) may not be as easily “spottable” as his counterparts because, unlike them, he doesn’t fit the typical profile of the uneducated client. The Recalcitrant Client is not necessarily new to translation, monolingual, badly informed, or ill advised. At first, he may even seem familiar with the target language and/or the translation process. But working with him soon becomes the utmost challenge as you realize that, to him, everything seems “wrong” (although he will seldom provide you with any direction on how to make it right). It may also take all of your skill, patience, and guile to reach a point where you may have a relatively good working relationship with him—if ever.

The truth of the matter is that when it comes to the Recalcitrant Client, you’re not dealing with someone who necessarily lacks information or has preconceived ideas about translation. Actually, what seems to drive the client to doubt your work doesn’t have anything to do with language or translation! Most often, it has to do with mistrust, and perhaps even ego and/or control. Whether the client has any knowledge of the target language or not, he believes that he knows better. He will always doubt, question, and ultimately revise your work, even if he has to resort to machine translation to do so.

Unlike his counterparts, the Recalcitrant Client seldom sees things objectively, and no evidence, explanation, or rework ever seems to satisfy him. That is, unless he feels that he’s had decisive input in the final text or got you to acquiesce to all his demands. Whether that’s something you can do depends on your personality, the value you put on your work and professional reputation, and how much of your livelihood depends on him.

When working as an in-house translator, you might have little choice in the matter. When working as a freelance translator on the other hand, you always have the option to “fire” your Recalcitrant Client (especially if the situation has turned abusive). The following advice about how to deal with overly difficult clients, originally written by Judy Jenner (author of “The Entrepreneurial Linguist” column in The ATA Chronicle), is pertinent:

If your customer makes your stomach turn, you are losing sleep, or can’t talk about anything else, perhaps it’s time to prioritize your mental health over your business’ bottom line […] 2

A translator’s job is complex enough, and while we should always be prepared and willing to educate our clients (because it’s to our mutual benefit), client education should not occupy most of our time or resources. While we can reasonably anticipate having to explain repeatedly that computer-assisted translation is different from machine translation and that we’re the ones doing the work (and therefore need time), we can’t be expected to consent to unrealistic demands, intentionally damage translations, or spend hours justifying every single word because the dictionary, Google Translate, or our client’s bilingual accountant (or plumber) “says something else.”

Ultimately, It’s All about Trust … and Patience

When working with clients who are familiar enough with translation and/or the target language to be able to provide constructive input, the ensuing relationship feels more like a partnership than a service provider-client relationship. That’s really what all translators strive for: trust, collaboration, and mutual respect. Getting there may take a little longer with “uneducated” clients, but it’s an attainable goal for most.

The vast majority of “uneducated” clients are “educable” (or at least willing to get educated), and even though they may never thoroughly appreciate the difficulty of our work, they’ll get to understand enough of the translation process to develop a positive, trusting, and mutually beneficial working relationship with us.

As for dealing with those few “uneducable” clients who may cross our path from time to time, the choice is ours. We may either choose to get crafty, yield, terminate the relationship, or hope and trust that “a little persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious success.” Meanwhile, keeping a sense of humor is not a bad idea!

Notes


Upcoming Events

**July 30-August 1, 2015**
Nebraska Association for Translators and Interpreters
16th Annual Conference for Professional Development
Bellevue, NE
www.atanet.org

**July 31-August 2, 2015**
Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts
Court Interpreter Services
Legal Interpreting Seminar
Little Rock, AR
https://courts.arkansas.gov/event/legal-interpreting-seminar

**August 3-5, 2015**
Société française des traducteurs
“Translate in Chantilly”
Chantilly, France
http://translateinchantilly.com

**September 30-October 3, 2015**
American Medical Writers Association
75th Annual Conference
“Quest Toward Brilliance”
San Antonio, TX
www.amwa.org/events_annual_conference

**October 30-November 3, 2015**
Association for Machine Translation in the Americas
MT Summit XV
Miami, FL
www.amtaweb.org/mt-summit-xv

**November 4-7, 2015**
American Translators Association
ATA 56th Annual Conference
Miami, FL
www.atanet.org/conf/2015

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

Win a Free Night’s Stay at the ATA Conference Hotel

Five lucky winners will receive one free night at the Hyatt Regency Miami, the host hotel for ATA’s 56th Annual Conference, November 4-7! Reservations made before November 2 will automatically be entered to win. Winners will be announced at the Closing Session on Saturday, November 7. You do not have to be present to win. If you are selected, one night of your existing hotel reservation (room and tax only) will be paid by ATA. No cash payment or reimbursement will occur. Make your reservation online now: www.atanet.org/conf/2015/win.htm.
Losing Your Best Customer — and Thriving!

By Wendy Griswold

Surely, losing your best customer is the worst nightmare of many a freelance translator.

We may wring our hands and wrinkle our brows a lot, but truth be told, when push comes to shove most of us are just too busy cranking out the word count to do much marketing. Moreover, most of us do not enjoy marketing, which is one of the reasons we rely on agencies to keep us busy. It can get so comfortable working with one or two agencies that keep us busy, that pay promptly, that know us, and that we look upon as friends, that we sometimes cannot
imagine life without Company X. But the loss of a best client is a fact of life, so prepare we must.

**Breaking Up Is Hard to Do**

It happened to me out of the blue, although looking back, it seems as though over the past few years of dealing with this client the work had become more like work and less like fun, and the easy relationship I had with the staff had become more formal and less relaxed. There were more and more jobs that I considered punishing—the type of work you do because you expect the client to reward you with something better down the road. But the “something better” never came.

And then the final blow, which I really should have seen coming: a new contract that I considered overreaching, abusive, and punitive. I just couldn’t sign it. We negotiated, we exchanged counter-proposals, but in the end the company wouldn’t budge on certain clauses I found unacceptable and we parted ways.

And there went 60% of my workload.

**Weathering the Storm**

1. Although I had been getting 60% of my work from one client, I still had a substantial client base. The first thing I found out was that I was not turning down my other clients nearly as often because I had more time for them. The more work I accepted from them, the more often they called. One client in particular was snowed in with work and was happy to send me as much as I could take. Fortunately, she still is.

2. I did a thorough review of my former and existing clients. I judiciously offered a small discount for returning customers. I did this only for a select few for whom I really enjoy working and who had, over the years, sent me rewarding projects, paid on time, and run truly professional operations. That brought in a substantial amount of work, and the rates have climbed steadily back up, so I consider that judicious discount a good investment.

3. Having done that thorough review of my former and existing clients, I re-marketed to some “dormant” clients without offering a discount. That, too, brought results.

4. Busy or not, overwhelmed or not, allergic to marketing or not, I had still been networking and sending out résumés or filling out online applications for likely prospects.

5. Perhaps most important, my network was strong. I was giving and receiving referrals on a regular basis. With more free time due to the loss of Client X, I was able to accept work—after doing my due diligence—from new clients who came knocking.

6. As a side benefit, I think there was some personal growth associated with this experience. I no longer panic at the prospect of a couple of slow days, or even a couple of slow weeks. I fill any “down” time by catching up on my reading, honing my skills, doing pro bono work, marketing, and getting out more and networking.

**Preparation Is Everything**

If I had to boil this experience down to one lesson, it would be the old cliché “be prepared.” We do not like to think about this sort of thing happening, but it can and does, and if we are going to save ourselves and our businesses, we need to have our lifelines in place. Here are some tips:

- Do not rely too heavily on a small core of clients.
- Hone your skills. The more marketable you are the more likely you are to survive a sudden and dramatic loss of income.
- Set up a slush fund to tide you over during lean periods. Otherwise you might find yourself accepting horrible, low-paying jobs for the interim.
Tips for Reviewing Your Clients

A change in your client’s activities or style is not necessarily a harbinger of disaster. But you may want to ask yourself some questions to see if you can determine whether the change is potentially negative.

- Is the work becoming less rewarding?
- Are timeframes becoming shorter and shorter?
- Are requests for discounts or unpaid work increasing?
- Is payment becoming irregular?
- Are there provisions in the work orders or contract that make you scratch your head and think twice?
- Do you feel as though they are just grinding out the work as opposed to seeking a more refined, professional product? Has the level of quality they demand changed? Is the staff turning over so fast that you find yourself constantly working with inexperienced, untrained project managers?
- Is the quality of the relationship deteriorating? Are you starting to feel like just another “resource”?
- Do you feel you are receiving less support and assistance?
- Are they making a major shift (e.g., from primarily “human” to primarily “machine” translation)?
- Does something about the way your client is doing business make you uncomfortable? Can you pinpoint what that is?

- Expect the unexpected.
- Draw up a contingency plan and budget. Consider the purchases and other expenses you may have to postpone in the event of a disaster.
- Look for signs that a relationship may be changing or that your best client’s business plan has shifted direction. (The questions listed in the box above will help you determine when a client relationship might be changing.)
- Always, always have your résumé current and on the street.
- Be flexible. There are times when lowering your rate a fraction can keep you going until the situation improves.
- Do not burn bridges. “Old” clients can become “new” clients.
- Network, network, network.

The best news? You can survive and do well after a disaster like this. The worst news? There will almost certainly be a drop in income while things get sorted out. The smartest thing I did? Not letting my client base get too small. The dumbest thing I did? Ignoring the signs that the client’s business model had changed. The best news of all? We can all learn from my experience and be better business managers.
Still Don’t Have a Website? Why WordPress Is for You!

By Max Troyer

Why do you need a website in the first place? When clients (both agencies and direct) are deciding whether to work with a translator, they typically follow a procedure that involves verifying several sources to make sure everything checks out. You probably already sent them a résumé with your qualifications, but they’ll very likely try to find you on LinkedIn to see your profile and connections. Hopefully your profile is up-to-date and you have included a profile photo, two ways to show clients you’re a real human being, and that you’re serious about your work. Next, if you listed your website on your résumé, you can bet they’ll visit it. Having a multilingual website demonstrates that you’re serious about your translation business and really want to give your clients a way to get to know you. You absolutely want to curate your web presence, since the worst possible thing is not showing up at all in a search.

In the September 2014 issue of The ATA Chronicle, Dan DeCoursey showed you how to create a free website with Google Sites. With Google Sites, you get a free website that is extremely easy to edit, but you’re limited to the designs Google offers. With WordPress, you can choose from thousands of themes, which make it almost impossible for the visitor to know how you ended up with such a professional website. Plus, WordPress sites don’t cost that much more than a Google Site with a custom domain and Gmail. WordPress is free software that you download from WordPress.org and install on a web server.
Having a multilingual website demonstrates that you’re serious about your translation business and really want to give your clients a way to get to know you.

What Does Your E-mail Say about You?

Let me back up for a second. You e-mailed your résumé to your client, but have you considered what your e-mail address says about you?

According to the DogHouse Diaries blog, using your Internet provider’s e-mail address indicates that you’re probably too loyal to your provider. Using @aol, @me, @hotmail, or @yahoo is a step in the right direction, and while @gmail users get a pass for now, having a personalized domain demonstrates that “you’re savvier at tech than most and you want others to know it.” For me, it means much more. It means you want to be traceable, and this is a really good thing for your clients. Armed with my professional e-mail address, my clients can verify that I own my website domain and that my phone number and address match what is on my résumé.

What Language Should Your Website Be in?

When creating a new website, you’ll very likely write your content in your native language. If you translate exclusively for agencies in your own country, this might be good enough, since they’ll be searching in your native language. However, as your translation career evolves, you’ll likely want to seek out direct clients—and they generally do not speak your language, which is exactly why they need you!

Ultimately, if you want to attract direct clients via an organic search, your website needs to be written in your B language and absolutely flawless. After all, you’re promoting your language skills!

Why Is WordPress Perfect for Translators?

I worked with a long series of website-building platforms before realizing that WordPress could do everything the others could do, but much faster. The killer feature is upgrades. To maintain a secure website, you want it to be up-to-date, but most frameworks don’t make it easy to upgrade. WordPress is very easy to use, and because it dominates the content management system market, it’s very easy to get help when you need it. WordPress also has many themes and plugins to change website design and expand functionality.

WordPress Is Very Easy to Localize

This is not something that can always be said of other frameworks. WordPress started out as a blogging platform, designed to let writers focus on the task at hand without having to worry much about configurations and security. There are many plugins that enable translation, but the one that stands out from the rest is qTranslate X, which is updated often (a good thing). Add this plugin to your website, enable an additional language, and you’ll find a tabbed interface that lets you add translations very easily.

One valuable feature of WordPress compared with other platforms is that the copy-and-paste feature in Word has been perfected over the years so you can copy a source text into Word, have it translated, and paste it back into WordPress without needing to fix text styles and formatting.

Should You Hire Someone or Build the Website Yourself?

This depends on you. If you like to tinker, there are countless tutorials and websites that will show you how to create and develop a website using WordPress. I highly recommend the “Easy WP Guide,” which goes into great detail regarding how to build a site from scratch.

If you want a website that just works, hire an expert. If you’re building it yourself, first consider what content you will feature on your website. At a minimum, you will want an “about me” page, a page with the services you provide, a page with a list of projects on which you have worked (be careful not to violate non-disclosure agreements), a contact page, and possibly even a blog.

The most difficult part of creating a new website is writing the content, and it is very unlikely that you’ll be able to find someone who can do this for you. The time you spend writing your content will probably compare roughly to the time it will take you to build your site. (I actually rather enjoy working on my website.) Ultimately, I think this litmus test will work: if you don’t mind (or even enjoy) learning a new computer-assisted translation tool, then you will probably enjoy building your own website.

Domain and Hosting Concerns

A note of caution: in your searches, you may discover how easy it is to create a website on WordPress.com, which is a WordPress hosting company. The problem is that WordPress.com doesn’t permit you to install any theme or plugin you want, so qTranslate X is not an option. To have full control over your WordPress site, you need to choose a host that gives you full administrator access to your site. I recom-
mend Site5 ($4.95/month) and GreenGeeks ($3.96/month), two independent hosts with great reputations.

The first step is to choose and purchase your domain, which costs around $10 per year. Put some thought into your domain, do some research, and consider that you have one chance to get it right. Most hosts have “one click” installation methods available. If you want to learn how to install WordPress yourself (a very rewarding experience), I recommend a video on WP101 called “How to Install WordPress.” The host will also let you create a personalized e-mail address that matches your domain name.

Next Step
Start thinking about your domain, choose your host, and get WordPress installed and configured. From there, you need to choose a theme that controls the appearance of your website. There are enough free themes available on WordPress.org to keep you busy for a while, but if you cannot find one you like, consider a paid premium theme from one of the many providers. Now you need to add your content, which may mean enabling qTranslate X so you can then add your translated content. Once you are happy with your website, you need to update your LinkedIn profile so that it links to your new website. You should also have your business cards reprinted with your new website and customized e-mail address. Speaking of business cards, the next time you have some free time, consider redesigning your business card to match your website theme!

Notes
1. DeCoursey, Dan. “How to Set Up a Free Website (and Inexpensive E-mail) with Google,” The ATA Chronicle (September 2014), 20.
ATA’s Certification Program has seen a great deal of exciting activity since I took over as committee chair last fall. In April, more than 40 graders gathered for the annual Language Chairs Spring meeting in Alexandria, Virginia—a day of training and discussion on matters essential to certification testing. The Certification Committee had meetings the same weekend, where we not only handled routine housekeeping, but also worked on overall policies looking forward. Here are a few of the areas currently getting attention:

**Exam Delivery:** ATA’s efforts to move us into the 21st century and end handwritten examinations have proceeded too slowly and been encumbered by too many drawbacks. We’re now exploring alternatives to our current model for keyboarded exams. These include at-home, online exam delivery as well as a way to continue our current system of group sittings using a different hardware and software configuration, and also the possibility of using commercial testing centers. We hope and fully expect to have a reliable and secure method for delivering the exam, with keyboard input and limited Internet access, available to candidates by early 2016.

**Membership Decoupling:** In November 2013, ATA’s Board of Directors voted to no longer require ATA-certified individuals to be ATA members, effective January 2016. The reasoning behind this change is that professional credentials not linked to membership in an organization generally enjoy greater credibility. In April, the Board voted to attach conditions (of a financial and logistical nature) to the timing of this decoupling. It now appears that it will not happen in 2016.

**Eligibility Requirements:** As I wrote in my reply to a letter to the editor in the June issue (page 7), exam eligibility requirements are definitely a focus of attention right now. It’s clear that our current system has not been effective at filtering out extremely low-performing candidates and improving overall pass rates. Several options for reforming the system are under consideration.

**Other Developments:**
- Caron Mason has been ATA’s Certification Program Manager since February. Caron is eager to streamline processes and improve efficiency in the overall grading process.
- A project is underway to create an online grading portal, which will bring greater efficiency to the grading process and reduce candidate notification time.
- A task force is studying a reconfiguration of our passage category structure to help bring the exam more in line with stated testing objectives. More details will follow as they become available.
- The Candidate Preparation Subcommittee is working on updating and standardizing resources used in candidate preparation workshops, the aim being to expand the number of workshops offered. This effort is consistent with comments voiced by members at ATA’s Annual Conference and elsewhere. The group is also looking at new avenues for reaching candidates with useful advice.

The Certification Committee always welcomes input from ATA members about improving certification as a coveted credential.
Small Talk Tips for Translators

The old industry adage might be spot on: most interpreters are fairly extroverted, while most translators tend to be introverts. That’s an oversimplification and I know that there are always many exceptions, but during my years in the industry, I’ve noticed that translators struggle more with one important thing than interpreters do: small talk.

Do you hate small talk? If yes, read on. I know small talk can be painful, but you can make it easier on yourself by keeping a few things in mind.

1. **Keep it short.** At networking events, no one wants to hear long, complicated stories. Be succinct and interesting, but resist the urge to tell your life story.

2. **Work on your conversation starters.** The easiest way is to introduce yourself and say something simple along the lines of “I’m new to this event” or something similar. Experienced networkers will get the hint and will introduce you to others. Another good way to start a conversation is to ask questions: about the organization, about that particular event, and about the person to whom you’re speaking.

3. **Learn to listen.** The best relationship builders are people who truly listen and who are not obsessing over what they can sell, but rather how they can help the other person. It’s a powerful thing to think long-term and big picture rather than short-term and project-based.

4. **Don’t monopolize people.** Once you get comfortable talking to one person and your nerves settle down a bit, you might want to hang on to that person for dear life because it’s scary to start over with another person. However, remember that everyone is there to mix and mingle and that you are not the only person to whom they want to speak.

5. **Brush up on current events (including sports).** Even if you don’t like baseball, you’d better have something to say if you’re at an event during the World Series. And while local politics might not be all that interesting (mostly), it would still be good to know that a big new company is investing $100 million in your state. You don’t have to know everything, but the bottom line is to be informed so you can participate in conversations.

6. **Avoid certain topics.** It’s usually best to steer clear of politics, religion, and highly personal matters. Sure, there’s always an election around the corner, and it’s perfectly fine to have an opinion, but I prefer to talk about more neutral matters with people I don’t know or barely know.

7. **Get the introductions out of the way.** It can be awkward when another person walks up when you’re already engaged in conversation and you don’t know the names of either the first or the second person. In my experience, it’s usually best to be honest and say “I’m sorry, we just met, would you mind telling me your name again so I can introduce you to....” It’s horrifying to stand next to people all evening without knowing their names, so it’s good to get the introductions out of the way early. And it’s fine to admit you don’t remember the person’s name. Just ask again. Get a business card and try to remember one particular thing about the person to help you remember (e.g., her purse, his shirt, her cute earrings, his Boston accent).

Small talk is similar to translation in one way: it’s art, not science. And just like translation, it usually gets easier the more you do it. Happy small talking!
Have you ever applied to a translation agency and wondered why you never heard back? After all, you seemed to be exactly who they were looking for, with all the right specializations and a killer cover letter.

While there may be many reasons why you don’t get a reply from an agency, there’s one hurdle to landing that spot in their database you may not have thought of: your references. Many translation agencies ask prospective “vendors” for references to verify their translation experience. So, you listed that project manager with whom you’ve been working for five years, who keeps coming back to you because of the outstanding work you provide. Certainly he will vouch for you. Well, don’t be so sure.

Three years ago, I filled out a registration form for a translation agency that was looking for translators with my specializations. I listed one of my best agency clients as a reference, someone with whom I had been working on a regular basis for years. I never heard back from the agency. I forgot about them. That is, until recently.

The other day, I was contacted by that same agency about a potential collaboration. They had found my profile in ATA’s online directory and thought I might be a good fit. I didn’t realize I had filled out their online vendor form long ago until a message popped up during the registration process saying a translator with my e-mail address was already in their system.

I e-mailed the talent manager (isn’t that term so much nicer than “vendor manager?”) who had contacted me, who quickly responded saying that I was indeed already registered. My application had never been approved because—wait for it—one of the references I had provided at the time never got back to them.

Of course, the translation agency had never contacted me to let me know about this. My application simply got lost in their system, stuck in a dead end due to a formality. I would have never known if it hadn’t been for this coincidence.

This occurrence has taught me two important lessons. First, always check with your references to make sure they are aware you listed them as contacts and get their approval to provide you with a testimonial. You may think they are willing to help you out, but they may be too busy to take the time to fill out an agency’s reference request form. Some agencies may even have a policy against providing references altogether. Always check.

The second lesson is: if you haven’t heard back from an agency after a week or two, contact them. This is especially important if you’ve merely filled out an online registration form rather than had contact with an actual human being. Write to the vendor (or talent) manager at the agency and explain that you have followed their online registration procedure but haven’t heard back. Then ask if there is any more information they need from you. This may not always result in a response, but it’s worth a shot.
In my April 2014 column, I reported on two webinars conducted in January of that year during which the participants and I collected ideas for features in translation environment tools that were either missing or that we felt were underdeveloped. We presented those lists to the tool developers, who took this to heart by responding very comprehensively. Many promised changes or improvements in their tools, and we agreed to follow up with them after a year. Well, it took slightly longer than a year, but I did finally touch base with all those who had promised changes to see what kind of progress had been made. I compiled all of the progress reports in a recent version of the Tool Box Journal.1

But why stop there? As a next step, I thought it would be helpful not just to look at individual features, but to find out whether we as a community could come up with something bigger, perhaps the “The Next Big Thing” in translation technology. So, I opened a shared document and promoted it widely on social media (including ATA’s LinkedIn group). The result? Although we may not have broken completely new ground, we were able to come up with some overarching themes that we then passed on to the tool developers. (The list included the developers of Across, Cafetran, Déjà Vu, Fluency, Lingo, MateCat, memoQ, Memsource, Metatexis, OmegaT, SmartCAT, Smartling, Star Transit, Swordfish, Text United, TM-Town, Trados Studio, Translation Workspace, Wordbee, Wordfast, and XTM.) Here is the letter.

Dear Tool Vendors:

I would really like to thank you again for your willingness this past year to respond to the translation community’s suggestions on where we would like to see improvements in your technology.

The upcoming follow-up seminar has long been booked, so there is obviously great interest from our side to continue this discussion. We are grateful that you’re taking the time to engage with us again.

Last year’s topics dealt with very specific features concerning user-friendliness, translation memory and term base handling, and usage of external resources. For this year, I’ve tried to push this to the next step and ask the community to chime in with more groundbreaking ideas that look toward where translation technology should really be headed. I’ve had quite a few submissions, and though I’m not sure we really came up with anything completely new, here is my attempt to distill the discussions into some over-arching topics.

**Translation Environment:** I’ve been using the term translation environment tool for several years now, and quite a few others have adopted the term as well, but I’m only now starting to see why this was a particularly good choice because of its description of something very desirable. We want a tool (or platform) that provides a complete environment that:

1. Gives us the full range of authoring capacities that we can find in full-fledged word processing programs, as well as editing capacities that we find in tools like Adobe Acrobat (such as better and more easily visible commenting features).

2. Gives us access within the tool to all required external resources, whether they are browser-based or found in digital dictionaries.

**Machine Translation:** Many of us are looking for a deeper and different integration of machine translation into our translation environments. While some translators are interested in using machine translation through the traditional route of post-editing of machine translation (PEMT), overall there is more interest in having machine translation be just one of the resources in our translation environments. If machine translation is used to complement and enhance existing processes and if it is interactive,
many see a bright future in using machine translation because it would be more productive and find greater acceptance among practitioners. Suggestions included:

1. A direct integration of Moses into translation environments.

2. Simultaneously using various subsegmented machine translations as AutoSuggestions.

3. Fixing translation memory matches with machine translation and fixing machine-translated suggestions with terms and translation memory.


5. Better reporting on the impact of productivity through machine translation.

OS Independence: You’ve heard this many times over the years—usually packaged as “We want a Mac/Linux version of the tool.” Offering an interface that runs on all platforms (such as through the web browser) rather than looking at the support of specific operating systems might finally make this a reality.

New Business Models: There has been a lot of talk about disintermediation (i.e., the direct contracting of translation clients with the immediate translation provider) in the past few years. The only way this seems possible on a large scale is by using technology. While there already are technology solutions for this, they typically lack the volume of users to make them viable. Are you (with a potentially large number of existing technology users) willing and able to open your technology for this? Does the fact that some of you (SDL, Star, or Lionbridge) are also language services providers prevent you from offering such a possibility?

A number of other points were made that we might be able to discuss during the webinar, but the four points below are the ones to which I would ask you to respond:

1. Creating a more complete translation environment.

2. Integrating machine translation more organically and productively.

3. Achieving independence of operating systems.


How do you see your technology fitting into those? Do you have plans (that you can share) to head that way already? What can we do to encourage you to take those routes? And (maybe most importantly) did we overlook a fundamental change in translation technology that you’re already anticipating or implementing? Please share that as well.

I can’t tell you how pleased I am to report that we received thoughtful (and illuminating!) answers from Across, Cafetran, Déjà Vu, memoQ, Memsource, OmegaT, SmartCAT, Star Transit, Trados Studio, Wordbee, Wordfast, and XTM.

I used these answers extensively in the webinar, but, more importantly, I compiled all of them into a 20+ page document that can be found online. Since it would far exceed the space boundaries of this column to give you an adequate retelling of the responses, I encourage you to read through the document—that is, if you have any interest in where the technology you’re using (or maybe should be using?) is headed.

And be sure to thank the tool vendor of your choice for this kind of meaningful and thoughtful interaction when you talk with them or meet them at the next ATA Annual Conference. (While you’re at it, feel free to ask those who didn’t respond why they didn’t.)

Notes
1. See tinyurl.com/ProgressSince2014.

2. You can download the webinar at tinyurl.com/TransTechWebinar.

What can you say about a good translator/interpreter who “draws a blank” when it comes to the names of types of plants or their parts? In this case, not even the common refuge of those translators/interpreters who cannot recall names and could resort to circumscribing them is of any help. You simply know the plant terms or you don’t. For good translators/interpreters, the advice has to be simple: eliminate your “blind spot” by familiarizing yourself with the terminology surrounding plants. A good and inexpensive way to do this is to peruse The Kew Plant Glossary, which is expertly reviewed here by Philip Isenberg.

—Peter A. Gergay

The Kew Plant Glossary: An Illustrated Dictionary of Plant Terms, Revised Edition

Author: Henk Beentje (Illustrations by Juliet Williamson)
Publisher: Kew Publishing
Publication date: 2012
Number of pages/entries: 176 pages, 4,100 entries, 800 illustrations

This is the second, revised version of the glossary of the same name that appeared in 2010. Both versions appear to carry the same ISBN number, which may in fact be a source of some confusion. Those wishing to obtain the latest version from 2012, which carries some 125 additional terms, are advised to check the publication date. That version seems to be most readily available from the publisher in the United Kingdom. As of this writing, the usual popular online sites in the U.S. appear to carry only the older version. The work is also available from the publisher as an e-book.

Content

Having come to translation following a career in the performing arts, I am always acutely aware of the audience, correspondingly making every effort to ensure that my translations are straightforward and grasped easily. Colleagues may thus imagine my dismay when the chief comment regarding the ultimately successful test passage for a groundbreaking 700-page book on phytosociology was that my translation from Italian into English was “too accessible.” In other words, I needed to get away from communicating to the masses and write like a botany professor.

Specifically, I had referred to the lower layers in a forest as the “undergrowth” rather than the “understory.” If I had only had The Kew Plant Glossary at my fingertips at the time, it would have spared me countless hours of monolingual Internet research over the course of that lengthy translation. This English-to-English glossary covering types of plants, their various parts, and conditions inherent to their growth is very clearly laid out and includes a number of features that are of particular use to the translator.
For those without a great deal of formal training in Greek and Latin, the sections on prefixes and especially suffixes provide particular assistance when, for example, we need to convert a source verb to a target noun or a source noun to a target adjective. The main body of the glossary, with its numerous helpful illustrations, provides not only extensive definitions of highly technical terms, but also the specific botanical application of what might be an otherwise commonly occurring word. And the appendices, with additional illustrations by group or with indications of color, are perfect for those translators who have narrowed down a concept to a general meaning, but are still searching for precisely the perfect expression.

In addition to my now beloved “understory” being confirmed as “sub-canopy layer(s) of vegetation in forest or woodland; usually denoting shrub and small tree layer,” another entry that would have been very useful in my book translation is “pungent.” The Italian word I had (pungente) made me very wary of a false cognate, since it was used in reference to the shape of a leaf. Although we commonly hear the word in English referring exclusively to odors, it turned out that the definitions in the Italian–English dictionaries listed not only the obvious “pungent” but also “biting,” “bitter,” and “sharp,” as well as “prickly,” “pricking,” and “stinging.” While the latter three choices would have conveyed the meaning, they would have been far too colloquial and not have maintained the register of the specialized botanists who wrote the source book. And in fact, the entry for “pungent” in this glossary is “ending in a sharp rigid point,” thus confirming that it is not a false friend at all, but rather precisely the correct solution in this case.

Because the main thrust of the glossary is individual plants (or parts thereof) rather than various conglomerations of them, it omits entries that would perhaps solve problems of differentiation of terminology when a single word in the source language would have a number of synonyms with finely shaded meanings in English, such as “forest,” “woods,” “woodland,” “grove,” and “copse.” Similarly, terms that are highly specific to the area in which I was working (plant associations) are not to be found, such as “floristic composition,” “climax belt,” or relevé.

One extremely positive aspect of this work is its inclusion of what may appear to be a very general lemma, but with the definition restricted to the scope referring to botany. One clear example of this is the definition of “binary.” Rather than including a general meaning along the lines of “characterized by or composed of two different parts,” it cuts right to the chase: “(in nomenclature) the name consisting of the genus name and species epithet; = binomial, which is preferred.”

When this glossary landed on my desk for review, it was my assumption that I would be contemplating it only in reference to my work that had already been completed. But in the meantime it has turned out to continue to be surprisingly useful.

For example, while translating 19th-century articles from German into English on the introduction of the soybean into Europe for Early History of Soybeans and Soyfoods Worldwide (1024 BCE to 1899): Extensively Annotated Bibliography and Sourcebook, by William Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi, I was faced with the phrase die dreizäh-ngen Blätchen. This is one of those clear examples we run across so often when a word or phrase makes total sense in our foreign language, but we are not immediately convinced of the best expression of it in our native language. The clarity and logic of German comes through in classic fashion: it obviously conveys the meaning of “a compound leaf composed of three leaflets.” But it was clear in advance that combing through a variety of technical dictionaries or going to search online for a direct German>English translation would be fruitless because it would basically come out as “the little leaves which are three in number.”

The simplest solution was to pick up The Kew Plant Glossary, turn to the appendix marked “Grouped Terms,” and quickly “leaf” through the very intuitively organized pictures until the plainly correct illustration was found immediately, below which was the perfect term I was seeking, trifoliolate.

This resource has thus proven itself. And because of other work that I do with the winegrowing industry, the field of apple cultivation, and the like, I can easily see it being of use in these areas as well as with other specialized subjects that may yet arrive.

Overall Evaluation
Anyone working within the fields of botany, plant pathology, or even agriculture who is writing in, or conceivably also reading from, English would be well served by The Kew Plant Glossary. It is thorough, manageable, affordably priced, filled with extremely useful terms, and nearly devoid of entries that are of a common nature or that would easily be found in a less specific reference work.
There is no question that a great translation-related treasure fell into our laps with the recent online appearance of the *St. John’s Review*, nearly in its entirety over a 46-year period from 1969 to the present. The journal is the premier publication of St. John’s College, with campuses in Annapolis, Maryland, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. St. John’s is the institution that devotes the attention of its undergraduates entirely to the Great Books tradition of western culture. Many of the items published since 1969 by the *St. John’s Review* are either translations themselves or articles that deal quite extensively with how to translate difficult words from antiquity. Dr. Eva T. H. Brann’s most recent essay, “Momentary Morality and Extended Ethics,” deals in part with how difficult it is to translate *arête* as the ancient Greeks used it. A nifty 28-page index of this publication by the author makes it easy to search. Look for it at www.sjc.edu, under “media.”

**New Queries**

(English>Danish 7-15.1) “Closed-loop communication” doesn’t seem too arcane as a nautical term, but attempt it in Danish: “When navigating in these conditions, all members of the navigation watch should use closed loop communication to acknowledge [that] instructions are heard and understood.”

(English>Slovenian 7-15.2) With a gentle nudge in the right direction by pointing out that “borrower” in the target language is *posojilojemalec*, one of our colleagues wishes to venture the rendering: “co-borrower: any additional borrower(s) whose name(s) appear on loan documents and whose income and credit history are used to qualify for the loan.”

(French>English 7-15.3) The phrase *peintre ordinaire de la vènerie impériale* was difficult for a colleague working with a text describing artistic activity from the era of Napoleon III. Who can help with this?

(German>French [English] 7-15.4) Pistons and their strokes are the subject here. The troublesome term comes at the end of this context sentence: *Jeweils am Ende der Kolbenstange befindet sich eine Mutter, die durch Verdrehen die Hubbewegung verändert. Dabei ist auf der linken Seite die Mutter als Kugel ausgebildet und sitzt in einer Kugelpfanne.* What is the term in bold?

(German>Italian [English] 7-15.5) In relation to *aubrieta*, a cabbage-like, flowering ground-cover plant, the text states: *Sie besitzen ausge­sackte innere und normale äußere Kelchblätter*. But if you link up the bold-print adjective with the bold-print noun, you get something that proved difficult for the translator. What are these forms?

(Polish>French [English] 7-15.7) A presentation about [by?] an ecologically-oriented firm contained this sentence, the last two words of which posed difficulties: *Dana firma pracuje nad rozwój technologii dla elektrowni fotosyntezy*. What might that be?

(Russian>English 7-15.8) Телефонная трескотня proved difficult in this description of an accident. It went like this: *Часть звонков, может быть очень важных, не были приняты персоналом диспетчерского пункта. Просто кто-то хотел сообщить со станции серьезное сообщение, но в трескотне телефонной оно не было принято.* What is an elegant way to express this?

(Spanish>English 7-15.9) The troublesome term, válvula titilante appeared in a list of components whose heading was *El modulo de equilibrado rotacional está compuesto de los sigue-
Let me provide just two more of the listed components to flesh out the context: anillo de reglaje and tapa del contrapeso. So, what about válvula titilante?

(Swedish>English 7-15.10) No online searches, not even using Dogpile, provided anything for dogse in this excerpt from an essay from the Renaissance period: rustade med klokhet, må vara dogse att visligen tjäna staten såsom domare och sändebud.

Responses to Old Queries
(English>Romanian 5-15.4) (silica-based spin filter method): For this, including the entire context phrase, Andreea Boscor suggests un kit (pachet) care pretinde că poate izola genomul AND din orice mostră ... printr-o metodă de filtrare prin centrificare cu silicat.

(German>Hungarian |English 5-15.8) (Veranlagungsfreibetrag): Ted Wozniak says that this is an Austrian tax term rooted in section 41 (3) of the Austrian Income Tax Act. Paragraph 3 states that if (total) income includes taxable income, an “assessment allowance” (Veranlagungsfreibetrag) of up to 730 euros shall be deducted from the other income. In English, it can be called an “allowance on assessed income,” “assessment exemption,” or “assessment deduction.” He prefers the latter, as it is an amount that is deducted from the gross basis to arrive at the net assessment basis. We await the Hungarian for this!

(Spanish>English 4-15.8) (armadura, entramados) Josefina Rodriguez noted that the original context sentence was Las estructuras artificiales se clasifican en: macizas, laminares, de armadura, entramados, trianguladas, colgadas. Her proposal: “artificial structures are classified as massive, layered, armor, trusses, triangulated, dangling.”

The Translation Inquirer is grateful to the contributors above for their help.

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

English into Polish
Arkadiusz B. Kaczorowski
Wielkopolska, Poland

Italian into English
Erin M. Lyons
Bordeaux, France

Spanish into English
James H. Coil
San Francisco, CA
Izaskun Orkwis
Vienna, VA

English into Portuguese
Helder F. Paulo
Houston, Texas

ATA 56th Annual Conference Roommate Blog
Use the ATA Roommate Blog to locate a potential roommate during your stay in Miami. You may also consider contacting a local group or your fellow ATA division members to find a roommate. For more information: http://ataroommate-miami.blogspot.com.

 ATA Chronicle | July-August 2015
Humor and Translation

Mark Herman

Foreignization and Domestication


According to Shmidt, Bartlett:

...attempts to bridge the divide between two forms of translation that have generally remained irreconcilable. In her introduction, Bartlett claims that her object is to remain literally “faithful” to the novel, “preserv(ing) all the idiosyncrasies of Tolstoy’s inimitable style,” while simultaneously striving for an “idiomatic” reproduction.

The two “irreconcilable” forms of translation are known today as “foreignization” and “domestication.” Though the terms were recently coined by Lawrence Venuti, debates regarding the relative merits of the two concepts go back centuries. Roughly stated, foreignization brings the reader to the source text by including cultural material foreign to the target culture and turns of phrase that are strange or unnatural in the target language. Domestication brings the source text to the reader by eliminating elements foreign to the target language and culture, often by substituting elements that are not foreign. Each by itself is an example of “*traduttore traditore!*” Foreignization can turn normalities in the source text into oddities in the target text. Domestication obliterates aspects of the foreign culture. Most translations minimize falsification by not adhering to either extreme: they lie along a spectrum between foreignization and domestication with frequent shifts from one to the other, sometimes within a single sentence.

Domestication has been in fashion for some time now, the goal being translations that are as “smooth” as the originals. However, in *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (2nd edition, Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge, 2008), Venuti disparages such “fluent” translations that render the translator “invisible.” He also believes such translations to be illusions:

I constantly find in reviews of verse translations the following kind of thing that sends me into spasms of helpless fury: “Mr. (or Miss) So-and-so’s translation reads smoothly.” In other words, the reviewer of the “translation,” who neither has, nor would be able to have, without special study, any knowledge whatsoever of the original, praises as “readable” an imitation only because the drudge or the rhymster has substituted easy platitudes for the breathtaking intricacies of the text. “Readable,” indeed! A schoolboy’s boner is less of a mockery in regard to the ancient masterpiece than its com-
Commercial interpretation or poetization. “Rhyme” rhymes with “crime,” when Homer or Hamlet are rhymed. The term “free translation” smacks of knavery and tyranny. It is when the translator sets out to render the “spirit”—not the textual sense—that he begins to traduce his author. The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase. (Problems of Translation: Onegin in English, Partisan Review 22: 71)

Reviewer Shmidt, however, is not Nabokov’s clueless reader: she has made a “special study.” She is a doctoral candidate in Russian and British literature at The Graduate Center, City University of New York.

One further point by Venuti warrants mention. He believes the quest for “fluent” translations and the resulting translator “invisibility” is one of the reasons why translators often receive little recognition for their work:

The translator’s invisibility is thus a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture. (Venuti: 8)

So, will the creation of foreignizing and more difficult-to-read translations reduce the “marginal status in Anglo-American culture” of translators? Somehow, I don’t think so.

Notes

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