Ah summer... a time to relax, reflect and register

ATA’s 44th Annual Conference
November 5-8, 2003
Phoenix, Arizona

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February
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March
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April
Focus: Client Education
Submission Deadline: February 1

May
Focus: Agencies, Bureaus, and Companies
Submission Deadline: March 1

June
Focus: Professional Development/Outreach
Submission Deadline: April 1

July
Focus: Science and Technology
Submission Deadline: May 1

August
Focus: Medical Translating and Interpreting
Submission Deadline: June 1

September
Focus: Interpreting
Submission Deadline: July 1

October
Focus: Legal Translating/Interpreting
Submission Deadline: August 1

November/December
Focus: Training and Pedagogy
Submission Deadline: September 1

The ATA Chronicle Submission Guidelines

The ATA Chronicle enthusiastically encourages members to submit articles of interest to the fields of translation and interpretation.

1. Articles (see length specifications below) are due the first of the month, two months prior to the month of publication (i.e., June 1 for August issue).
2. Articles should not exceed 3,500 words. Articles containing words or phrases in non-European writing systems (e.g., Japanese, Arabic) should be submitted by mail and fax.
3. Include your fax, phone, e-mail, and mailing address on the first page.
4. Include a brief abstract (two sentences maximum) emphasizing the most salient points of your article. The abstract will be included in the table of contents.
5. Include a brief biography (three sentences maximum) along with a picture (color or B/W). Please be sure to specify if you would like your photo returned. Do not send irreplaceable photos.
6. In addition to a hard copy version of the article, please submit an electronic version either on disk or via e-mail (Jeff@atanet.org).
7. Texts should be formatted for Word or Wordperfect 8.0.
8. All articles are subject to editing for grammar, style, punctuation, and space limitations.
9. A proof will be sent to you for review prior to publication.

Standard Length
Letters to the editor: 350 words; Opinion/Editorial: 300-600 words; Feature Articles: 750-3,500 words; Column: 400-1,000 words

An Easy Reference To ATA Member Benefits

Your ATA membership has never been more valuable. Take advantage of the discounted programs and services available to you as an ATA member. Be sure to tell these companies you are an ATA member and refer to any codes provided below.

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(484) 242-7226
Horoskim@dnb.com

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NOVA Information Systems
Reference Code: HCDA
(888) 545-2207 • (770) 649-5700

MasterCard
MBNA America
Reference Code: IFKV
(800) 847-7378 • (302) 457-2165

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Mutual of Omaha
(800) 223-6927 • (402) 342-7600
www.atanet.org/mutual.htm

Overnight Delivery/Express Package Service
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(800) 325-7000
www.ups.com

Professional Liability Insurance
National Professional Group
(888) 219-8122
www.ata-ins.com

Retirement Programs
Washington Pension Center
(888) 817-7877 • (301) 941-9179

Website Development
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radtown@atanet.org
www.atanet.org/radtown

...And, of course, as an ATA member you receive discounts on the Annual Conference registration fees and ATA publications, and you are eligible to join ATA Divisions, participate in the online Translation Services Directory, and much more. For more information, contact ATA (703) 683-6100; fax (703) 683-6122; and e-mail: ata@atanet.org.

Moving? Find an error with your address?

We’ve done everything possible to ensure that your address is correct. But sometimes errors do occur. If you find that the information on the mailing label is inaccurate or out of date, please let us know. Send updates to: The ATA Chronicle • 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590 • Alexandria, VA 22314 Fax (703) 683-8122 • Chronicle@atanet.org
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to keep your listings updated in
ATA’s online
Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services and
Directory of Language Services Companies

www.atanet.org
About Our Authors…

Ines Bojlesen is a full-time freelance Portuguese translator and interpreter based in Lake Oswego, Oregon. She translates legal, marketing, medical, and software/hardware texts, and does conference, community, court, and telephone interpreting. She has T&I proficiency diplomas from the Alumni Association in São Paulo, and a B.A. in industrial design from the University of Mackenzie in São Paulo. She started her T&I career in 1968 working for the U.S. consulate and U.S. corporations in São Paulo, and was appointed a sworn translator for the State of São Paulo in 1979. She has been living in the U.S. since 1998, and is now an active member of ATA and the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society. She is the treasurer of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division, and serves as the assistant editor of the division’s newsletter, the PLData. Contact: inesb@hevanet.com.

Tereza d’Avila Braga, based in Dallas, Texas, is a full-time freelance translator and interpreter working with Brazilian Portuguese. She translates legal, marketing, advertising, and technical texts, and does conference interpreting. She is a native of Brazil and is ATA-accredited (English→Portuguese). Her career includes nine years as a trade officer with the Brazilian consulate in Dallas. She is also a contractor with the U.S. Department of State, the Organization of American States, and Bowne Global Solutions. She is the administrator of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division, and serves as editor of the PLData, the division’s newsletter. Contact: tbragaling@cs.com.

James L. Davis is associate professor and director of the Technical Japanese Program in the Department of Engineering Professional Development at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A licensed professional engineer, he has worked as a chemical engineer in industry, has conducted research as a Fulbright Graduate Fellow at Kyoto University, and has been teaching technical Japanese at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 1990. He served as administrator of ATAs Japanese Language Division from 1993-1995, and is ATA-accredited (Japanese→English). Contact: jdvais@engr.wisc.edu.

Hans Fenstermacher is founder and president of ArchiText Inc., a U.S. localization and globalization services firm, and the founding chairman of the board of the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA). Contact: hansf@architext-usa.com.

Linda Gauthier is a translator, certified from English-to-French by Quebec’s professional order, the Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec. She is the co-founder and chief operating officer of BG Communications International Inc., now one of the largest translation companies in Canada, which provides language services in over 150 languages, employs 15 people in-house and over 900 subcontractors worldwide, and has been the Gold recipient for two years’ running of the Consumers’ Choice Award. She also chairs the Jury Committee for the Babel Bursaries, which recognizes excellence in translation at the university level throughout Quebec, and is a committee member of Compagnie F, a community-based organization helping women establish themselves in business. She is the newly appointed administrator of ATA’s Translation Company Division. Contact: linda@bgcommunications.ca.

Evan Geisinger is the chief linguist and chief quality officer at Elanex Inc., and is the current chair of ATA’s Translation Company Division’s Best Practices Committee. Contact: evan@elanex.biz.

Dr. Barton Goldsmith is an international speaker, author, and consultant who is considered an expert on leadership. He is a contributing author to numerous books and publications, including The Los Angeles Business Journal. Contact: www.bartongoldsmith.com.

Richard Gray is owner and CEO of Richard Gray Financial Translations (RGFT) Ltd., a company that specializes in financial translations. He started his translation career in a Madrid stockbroking firm in 1989, and subsequently worked as a freelancer for some of Spain’s leading financial institutions. In 1995, he moved to London and, in 1996, set up RGFT, which now has offices in London, Madrid, and Paris. Contact: rg@rgft.com.

Thomas G. Mansella is an ATA-accredited (English→Spanish) freelance translator and the coordinator for translation services for Arlington County Public Schools in Arlington, Virginia. He has worked in the field of translation and multicultural training for the last 25 years, specializing in social sciences, education, canon law, business, and technology. He also works as a consultant for www.secnsaf.com.ar, an Argentine-based information/technology security firm. Contact: tgmx@marandu.com.

Lúcia de Almeida e Silva Nascimento has been a certified public translator for the past 14 years in Brazil. She is a doctoral candidate at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Brazil, where she conducts research about certified translations. She spent the 2001–2002 academic year at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Contact: luciatrad@hotmail.com.

Alexandra Russell-Bitting has been a staff translator-reviser at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC, for 15 years, working from French, Spanish, and Portuguese into English. She has worked freelance for other international organizations such as UNESCO, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Organization of American States, as well as for the U.S. Department of State. She has taught translation at Georgetown University and the Université de Paris VIII. She is an active member of ATA, a regular contributor to the ATA Chronicle, and a member of ATA’s Public Relations Committee. Contact: alexandrarb@yahoo.com.

John P. Shaklee is a full-time telephone interpreter (Spanish→English) for Language Line Services. He earned his M.A. in translation from the Institute for Applied Linguistics at Kent State University. He is a regular contributor to the Northeast Ohio Translators Association, and is the co-chair of ATA’s Mentoring Task Force. Contact: jshaklee@neo.rr.com.
ever have there been more opportunities to improve your translation and interpreting skills. From the last week of April through June, you can choose from over a dozen translator- and interpreter-specific events. It is truly exciting to see this wealth of opportunity. Unfortunately, the downside of such an embarrassment of riches is that there is some overlap between the events. Overlap was unavoidable because Easter, Passover, Mother’s Day, Memorial Day, and Father’s Day also occur during this time period, and in general, groups try to avoid having a meeting coincide with a holiday. As we move forward, it will become more and more important for all groups in our industry to work together to try to keep conflicting dates to a minimum.

Here is a snapshot of the events that I am aware of:

**April 24-27:** Swedish Association of Professional Translators Annual Meeting (Gothenburg). www.sfoe.se;

**April 25-26:** ATA Portuguese Language Division 9th Spring Annual Meeting (Miami). www.ata-divisions.org/PLD/9_PLD_Meeting.htm;

**April 26-27:** ATA Spanish Language Division Conference (San Antonio). www.ata-spd.org/SanAntonio2003/san_antonio.htm;

**May 2-4:** ATA Legal Translation Conference (Jersey City). www.atanet.org/legal;

**May 3:** Annual New England Translators Association Exhibition and Conference (Weston, Massachusetts). www.netaweb.org;

**May 3-4:** Mid-America Chapter of the ATA Science and Technology Conference (Kansas City). www.ata-micata.org;

**May 1-4:** Fourth Latin American Congress on Translation and Interpretation, Argentina (Buenos Aires). www.traductores.org.ar;

**May 15-18:** Fourth Annual ATA Translation Company Division Conference (Montreal). www.ata-divisions.org/TCD/index.htm;

**May 17-18:** ATA Accreditation Committee Language Chairs Meeting (Alexandria, Virginia). www.atanet.org;


**May 18-21:** Society for Technical Communication’s 50th Annual Conference (Dallas)—while not directly related, STC has an International Technical Communications Special Interest Group that frequently addresses T&I matters. www.stc.org;

**May 23-24:** 24th Annual National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators Meeting and Educational Conference (Nashville). www.najit.org; and

**June 17-21:** ATA/TermNet Summer Terminology Academy (Kent, Ohio). http://applying.kent.edu/ResourcePages/TSAWeb/TerminologyAndLocalizationHome.html.

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**Attention Exhibitors**
American Translators Association 44th Annual Conference
Phoenix, Arizona • Pointe South Mountain Resort • November 5-8, 2003

Plan now to exhibit at the American Translators Association’s 44th Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, November 5-8, 2003. Exhibiting at the ATA Annual Conference offers the best opportunity to market your products and services face-to-face to more than 1,300 translators in one location. Translators are consumers of computer hardware and software, technical publications and reference books, office products, and much more. Face-to-face selling, as you know, is the most effective and successful method of marketing. The ATA Annual Conference is the perfect venue, and you are assured of excellent visibility. Exhibit space is limited, so please reserve your space today. For additional information, please contact Drew MacFadyen, McNeill Group Inc.; dmacfadyen@mcneill-group.com; (215) 321-9662, ext. 37; Fax: (215) 321-9636.
From the Executive Director

Recent Board Activities and Recognition

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

Here is an update of recent Board activity since the March Board Meeting.

Bylaws Amendment. The Board passed a motion recommending to the membership that the bylaws be amended to change the name of ATA’s credential from “accreditation” to “certification.” As ATA President Thomas L. West III commented, “We translators and interpreters—of all people—should be using terminology correctly. By mislabeling our program ‘accreditation,’ we have been sending a confusing message to the general public, who would assume that it refers only to institutions.” Since the term “accreditation” is used throughout the bylaws, the bylaws will have to be amended to reflect the change in terminology. All bylaws amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the association.

June Board Meeting. The next Board meeting is set for the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami, June 28-29. As always, the meeting is open to the membership.

Roshan Pokharel. ATA’s Information Systems Manager Roshan Pokharel celebrated his 10th anniversary with ATA on April 1. Roshan’s work ethic and insatiable curiosity have made ATA the strong association that it is today. Roshan, who is originally from Nepal, established ATA’s web presence with our first website (as well as the second, third, and the upcoming fourth generations of the site); he overhauled the database system; and he got ATA’s directories online. He is also involved with many other aspects of running the association, from various conference-related activities to formatting and producing the annual Membership Directory. On top of all this, he is always generous with his time to help in whatever comes up. (He joined ATA when there were around 3,000 members, whereas we finished 2002 with 9,000 members.) While doing all this, he avoids the limelight.

The Board and staff are very much aware of Roshan’s contributions. In recognition, the Board unanimously passed a resolution thanking him (see the copy below). On behalf of the association, thanks Roshan for all the great work and dedication.

Resolution honoring Roshan Pokharel
for 10 years of service to the Association

Whereas, Roshan Pokharel has served 10 years with the American Translators Association as of April 1, 2003; and Whereas, Roshan’s efforts with the development of the database, the establishment of the online directories and ATA website, and his integral support in many other areas in the administration of the Association have contributed directly to ATA’s success and growth; Therefore, be it resolved that the American Translators Association thanks and honors Roshan Pokharel.

Proposed

ATA Middle Eastern Languages Division

During ATA’s 43rd Annual Conference in Atlanta, a group of attendees met to discuss the establishment of a new ATA division, the Middle Eastern Languages Division (MELD). As its acronym suggests, MELD will be designed to serve as a nonpolitical forum that welcomes participation from all translators and interpreters working in the languages of this region. For more information or to volunteer with this effort, please contact Haleh Vakhshori, MELD coordinator, at eztranslations2@yahoo.com.
As I pointed out in my last report in the January issue, the budgeting process has shifted by six months and the Board now approves the budget in March. Currently, we find ourselves in the interim six-month period, which will end on June 30, 2003. In July, we will begin a full fiscal year, the budget for which was approved unanimously at the Board meeting held in Alexandria, Virginia, on March 7-9, 2003.

The new full-year budget is balanced at $2,206,792 for both revenues and expenses, an increase of $270,167 compared to the last full-year budget for 2002. The budget structure follows the usual pattern, with membership dues being the main source of revenues followed by the annual conference. For the complete picture, please see the accompanying graph.

Highlights of the new budget include the addition of the Medical Division and a new line item for a public relations firm, which was selected by ATA’s Public Relations Committee and subsequently approved by the Board. We have projected a conservative increase in membership growth of 3.8%. In keeping with our conservative approach when budgeting revenues, we lowered the projected conference registrations. This decision was driven by the current economic and political situation, and was also based on the fact that attendance at the Atlanta conference was lower than projected.

While the books for 2002 are currently being audited—we have the association’s finances reviewed each year by an independent auditing firm—we know we finished with a loss. Once I have the official results of the audit, I will share that information with the membership through jiri@cetra.com.
my column and at the conference. In response, we have taken several steps to economize, which I will describe in greater detail in a separate report after the annual audit is completed.

As a translator, I have been put off on a number of occasions when translating annual reports of companies small and large, in which the CEO used superlatives to describe the company’s achievements while the accompanying figures testified to the contrary. Keeping this in mind, I would like to assure all of you that the association is in good financial health despite the recent setbacks, and that ups and downs are a natural course for nonprofit organizations trying to find the right balance between offering a growing list of products and services and operating without losses. In my next report, we will take a look at the financial results for 2002 and review several areas in which we can streamline the association’s operations in order to operate more efficiently.

From the President Continued from page 7

This list does not include the 18 (!) exam sittings and the regularly scheduled chapter and other local group meetings that are taking place, or will be, over these two and a half months.

While things may slow down over the summer, you can be sure that they will pick back up in the fall. By the way, this pattern is very typical of the meeting business. I have learned from my ATA Annual Conference planning experience that the prime meeting months are October (most popular), April, and May. In our profession, we tend to have a lot of events in September as well.

This jam-packed calendar is just another sign of the growth of the profession. As always, I encourage you to participate in as many of these professional development opportunities as you can. Thank you for your support of these industry events.

Attention Judiciary Interpreters and Translators

Don’t Miss
24th Annual National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators Meeting and Educational Conference
May 23-24 • Nashville, Tennessee
www.najit.org

New from Chambers Harrap Publishers, Ltd.

Harrap’s French Business Dictionary

Publication Date: March 2003
Hardback, 704 pages
ISBN: 0245 60714 5

This new edition of Harrap’s French Business Dictionary covers everyday business language, as well as the more technical language of, for example, finance, insurance, computing, marketing, and the stock exchange. Examples are included throughout to show the language in use, in addition to hundreds of boxed quotes from the English and French business press. Includes a two-color supplement incorporating: extensive French and English communication guides; articles on French and English meeting protocol; tips for business people working with translators; information on nations of the world and administrative divisions; and explanations of French and English financial statements. A practical everyday guide for anyone using French in a business context!
Letter to the Editor

A Question of Probation

This is in response to Madeline Rios’s letter that appeared in the January 2003 issue of the ATA Chronicle, in which she wrote a response to my article, “English-Spanish Dictionaries on Probation,” published in the October 2002 issue.

First, I would like to clear something up about what Ms. Rios wrote with regard to my conclusion on the term *probación* for probation. She mentioned that “Legal terminology…shuns such irritating and incomprehensible Anglicisms,” and that *probación* “is never used in Latin America to refer to the U.S. system of probation.” Yet, I cited three Latin-American references in my article that demonstrate the opposite. One of those references clearly demonstrated this in its title: *Bases para el desarrollo de un sistema de Probación en Venezuela* (Bravo Dávila, 1981).

Ms. Rios also mentioned that she was left with the impression that I “was a victim of over-analyzing the subject at hand.” However, she further cited a standard court document from California that associated probation with a suspended sentence to refute my contention that probation is now a sentence in and of itself and no longer associated with a suspended sentence. In my opinion, such documents should only serve to corroborate legal terms or to verify colloquial usage thereof. Nonetheless, Ms. Rios’s citation inspired me to consult the California Penal Code. From this, I was able to confirm that the cited court document was not referring to probation colloquially, but, rather, it was referring to probation as it is described by the legislature of the State of California. Section 1203(a) states, “As used in this code, ‘probation’ means the suspension of the imposition or execution of a sentence…under the supervision of a probation officer.” Bingo! And thank you, Ms. Rios, for leading me down the California highway. As it turns out, not every jurisdiction in the U.S. conforms to the standard of probation as a sentence.

I took it upon myself to further “analyze” this interesting quirk. (I hope that Ms. Rios or any of your other readers don’t mind if I briefly display my findings.) It turns out that one of the main reasons probation became a sentence in and of itself (in most of the U.S.) is because judges would often predicate probation upon “suspending” or “deferring” an offender’s sentence. A former historical necessity, this practice often generates confusion because the language can mean either suspending imposition of some incarceration term or suspending an imposed term’s execution. Accordingly, The American Bar Association urged semantic distinctions to be dropped and that “probation be viewed as a sentence just like any other sentence” (ABA Standards Relating to Probation, 1970).

Whether California will ever change its meaning of probation remains to be seen. For the time being, however, California state interpreters and translators must view probation as a suspended sentence, not because it appears in a court document, but because it is the law of California. Ms. Rios suggested that the association between suspension of sentence and probation validates the translations of *condena condicional* or *libertad a prueba*. Although I personally believe that *condena condicional* is a much better option for suspended sentence than the latter, it may not make sense to do so in California. Upon further reading of Section 1203(a), we find, “As used in this code, ‘conditional sentence’ means the suspension of the imposition or execution of a sentence…without the supervision of a probation officer.” Therefore, I believe that, for California, it would make sense to use *condena condicional* for conditional sentence and *libertad a prueba* for probation, since both terms in Spanish have been codified to mean suspended sentence.

For the majority of the U.S., however, I still contend that it is important to differentiate between probation (as a sentence) and a suspended sentence. The New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice highlights this distinction in Section 2C:45-1, conditions of suspension or probation, and states: “When the court suspends the imposition of sentence on a person who has been convicted of an offense or sentences him to be placed on probation….” To say, “le impone una condena de condena condicional” or “libertad a prueba” would be a contradiction of terms, and laws. To say, “le impone una condena de probación,” I admit, is not great, but, in my opinion, it is the lesser evil of any other option to date—for said reasons and the ones cited in my article.

Sandro Tomasi
yodro@aol.com
Conferences and Events

**Washington, DC**
Translators Discussion Group
Borders Books and Music
18th & L Streets, NW
Meets the second Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:00 pm at Borders. For more information, please contact Borders at (202) 466-2152.

**Chicago, Illinois**
Global Websites and eCommerce Conference
June 9-11, 2003
This conference will bring together global website managers from a broad spectrum of industries, including IT, travel, financial services, publishing, and others for an opportunity to discuss recent developments, strategies and tools, and to exchange information about how to efficiently manage global websites and eCommerce. Cost is $995 (preconference seminars not included). Information: www.localizationinstitute.com.

**Athens, Greece**
Choices and Difference in Translation Conference
University of Athens
December 3-7, 2003
An awareness of what features might constitute linguistic/cultural identity is significant in modern culturally interactive societies, in that it contributes to intercultural understanding. Papers that raise questions on linguistic and interdisciplinary issues in the context of translation are particularly welcome in the following areas: news and media translation; translation at the upcoming Olympic Games; scientific and/or environmental studies translation; translation and the EU; advertisement translation; literary translation; and theater and film translation. Information: www.cc.uoa.gr/english/C&D/C&D1.htm.

**Lisbon, Portugal**
European Society for Translation Studies 4th Congress
"Translation Studies: Doubts and Directions"
Faculty of Letters, University of Lisbon
September 26-29, 2004

**Plan Now!**
ATA’s Annual Conference
Phoenix, Arizona
November 5-8, 2003

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**NOTIS Directory of Translators and Interpreters Online!**

The Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society’s Directory of Translators and Interpreters is now online, enabling translation and interpretation users to find the right professional for the job. Go to www.notisnet.org (click on “Need a Translator or Interpreter?”), and be sure to share the link! The NOTIS website hosts a wealth of client education information, from “beginner” education to payment practice reminders. White papers on our letterhead (in PDF format) are ready to send to your clients as is, or you are welcome to use some of our text to incorporate into a letter to the editor. Just click on “About Translation & Interpretation.”

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**Call for Papers**

7th San Jerónimo International Translators Day Annual Conference of the Organización Mexicana de Traductores (OMT) • Guadalajara, México
Alliance Française de Guadalajara • September 26-28, 2003

Proposals (must be submitted in Spanish or English) are invited in the following areas: Community-based Interpretation; Professional Ethics; Literary Translation; the Future of Translation; Tendencies in Simultaneous Interpretation; Translation and Environmental Issues. Suggestions for additional topics are welcome. Deadline: June 30, 2003. Send proposals to:

Organización Mexicana de Traductores,
C., Avenida Vallarta nº 1525-304, Guadalajara, Jalisco, México;
Fax: (52) 33-36-31-01-82; E-mail: michele@iteso.mx
See www.omt.org.mx for more information.
International Certification Study: The Arab Countries

By Jiri Stejskal

In the last issue we examined the situation in the Netherlands and Belgium, and now we will take a look at certification of translators and interpreters in the Arab countries. Collecting information on the credentialing procedures in the Arab-speaking area proved to be quite a challenge, and the information below may not represent the actual situation with the desired degree of accuracy. I would like to express my gratitude to the following individuals for the support I received when collecting materials for this article:

- **Moustafa Gabr**, translator training consultant working in the State of Kuwait, Fellow of the Institute of Linguists, author of several books and articles on translation and translator training (moustafagabr@yahoo.com);
- **Mustafa Askari**, translation manager, HORIZONS Media & Information Services Corporation (mustafa_askari@hotmail.com);
- **Nina Behrens**, Arabic conference translator/interpreter working in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, graduate of the School of Translators and Interpreters in Beirut, Saint Joseph University (nkbehrens@aol.com);
- **Stephen H. Franke**, certified as a military Arabic linguist by the U.S. Army (mutarjm@aol.com);
- **Viviane Sacy Tannoury**, M.A. in conference interpreting from ETIB (Arabic, French, and English), ATA member (t22304@yahoo.com);
- **Zenab Khouder**, Arabic translator/interpreter working in Austin, Texas, member of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association and ATA (zenab71@aol.com);
- **Hassan Sleem**, secretary of the Sworn Translators Association in Lebanon (sleemsts@inco.com.lb); and
- **Mohamed Boukhir**, third vice-president of the Association des Traducteurs Agréés près les Juridictions, graduate of King Fahad School of Translation Tangiers (newtra@menara.ma).

“The socioeconomic status of translators and interpreters lags far behind that of practitioners of professions established through strict credentialing procedures…”

The socioeconomic status of translators and interpreters in the Arab countries is quite similar to that of the T&I professionals in the United States. Moustafa Gabr points out that throughout the Arab countries, “contributions made by the translator, though essentially significant, are hardly appreciated,” and that lack of financial, moral, institutional, and legislative support “leaves the door open for every Tom, Dick, and Harry to join the profession and discredit the output and, therefore, the image of the translator.” It is quite apparent that in countries without a rigorous certification system and education of the public about the T&I profession, the socioeconomic status of translators and interpreters lags far behind that of practitioners of professions established through strict credentialing procedures, such as that of CPA in the United States.

With an estimated 186 million native speakers, Arabic ranks sixth on the list of world languages arranged by the number of speakers, following Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, English, and Bengali, respectively. It is not without interest that among the five leading languages, only two, Spanish and English, have a recognized form of certification for translators and interpreters. Arabic is spoken in 22 countries, and, therefore, there are many Arabic dialects. Classical Arabic, the language of the Qur’an, was originally the dialect of Mecca in what is now Saudi Arabia. An adapted form of Classical Arabic, known as Modern Standard Arabic, is used in the media, mosques, and in communication among Arabs from different Arab countries, as well as in communication with the outside world.

In this series, we have described three basic types of linguistic qualification, where translators and interpreters can be certified by a government, a professional association, or by an academic institution. All of the above are available to linguists in the Arab world; however, there are certain limitations. Academic credentials appear to be the most readily available throughout the region. Certification by the government is available in only a few of the 22 Arab-speaking countries, and, finally, certification by professional associations is in its early stages of development and only time will show whether any such programs will become widely recognized.

**Academic Institutions**

The certification program offered by the Arabic and Translation Studies Division of the Center for Adult...
and Continuing Education at the American University in Cairo, which offers nondegree professional certificates in translation, was described in detail in the September 2001 issue of this magazine. Moustafa Gabr, a translation teacher at the American University in Cairo, paints a bleak picture when it comes to academic credentials for translators and interpreters. His observations concerning several academic programs appear below.

A survey conducted at the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, at Ain Shams University in Cairo (the second biggest national university in Egypt) to explore the adequacy of the translation program being conducted there, showed the following findings:

• 63% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the translation program conducted at the undergraduate level; 17% expressed no opinion; 20% expressed satisfaction with the program.

• All departments of English offer translation courses at the undergraduate level as a compulsory subject, but what is actually offered is quite arbitrary and depends almost entirely on personal initiatives on the part of teachers.

• The relevance of what is being offered in these courses to actual market needs is virtually nonexistent.

In another survey conducted in the State of Kuwait, the views of 50 Kuwaiti translators on the translation education they received at their colleges were explored. Some graduated recently; others have been translating for many years. All of them, without exception, expressed deep dissatisfaction and frustration with the translation classes they attended at their colleges. A total of 46 translators reported that they had not received any further training in translation after graduation. The remaining four claimed that they attended a translation course at the Community Service Center at Kuwait University, but that it was no different from the other courses they had attended as undergraduates. Interviews were also conducted with 12 Syrian translators, who expressed similar dissatisfaction with the translation education they received in Syrian universities.

The School of Translators and Interpreters of Beirut at Saint Joseph University, a member of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) and the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), is one of the first translation schools in the Middle East, established in 1980, known in French as the “Ecole des Traducteurs et Interprètes de Beyrouth” or ETIB. Before then, specialized schools for training translators did not exist in the Arab world. ETIB follows the European schools of translation model. The languages of the school are Arabic, French, and English. Eligibility requirements, which also apply to other private universities in Lebanon offering similar programs, are reportedly quite strict (i.e., applicants should rank among the top 30 candidates in a very selective linguistic and general knowledge test). The training varies from three years to get a B.A. in languages and translation, and five years to graduate with a M.A. in translation and conference interpreting. The curriculum includes linguistic courses, general and technical translation, global issues, law, economics, history, geography, business writing, and the study of religious texts. The curriculum at ETIB also includes specially tailored courses that focus on the terminology of the UN conferences to prepare the students for work with international organizations. The school is also offering courses on the use of the latest translation tools. Recently, the Saint Joseph School of Translation and Interpreting introduced a Ph.D. program and continuing education seminars, with guest speakers coming from different parts of the world in order to share their expertise in their respective fields. Further information on ETIB is available, in French, at www.usj.edu.lb/form/inst.htm. Other Lebanese institutions of higher education offering programs in translation and interpretation include the University of Holy Spirit in Kaslik-Jounieh, Lebanese University (public) in Beirut, Islamic University in Beirut, and American University of Technology (also in Beirut).

Another school in the Arab world that is also a member of FIT is the King Fahd Advanced School of Translation in Tangier. Established in 1986, it is the sole institution in Morocco dedicated to translator training. The school aims to train translators and interpreters to a high level of professional competence. Through contracts already established with translation centers in Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S. and Canada, the school further aims to provide conference and seminar facilities together with research opportunities in related fields. In addition to its teaching activities, the school has hosted conferences in the field of translation in conjunction with AUPELF and FIT. The school offers “Cycle Normal,” leading to a diploma in translation. In the future, the school will offer “Cycle Supérieur” (more advanced training), leading to a higher degree in translation or interpreting. Languages now available at the school are (in the 2002-03 academic
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The University of Jordan in Amman offers M.A. courses in English→Arabic Translation. Further information is available, in English, at www.ju.edu.jo/faculties/index.htm.

Other possibilities for T&I degree and certification programs include Yarmouk University in Irbid and the community college system in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Each community college is sponsored and supported by a major national university. Some of the national universities (governed by their respective Ministry of Higher Education) in Saudi Arabia and UAE offer academic programs for B.A.-level degrees in translation and interpreting. Among such institutions are:

- King Saud University (KSU) in Riyadh, College of European Languages and Translation (CELT);
- King Abdulaziz University (KAAU) in Jeddah;
- King Fadh University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) in Dhahran;
- United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) in Al-Ain, Abu Dhabi, UAE;
- Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) system, a multi-campus network in UAE; and
- Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) Interpreter and Translator Training Program for training translators working with the Saudi Military.

Certification by Professional Associations

For certification of translators and interpreters by a professional association, the Arab Translators Network (ATN) is currently an option. When querying professional Arab translators, however, it turns out that the level of awareness concerning this certification program is close to zero, and many express skepticism. It is of interest here, however, because ATN describes the eligibility requirements and grading procedures needed for certification, and even though this particular program currently might be in the realm of wishful thinking, it does offer a glimpse into what direction any future efforts might take. The primary objective of the ATN is, as per the organization’s website, “to enhance the skills and efficiency of Arab professional translators through translation training courses, computer training courses, interpreter on-the-job training, certification tests, dictionaries, glossaries and other tools.” ATN allegedly offers certification testing in the following languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and Turkish, all both into and from Arabic.

A written test will be administered by ATN’s representative nearest to the candidate’s location. The purpose of the test is to assess the candidate’s ability to translate from and into the selected language combination. The candidate will be permitted to use a computer, dictionaries, glossaries, and other reference materials in order to simulate his or her actual working environment. The candidate will be expected to complete the test in no more than four hours. A certificate of accreditation will be issued to the candidate who successfully completes the test. Successful candidates become certified members of the Arab Translators Network, and the “ATN Certified” mark can be placed on his or her “member business card.” Such a person will also be recommended to any party contacting ATN in search of a translator. All registered members of the Arab Translators Network are eligible to take the test (there is a $25 testing fee). Copies of translated passages, with the name of the candidate removed and replaced by a code to ensure neutrality, will be sent to three graders. The graders will grade the test with a “PASS” or “FAIL,” not a score. Graded sheets may be mailed to the candidate at his or her request. Translators and interpreters certified through ATN can use a stamp, “Arab Translators Network Certified Translator,” if such a claim does not conflict with any rules or regulations in the particular linguist’s country. Queries concerning ATN and its certification may be addressed to test@arabtranslators.net.

Government Certification

In Syria, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education are primarily responsible for the certification of sworn translators. To become a sworn translator in Syria, candidates have to be tested and attend training classes organized by the respective ministry. The Ministry of Justice makes frequent competition announcements for this purpose, and any university graduate can participate in this competition, regardless of his or her specialization. Successful candidates are certified as sworn translators and are authorized to open their own offices and work as “approved” translators.

In Lebanon, according to Lebanese law, any translator who desires to act as a sworn translator must be at least 25 years old and must hold a university degree in translation or interpretation, English language and literature, or any relevant diploma accepted by the jury. Sworn translators in Lebanon are certified by the Ministry of Justice based on their qualifications and the
market’s needs. In order to practice as a sworn translator, the candidate must obtain a license from the Ministry of Justice, the sole authority entitled to issue such licenses. Successful candidates’ names are then published in the Official Gazette. The commission of a sworn translator is valid for a period of five years, and can be renewed based on a new oath taken before the High Appellate Court. Each sworn translator is held responsible for the accuracy of his or her translation. The Sworn Translators Association in Lebanon, established on August 9, 2000 by virtue of a government decree, serves as a professional organization for translators who work not only in English, Arabic, and French, but also in other languages, including Greek and Farsi.

In Morocco, the first Act on the conditions for registration in the list of translators and interpreters was passed 80 years ago, on October 17, 1923. The Act was subsequently amended by the Acts of June 22, 1928, and March 30, 1960. Act No. 50-00, relating to certified translators and interpreters for the courts, was passed on June 22, 2001 and became effective in July 2002.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned Act No. 50-00, candidates for certification have to fulfill the following eligibility requirements (inter alia):

- To be a Moroccan or a national of a state which has concluded an agreement with Morocco allowing nationals of both countries to practice translation in each other’s territories;
- To hold a translator diploma, awarded by a Moroccan university, or an equivalent recognized degree;
- To be at least 25 years of age; and
- To have passed the competitive examination and end-of-training test.

Successful candidates in the competitive examination have to complete one year of training in a sworn translator’s office (one having at least five year’s seniority) and pass the end-of-training test.

The certification body in Morocco is the Ministry of Justice. The certifying committee includes the following members:

- A representative of the Ministry of Justice, who serves as the chair;
- One first president of a court of appeal and one general prosecutor to a court of appeal, designated by the Ministry of Justice;
- The president of the Translators Association or his or her representative; and
- One certified translator, designated by the Ministry of Justice upon the proposal of the president of the Translators Association.

The committee has the following tasks:

- To organize the competitive examination and end-of-training test;
- To study the applications for registration on the list of certified translators;
- To update the translators list; and
- To exercise disciplinary power.

Professional Associations

Apparently, there aren’t many professional associations for translators and interpreters in the Arab countries; in any case, they currently do not have a web presence. Of the six organizations listed below, only the Jordanian Translators’ Association is a member of FIT:

- Association des Traducteurs Agréés près les Juridictions (ATAJ); and
- Association de l’Amicale des Anciens de l’ETIB.

Before the Act No. 50-00 came into effect in July 2002, Moroccan certified translators were organized in the Association of Sworn Translators-Interpreters of Morocco (Corps des Interprètes-Traducteurs Assermentés du Maroc, or CITAM). After Act No. 50-00 became effective, the professional nonprofit Moroccan Translators Association (Association des Traducteurs Agréés près les Juridictions, or ATAJ) was founded on October 24, 2002 in an attempt to comply with the recent reforms in the Moroccan judicial institutions and to keep pace with the ever-changing world environment. Under the same Act, all translators certified for work with the Moroccan courts must be members of ATAJ. ATAJ is the sole representative of translators before the public authorities and Moroccan and foreign bodies regarding any translation issue.

The ETIB Alumni Association was created less than 10 years ago, and is currently trying to establish quality standards in the T&I market in Lebanon. The association’s objective is to become a union which would defend the rights of T&I professionals. The Syndicate of Translators of Lebanon is another group for those who work in translation, but do not have any academic training.

The International Certification series is nearing its conclusion. In the next issue we will look at the credentialing possibilities for translators and interpreters in the United States. As the editor of this series, I

Continued on p.21
ATA in the News: More Media Coverage of the Translation and Terrorism Forum

By Alexandra Russell-Bitting

Several weeks after the Translation and Terrorism Forum was held during ATA’s Annual Conference in Atlanta, the Washington Post published a story entitled “Help Still Wanted: Arabic Linguists—Agencies Rushed to Fill Void, But Found Screening New Hires Takes Time” that featured a number of references to our association.

Splashed across “The Federal Page”—the subsection of the Post devoted to U.S. government news—and illustrated with a photo of panelists Richard Brecht of the National Foreign Languages Center and Margaret Gulotta of the FBI, the article was certain to grab readers’ attention.

In it, staff writers Susan Schmidt and Allan Lengel describe the government’s efforts to recruit linguists in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. New hires, they report, have slowed from an expected “gusher” to a “small but steady stream.” The main obstacle has been the extensive background investigations necessary for jobs that require a security clearance.

ATA is cited in the story as “trying to help the government recruit speakers of Arabic, Urdu, Pashto, Farsi, and other Middle Eastern languages.” ATA Public Relations Committee Co-Chair Kevin Hendzel is quoted several times, including this incisive comment on training: “Heritage speakers are of limited value. Kitchen Urdu is not the same as how to make a bomb Urdu,” he told reporters. “The best intelligence recruits are academically trained and have lived abroad.”

The article also notes that an ATA survey of U.S. colleges found only 614 students studying Pashto, Dari, Farsi, and Uzbek. The remainder of the article describes FBI efforts to recruit Arabic speakers from the Arab American community.

This article is just one example of the kind of media coverage that can be obtained by intensifying public relations and using the services of a professional. Hendzel and fellow PR Committee Co-Chair Chris Durban had hired PR expert Wendy Greenwald of The Solution, a premier media relations and PR firm. Wendy’s personal contacts with one of the Post reporters, among other journalists, were decisive in placing numerous stories in the Atlanta local press and on national networks.

The PR Committee has put together a 19-minute video collage of most of the coverage, starting with the two-and-a-half-minute segment that aired at least four times on CNN Headline News about two weeks after the conference. Translation and Terrorism panelist Glenn Nordin happened to be traveling that day and after checking into his hotel room, he turned on the news. Imagine his surprise when he saw himself on TV!

The video continues with clips from local Atlanta network stations NBC, CBS, and FOX, which reported on the event at their respective news times. The CBS report took a particularly creative approach by showing ATA audience shots interspersed with interviews with members speaking different foreign languages.

After running locally, these stories were syndicated to 21 cities, where local stations in Boston, New York, Dallas, and San Diego picked them up. The video also includes a radio segment from the ABC Radio show “Perspective” on public affairs, for which Kevin was interviewed.

Wish you could see it? Come to the Annual Conference in Phoenix, where the PR Committee will have a VCR set up so that all attendees can view the results of our activities to enhance the image of our profession and consolidate ATA’s position as the top authority for the translation industry.

…The PR Committee will enhance the image of our profession and consolidate ATA’s position as the top authority for the translation industry…”

Associate
Make A Better
World
The ATA Mentoring Program has been a membership benefit since its introduction at the 2001 ATA Annual Conference in Los Angeles. The structure of the program is simple. First, potential mentors and mentees participate in a three-hour training session at the Annual Conference. After this, mentors are matched with mentees (or they match themselves) in a working relationship designed to last one year.

The Mentoring Task Force is pleased to announce that there will soon be a regular column in the ATA Chronicle to address questions about the program. Issues to be discussed include tips on how to achieve a successful and meaningful mentoring relationship (for example, what do you do when your mentoring relationships seem to be faltering?). We will also publish a list of trained ATA mentors who are available to work with potential mentees. It is our hope that members who are not currently participating in the program will also read this new column and be inspired to get involved.

To that end, here are some quotes from current mentors and mentees that were recently posted on ATA’s Spanish Language Division listserv, Espalista:

“I did the mentor training last August and ‘adopted’ a mentee immediately. We have had a very successful, mutually beneficial relationship ever since. There are definite boundaries to the relationship, so it does not take up a lot of our time; mostly we e-mail back and forth. Nonetheless, we both have gotten a lot out of the relationship, so I highly recommend the program, both to potential mentors and to potential mentees.”

“The mentoring relationship works like this: one mentor plus one mentee. If there are many more mentees than there are mentors, then it’s impossible to match all mentees with mentors. This is why I encourage everyone who has something to offer to volunteer a bit of their time to help someone else, so that we can then have more successful matches.”

“I encourage everyone who has something to offer to volunteer a bit of their time to help someone else…”

“A few things changed about the program after the first pilot year, one being that mentees are now given some initial training and then encouraged to look for and approach potential mentors on their own. Many mentee-mentor relationships have been formed this way. There are quite a few people who did not sign onto the program initially, but became mentors once they were approached by a mentee who had received the training.”

“I was a mentor for the first year and had a terrific experience (in fact, I continue mentoring my mentee outside of the ‘official’ program).”

“My first year as a mentor was outstanding. I was assigned a mentee who re-taught me that you get out of the program as much as you are willing to put in. Our relationship was totally mentee-driven. He set up our monthly telephone meeting schedule, prepared a list of items to discuss at each meeting, and even arranged to come from the Midwest to “shadow” me for a couple of days.

It was my mentee’s contention that since he was the one picking my brain and experience, he would also be the one who had to make the greater effort. Little did he know that I was gaining as much or maybe even more from the relationship. I encouraged him to get involved and he did. He joined the Espalista listserv, wrote for Intercambios (newsletter of ATA’s Spanish Language Division), did a presentation at the Atlanta conference, and now he is preparing an article for the ATA Chronicle. My only input in all of that was to say: ‘Go for it!’ Basically, I lucked out. I had an excellent mentee.

I signed up again in Atlanta to take on a mentee this year, but the two of us have just not connected. For some reason, we haven’t yet found the chemistry to make things work. But I’m not giving up. I want it to work.

In both cases, I had mentees in my own language pair, but it does not have to be that way. It does not necessarily have to be a help-me-with-this-term relationship (Espalista does that much better than any one person), but just a sharing of experiences, sources, and strategies that have worked and not worked.”

Send your queries about the Mentoring Program to John P. Shaklee at jshaklee@neo.rr.com, and we will try to answer them in our next column.

For complete membership information, visit atanet.org today!
Translation Company Division Progress: Best Practices and Quality of Service

By Evan Geisinger

Since ATA is at heart a professional organization of skilled practitioners, the Translation Company Division (TCD) has been a special group from the very start. Many members are translators who have “crossed the divide” to found their own companies, often because they wanted to bring their craftsmanship and professionalism to bear on a wider range of work than they could when they were sole proprietors and freelance contractors. ATA corporate members are also participants in the TCD, and any company that sends representatives to ATA is clearly serious about contributing to the state of our art and to the improvement of the standard of service in our industry. The purpose of the division is to encourage reliability, clarity, and fairness in relationships between translation companies, their suppliers, and clients. Having members from the variety of backgrounds that we do is therefore a core strength.

Since its formation in 1998, one of the key goals of the TCD has been to set out standards and definitions for “quality” in the ways a translation or interpretation company provides its services. Such Quality of Service (QoS) consists of three principal subcomponents:

1. Clarity and professionalism in customer relationship management (i.e., making explicit commitments that are consistently delivered on, and maintaining a service-oriented relationship with the client in order to handle the unforeseen situations that inevitably arise in ways that assure customer satisfaction).

2. Clarity and professionalism in contractor/employee relationship management (i.e., clear communications on who does what, when, and how, and in relation to payment terms, etc.).

3. Product quality (i.e., translation fidelity and fitness-for-purpose, appropriate formatting and delivery method, etc.).

To address these three different aspects, a number of projects were undertaken. First, a company-oriented document, the TCD Code of Best Practices, was created as an adjunct to ATA’s Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices, and was adopted at the 2000 TCD annual meeting. That document set out the basic ethical framework for fairness and honesty according to which any “quality” translation or interpretation company should operate. This was a first step towards formalizing QoS components 1 and 2 above, but the TCD’s ambitions extended further still….

The Best Practices Committee and the TCD Quality Standards

The TCD’s Best Practices Committee has no explicit mission other than that which can be inferred from its name: to codify and promote the adoption of those “exemplary” practices through which businesses can do the most to improve our industry as a whole. This leaves room for a great deal of creativity and personal involvement by TCD members who have ideas they’d like to see implemented. The principal project of the committee so far has been to complete its formalization of QoS components 1 and 2, by establishing standards designed to address the many complex scenarios encountered by companies providing translation and other “value-added services” such as DTP and software localization.

Through the first four years of its existence, Suzanne Robinson chaired the Best Practices Committee, nurturing the TCD Quality Standards through seven different drafts. Along the way, she gathered input and sample texts from company owners in the European Union of Associations of Translation Companies (EUTAC), the head of technical policy at the British Standards Institution, and from the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). In the course of these activities, and through suggestions from ATA Board members and conversations at TCD summer conferences, it became clear what roles our quality standards should play. Responses from ATA’s attorney, who reviewed the standards document in the fall of 2002, made things even clearer.

When it is completed, the draft will be adopted as an official publication of ATA’s TCD. However, ATA is not a certification organization of the sort that does site visits and external audits for standards compliance, nor does it intend to become one. (Not only is such policing not a core competency of a professional organization like ours, but doing so would bring untenable liability exposure and correspondingly exorbitant insurance premiums. Moreover, most small companies would probably find the administrative overhead and the audit application fees prohibitive). Instead, companies that agree to abide by...
the TCD Quality Standards would be authorized to use a specifically worded statement of their voluntary adherence, which they could then use on their websites and marketing materials. The goal is to build a meaningful document: “to provide a set of procedural guidelines that companies can adopt in order to indicate to their clients their professionalism and seriousness of purpose, in a way that is explicit, yet not prohibitive in terms of administrative overhead and associated cost. More specifically, it should also be lightweight enough for even a well-run sole proprietorship to implement.”

At the TCD annual meeting in Atlanta, I volunteered to take on the responsibility of continuing this and other Best Practices Committee projects under new TCD Administrator Linda Gauthier. Suzanne Robinson was kind enough to volunteer her continued mentorship and participation, and half a dozen TCD members expressed interest in joining the committee or continuing their ongoing involvement. This group represents a good mix of “fresh blood” and participants who are familiar with the history of the TCD Quality Standards effort. Through them, we will continue the procedure of eliciting suggestions, evaluating all comments, working them into new drafts, and posting major revisions on the TCD website (www.ata-divisions.org/TCD/index.htm). Our goal is to submit a semifinal version to the division at the next ATA conference. The result, after approval by ATA’s attorney and Board, will become official.

Suzanne explained that she decided to devote herself to the TCD Quality Standards because: “It is clear that the intrinsic, competitive atmosphere of the relationship between freelancer and translation company is detrimental to both parties, and that this situation is not unique to the United States. An effective balance recognizes value in the scholarship, relevant experience, and linguistic capabilities of the language specialist, as well as the business expertise, complex project management skills, and added value services provided by a quality-oriented company. A valid industry quality standard should capture all of these aspects in its definition of the translation/interpretation process, allowing sufficient flexibility to encompass unusual situations.” She said that the effort has presented her with a great opportunity to grow professionally—both through insightful meetings with translation company owners in Europe and with our counterpart committees in the Association of Canadian Corporations in Translation and Interpretation and EUTAC.

This enticing picture matched well with my own quality-centered interests. For Suzanne, it was a background in journalism that led her to appreciate compelling, creative expression and accurate representation. As for myself, I spent a number of years translating in Japan, working with clients who were surprised and pleased when I checked back with them to disambiguate a phrase, or to obviate an error or omission in their source text. Authors and clients rarely get an indication of the level of attention and in-depth thought translators put into understanding their texts. Therefore, having these standards in place represents an opportunity for translation companies to give an added impression of care/quality and to improve their client relationships. Another area where clear communication can improve quality is in the job initiation process. For instance, Japanese translators often complain that they are not even told who the target audience will be, or which of the several written “formality registers” of Japanese (e.g., “-de aru” vs. “-desu/-masu” form) to use. Conversely, when I’ve subcontracted out work accompanied with explicit details, it has made a noticeable difference in the level of quality my colleagues have provided in return. Moreover, even when I’ve had to say “I don’t know” regarding a basic job requirement fact, I have still received occasional compliments from colleagues saying how refreshing a change it was for them to have access to all of the same information as the project manager.

There is clearly a great deal that can be done to ensure that communications between clients, companies, and practitioners are structured to support QoS. As a one-time Internet communications engineer, I have always been interested in the possibilities of standardizing the correspondence that goes into excellent customer service, so that these aspects of quality and consistency eventually become semiautomatic. After, or in parallel with, the completion of the TCD Quality Standards document, I hope to interest the committee in creating corresponding technical components (e.g., XML and human-readable content definitions for translation job orders and translation deliveries). Ideally, we could then use ATA’s influence to educate the market. Perhaps, several years from now, most of our clients will learn that “you haven’t ordered a translation unless you’ve specified X, Y, and Z.” After that, the final and most interesting hurdle will be to formalize vocabulary and quantitative criteria for the evaluation of translation fidelity. While many aspects of the definition of “a good translation” will not be accessible to computers until/unless full artificial intelligence becomes a reality, a number of other
aspects can be clarified—to help our industry “speak in the same language” about what has so far been vague and seemingly ineffable. It is only through using consistent definitions that we can assure that the general level of quality in the marketplace will improve over time. Doing so is a principal duty of any professional organization.

With members who are able to consider the issues we address from both sides of the freelancer/company relationship, we are truly a rarity. No group anywhere is better positioned to improve the quality standards of our industry than is ATA’s Translation Company Division. Through the completion and adoption of the TCD Quality Standards, and beyond that to the undertaking of whatever ambitious projects we address next, we look forward to your help and support. The Best Practices Committee continues to welcome participation from all who are interested (contact Evan Geisinger, committee chair, at evan@elanex.biz). Discussion is also welcome in the Members-Only section of ATA’s website: post messages on the TCD forum with headlines starting “BP-QS” (for Best Practices Committee-Quality Standards).

Notes

2. The Arab-speaking countries are: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen.

3. For more information on the linguistic and cultural varieties of Arabic, see “Cultural Awareness and the Arabic Interpreter” by Aziz El-Nasser Ismail (August 2002 ATA Chronicle).

4. Excerpts from “The Challenges of Translation in the 3rd Millennium: A Bifocal Approach.” The text is not a verbatim quotation—it has been modified slightly by the author of this article and then approved by Moustafa Gabr.

5. www.arabtranslators.net

6. The description of the ATN certification program was taken directly from the ATN website and modified slightly to conform to current U.S. English style.

7. Currently, the “translator diploma” is awarded by the King Fahd Advanced School of Translation. About 70% of the sworn translators practicing in Morocco are graduates of the King Fahd Advanced School of Translation.
Viewpoints: Opinions from the Field
Why Companies Can Be Better Than Agencies

By Richard Gray

Note: The following editorial and the one following on page 25 reflect the authors’ personal thoughts, not those of the association.

In this article, I argue the case for translation companies, defined here as companies that employ full-time translators and editors, and against translation agencies, defined here as companies that only use freelancers. I argue this case from two perspectives: 1) a business perspective—a translation company can be more effective at producing good translations, and so be more successful, than an agency; and 2) a broader industry perspective—that the translation business would be, and would be perceived as being, a more professional industry, producing better work, if it were made up of more companies and fewer agencies.

Before I start, I should say that I run a translation company, Richard Gray Financial Translations (RGFT) Ltd., that currently employs 35 in-house translators. We also aim to use freelancers for about 30% of our work. This structure was created by design, by putting into practice some of the ideas I set out in this article. I should also say that I am a translator, and worked seven years as a freelancer before setting up my company.

When I was a freelancer and started getting more work than I could handle, I faced the dreadful prospect of having to turn down assignments. Rather than do this, I asked my fellow freelance translators if they could help me out. In effect, I became a mini-agency, with the difference being that I would proof and edit my colleagues’ work. I usually out-sourced my work to translators who I knew could do a good job. But sometimes I fell into the trap of sending work to translators I didn’t know very well—with disastrous results. I would return translations to the translator with corrections highlighted and a friendly and constructive note to the effect that they should carefully read over the changes for the next time. But when the next time came, the same mistakes occurred. I realized two things: 1) that I was way down on this freelancer’s list of business priorities (and why shouldn’t I be?); and 2) that it would be impossible to teach them anything from a distance. When I came to set up my own company, I remembered these experiences and decided I would have to have in-house colleagues if I wanted my company to do a good job.

Of course, at that time I had no idea how to manage freelancers, and probably went about the job very poorly. Getting good, reliable service from freelancers is an agency’s core competence and something a lot of agencies do very well. But freelancers are free to be unavailable whenever they want, they can disappear at inconvenient times, and an agency has no idea if they will be in a fit state to work at any given time. Agencies have very little control over their training and preparation and cannot (at least under most legislations) command a freelancer’s full-time attention or loyalty. By contrast, a company enjoys the certainty of knowing how much capacity it will have at any given time, and also what type of capacity. It has more control over the translator’s learning and preparation. A junior in-house translator is more likely to take to heart feedback from a senior colleague than a freelancer is from an agency (if the agency gives it at all). And within an employer-employee relationship, a company is likely to command greater loyalty and dedication from its translators (and so get better service). So, on balance, in terms of quality and reliability of service, an in-house option looks better than a freelancer option, and so should make for a more robust business model.

This said, certain highly specialized jobs that are received by an agency may require the highly specialized skills of a particular freelancer. But that freelancer (if they really are highly specialized) will probably have their own end clients, and so may not often be available for agency work. This is also the reason why the in-house model is best suited for a specialist business model (e.g., financial translations). The narrower the range of subjects the company covers, the narrower the range of skills required of its translators.

I’ve heard the claim that agencies take care of marketing and client relations, and so allow the freelance translator to focus on translating. But there’s more to being a freelancer than marketing and client relations. An agency doesn’t do the freelancer’s invoicing, their accounts, IT maintenance, supplies procurement, etc. A company does. And so this allows the in-house translator more time to focus on translating. So, the “specialization of labor” argument favors the in-house over the agency model.

However, one task that an agency does take off the freelancer’s hands is dealing with clients. Freelancers that
work through agencies are usually not allowed to speak to the client—in case they steal their business. And yet, talking to a client (often the author of the source text) is often key to understanding a text, and therefore crucial to doing a good translation. More broadly, interaction with clients is probably the single best way that translators can improve their skills and, in so doing, improve their translations. Understanding is key to doing a good translation, and the author of the source text is the person who understands the source text better than anyone else. If the author can pass on some of their understanding to the translator, the translation will benefit. By blocking the freelancer’s contact with the author, an agency destroys a major source of value for the translation process.

What’s more, the unfettered interaction of translator and author is also an excellent way of educating clients. Such interaction gives the client a better understanding of the translator’s work and problems, many of which can be eased with the client’s cooperation. Commercially also, a relationship in which supplier and client talk to each other will probably be more resilient over time. Of course, a project manager can discuss a text with a client after prompting by the translator. But the project manager will not have read the client’s text as closely as the translator, and so the interaction between project manager and client will be diluted and will release less value. So, these are three more ways in which a translation company enjoys a stronger business thanks to in-house translators.

Underpinning this view that interaction with clients releases a lot of value for the translation process is the belief that translation is a knowledge-driven skill. This is a belief I don’t think I should have to argue in any detail here. I take it as self-evident that you (as a professional in the translation industry) agree that the more a translator knows about their subject and their languages (source and target), the better the translation they will produce.

The importance of knowledge in the translation process also underpins another aspect of having an in-house team that is the source of significant value for a translation business. When translators sit next to each other in the same room, they can speak to each other. In particular, a key relationship within a team of in-house translators is between native speakers of the source text and native speakers of the target text. The casual consultation that happens in a translation office between target speaker (i.e., the translator doing the translation) and source speaker has enormous value. These two translators may even have translated the same sorts of texts in opposite directions, in which case the information they can exchange will be even more valuable.

Yes, freelancers can phone and e-mail each other and post questions on websites, but the fact of the matter is that they don’t exchange as much knowledge as they would if they were in the same room together. By pooling their knowledge, each translator in a team will build up more knowledge than if they had been working in isolation. This may sound like a blatantly obvious point, but I think its importance for the translation process tends to be underestimated. Aside from the general importance of teamwork, translators working in close proximity to one another, especially on large translations or projects that need to be divided up, will probably do a better job.

Knowledge-sharing has been made a lot easier by TM software. TM is probably one of the most significant technological advances that has been made in the translation industry in the last decade. But the focus of TM’s benefits has been on the cost savings realized by effective translation recycling. Few people seem to realize the knowledge-sharing capabilities of TM tools. With TM, an in-house team of translators can effectively “look into each other’s minds.” Say three translators in an in-house team, Aidan, Gillian, and Julia, have to split up a text in order to meet a ridiculously tight deadline. When Gillian encounters the term “compte à terme” on page 7, she will see how Aidan translated it on page 2, and when Julia is translating the report summary on page 15, the TM tells her that Aidan has already translated an entire paragraph the author lifted from the Executive Summary on page 1. In this way, the TM allows teams of translators to increase their consistency when documents are split up. And let’s say that, six months later, the client sends an update to the report with a less ridiculous deadline. However, Aidan’s on holiday and Gillian and Julia are all busy on something else, so a new member of the in-house team, Charlotte, has to translate the report. By using TM, she will be able to use her colleagues’ translations of the terminology. In this way, TM allows consistency within a team, but also consistency over time. It also works as an excellent training tool for new team members, who are able to dip into the wealth of past translations produced by their more senior colleagues.

These knowledge-sharing advantages afforded by TM can be leveraged a lot more effectively by...
in-house teams. Although with a lot of careful TM memory, management, and sharing, an agency could benefit from some of these advantages, it would find it more difficult than a company. An agency might also be reluctant to share TM memories with freelancers because, as already mentioned, freelancers are free—in this case, free to work with other agencies and even end clients. So, although sharing knowledge through TM might have undoubted benefits for the translation process, an agency might prefer to pass them up for fear that freelancers might share those benefits with competitors.

So, there’s the case for an in-house model producing a better translation product than an agency: it’s more reliable, it enables valuable interaction with clients, and it releases a lot of value through knowledge-sharing. So why aren’t there more translation companies employing in-house translators? One reason is because many agencies aren’t specialized enough. As mentioned earlier, if you offer to cover a broad range of services, you need a broad range of skills. The question of whether a company should specialize or not is another issue altogether. But it doesn’t seem to be the only reason that translation businesses do not employ in-house translators. It is very cheap and easy to set up shop as a translation agency with so many ready and willing freelance translators making themselves available. In-house translators represent a heavy overhead for a business and so increase the risk, while freelancers represent capacity that can be tapped whenever necessary with a much lower risk. Exactly how risky the fixed cost of an in-house team of translators is for a business varies from country to country, but clearly a company tries to avoid underutilization of capacity. I can’t prove it, but I would suggest that the risk is worth the extra return (i.e., the extra quality of service as set out above). As translation customers become more sophisticated and translation quality becomes more important to them, perhaps translation companies will start viewing in-house translators as a “risk” worth taking.

My second broader argument in favor of companies over agencies is that the translation industry would be a lot more professional, and be viewed as such, if more companies employed in-house translators. For the reasons I have already suggested (better educational experience, more client interaction, and more knowledge-sharing), I think translators become better translators when they work in-house. And better translators would obviously make for a better industry. How do freelancers improve their skills when they receive little feedback on their work or support from agencies, when they cannot talk to the authors of the texts they translate, and when there is little opportunity to share knowledge with fellow professionals? In short, the freelance-agency structure seems designed to minimize the opportunities for the industry-wide improvement of translation skills.

This structure is bad for other reasons. The relationship between an agency and a freelancer is quite loose. It is entered into easily and is broken easily. If the agency finds a better freelancer for the same price, or of the same quality but cheaper, it will switch. Similarly, freelancers take the best-paid work they can get, and have no great loyalty to agencies. As far as the employment legislation in their home countries allows, agencies and freelancers will each do their best to engender loyalty in each other, but at the end of the day the relationship will always be quite ephemeral. This situation makes for a climate of low visibility, which in turn makes it more difficult for both agency and freelancer to plan ahead. Freelancers may be discouraged from taking time out to do research that could improve their work, and they may never have a consistent enough stream of work in a particular area to be able to build up specialized knowledge. And yet this precarious relationship is what binds the translation industry together.

My last point is that this structure looks bad to the outside world—a world made up of our potential clients. Intermediaries are not generally liked. Think of property agents, employment agents, brokers of all kinds, and many other middlemen. The suspicion is that they don’t do much for their money, that they just switch envelopes and take a cut. Their challenge is always to show that they add value. For a translation agency, this would take the form of proofing and editing and then returning the finished translation to the client _and_ the translator, thus adding more value by improving the translator’s skills for the next time (and proving that they added value in the translation for the client as well!). To the outside world, the translation industry is made up of agents and, unseen behind them, an army of freelancers who actually do the work, but whose identity is shrouded in secrecy. It is seen as an industry that handles rather than does. Imagine how you would feel if you hired the services of a law firm and found out your work was being subcontracted to a nameless lawyer, with whom you weren’t allowed to have direct contact? How...
Viewpoints: A Second Look
Companies & Agencies, Two Sides of the Same Coin?

By Linda Gauthier

Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company.

George Washington (1732-1799)

The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.

Vincent T. Lombardi

ew since last November to the position of administrator of ATA’s Translation Company Division, I feel it necessary to present a different view on the matter of companies versus agencies. To presume unilaterally that agencies are not worth their salt and that companies reign supreme is akin to saying that all Americans live off cheeseburgers and that all Canadians live in igloos.

Our company, BG Communications International Inc., could be considered a hybrid. The most popular languages are handled in-house, reflecting the company model, while projects for other languages are handled through our subcontractors, as demonstrated by the agency scenario. Sitting on the fence, as it were, I am in a good position to expound on the industry from various points of view.

In any case, whether you are a company, agency, or freelancer, you are only as good as your end product, however it is produced. By extension, we are only as good as the translators that we contract with, whether as employees or subcontractors. It stands to reason that an agency absolutely needs to validate the competency of its subcontractors. Phone interviews, resumes, verification of certifications and degrees, and testing will all contribute to increasing an agency/company owner’s comfort level.

The generalization (Cheeseburgers, anyone? Please excuse me while I go shovel the entrance to my igloo.) that subcontractors do not review comments and ignore phone calls seems to stem from a bit of bad luck. We have wonderful long-term relationships with our regular subcontractors, some of whom place our requests for work as priority and consider our comments carefully when we do have some to make.

“…There are clients for every kind of language service provider out there…we are only as good as the translators that we contract with, whether as employees or subcontractors…”

Obviously, one of the perks of freelancing is the ability to say no. One can be unavailable, out of town, out of commission, or simply taking a day off on occasion. By the same token, we can smell the coffee as well as anyone; if a freelancer were to say no every single time, we’d eventually manage to forget his or her number. That is why it behooves a project coordinator to have a broader base of freelancers per given language combination, additional resources to get more if need be, and a great deal of resourcefulness. Project coordination is not a job for the faint of heart or simple-minded. Our project manager often compares herself to a goalie during a practice session, with five hockey players shooting pucks into the net at the same time, or to a professional juggler. For her, being nimble is a good thing.

To say that all freelancers will attempt to steal clients sounds like the comments of someone left shell-shocked after some unfortunate experiences, and perhaps a lack of forethought. To that, I have but three words: contract, contract, contract. Generalizing is a slippery slope and, in this case, rather insulting to ATA members and the translation community at large. (Does anyone want fries with those burgers? One moment, folks, while I cut myself a chunk of ice from the igloo wall for my drink.) Of course, dishonest people exist in any industry, but at the risk of being called a Pollyanna, I’d like to think that the greater majority has strong values and a solid code of ethics. That said, anyone with a modicum of legal experience will tell you that any business relationship, and that includes an agency with its subcontractors, deserves to be governed by a contract. One of the first things we did when we launched BG was draft the contracts we would use with our subcontractors and clients, among others. Over the years, these have served us very well. Perhaps we’ve been lucky, or perhaps we were simply well prepared. Furthermore, we’ve found that most translators take great pride in rendering polished, solid documents. Our freelancers are professionals; some of them have been honing their craft for more than 20 years and have better sense than to send out shoddy work (as if they’d be capable of it in the first place). They truly are a pleasure to work with. Of course, over the years we may run across someone or a company whose quality does not meet our standards. Things can happen. That’s why quality control procedures get implemented.

The company scenario certainly has its advantages. Of course, the interaction between translators can be quite beneficial for the end
product and parries the isolation that freelancers often feel. Financially, having solid translators on the payroll makes more sense in general, provided that their performance is optimal. However, when the market collapses and work disappears, payroll can ultimately jeopardize the company’s viability and cause layoffs to ensue.

I tend to disagree with the idea that in-house teams should be highly specialized. On the contrary, we see documents from all sorts of industries relating to nuclear plants, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, weight loss products, contracts, mutual funds and other financial products, software manuals, engineering assessments and project descriptions, pipelines, human rights, retail franchises, advertising, processed foods, and on and on. In our case, we tend to subcontract the highly technical documents that are beyond the knowledge base of our generalists.

A firm that is specialized in a given industry can therefore only tender proposals in its field of expertise, thereby effectively cutting itself off from the rest of the market. If its market shifts or is battered by economic eddies, the company may want to look outside the box and diversify. Its highly specialized personnel would then have to handle documents from less familiar sectors, and would become less effective in the process. As a general rule, the narrower your client base, the more affected you will be by market trends. Those of you with business degrees, please bear with me while I make a basic point. Generally, a company with a yearly sales figure of one million dollars (regardless of the industry sector) that relies on two clients, each bringing in $500,000 of business, will be scrambling for a while if it loses one of those clients, as it will lose 50% of its revenues at once. Bankers will look more favorably on a company with the same yearly sales figures that has 10 clients bringing in $100,000 apiece. If it loses one client, it will only lose 10% of its revenues. Similarly, a specialized translation company is limiting its potential market.

As for consulting clients, if yours are amenable, you are indeed very lucky. As translators, our work requires a deep understanding of the source language and mastery of the target language, while our clients’ expertise usually lies elsewhere. They are attorneys, accountants, biochemists, businesspeople, engineers, scientists, software developers, managers…and while some do write beautifully, their documents are often not the greatest prose. Obviously, it does occur to us that we need to clarify an ambiguous statement or get an explanation for a term shrouded in mystery. We call and send e-mails, and once in a while, when the planets are aligned I suspect, we get an answer. Some clients do get irritated when asked too many questions. Nowadays, the get-it-done urge that seems to drive our North American society certainly drives our clients—they want their work done right, on time, with no whining (a client’s word, not mine). They feel that they pay for their expertise, so they shouldn’t have to do the work.

As for the use of translation memory software, I think it’s the best thing since the advent of word processing (I shudder at the thought of retyping all those pages at every set of corrections). It allows for terminological cohesion and improves performance. However, the cost of most products could be rather prohibitive for smaller companies/agencies and most freelancers. I would also not put it in the hands of junior translators until they get at least a few years of experience under their belts. Fuzzy matches are sometimes too fuzzy, and vigilance is required to make sure that today’s document is truly reflective of the source text. It is simply too easy to accept proposed sentences or paragraphs and forego the usual in-depth analysis. Strong critical thinking remains essential to produce quality documents, a faculty which juniors need to develop over time.

How do translators improve their skills? By attending industry-specific seminars and courses, doing research during downtime, and interacting with colleagues at ATA events. Just like other professionals, we (at least those of us who are bound by a professional order) have the obligation to stay current in our given fields of expertise and to continue to learn, which most people who are intellectually curious would tend to do anyway. Translators do not necessarily get better simply because they are in a company. They improve because they mature as individuals and gain experience, which will all be reflected in their work.

There are clients for every kind of language service provider out there. Some will lean towards the larger firms because of their one-stop-shop capabilities if they need several languages on a regular basis, as well as consulting services, narration, videos, etc. Others will prefer smaller firms or freelancers because their needs are on a smaller scale, or because they appreciate the familiarity of dealing with the same individual for the long term. By the same token, there are freelancers (I know a few personally) that prefer working only with agencies/companies that...
would you regard this law firm? More or less professionally than a law firm with in-house teams of professionals? The result is that the outside world doesn’t take us seriously, and so doesn’t feel it should pay us very much.

This structure, and the resulting image, is partly responsible for the relegation of our profession to the category of a clerical activity, one where product quality matters little and where it is thought to vary little, and where the focus is on adding value through customer service and packaging. But it is a structure that is being actively cultivated in our industry. Some of the leading agencies view translations as a commodity that can be bought cheaply and sold with a margin. And the freelancer-agency structure in our industry makes it easy for them to do this. Their bulk-buying power means they can squeeze the prices of their freelance suppliers. But I take comfort from certain trends that are being seen in the marketplace. Translation is a relatively young market and buyers of translations are becoming increasingly sophisticated and, with the help of actions to educate them about translations, are increasingly aware that quality can vary considerably and that it can be very important to them.
How can I secure my computer against a virus or a worm attack? How can I protect my data? How can I protect my client’s documents against snooping?

Most professionals working with computers and networks will ask themselves the same questions every day. And every day they will search for new answers, since yesterday’s may no longer be useful.

The electronic age that has brought us computers, Nintendo®, cellular phones, the Internet, PDAs, and innumerable other gadgets has also produced its own scourge: computer hacking, cybercrime, and a new industry as well—information and computer network protection services!

The idyllic era (if such a time ever existed) of the computer as the tool to help humankind save trees, reduce workload, and create a happier workforce has suddenly given way to Spy Ware, hoaxes, Trojans, malicious hackers, faulty software, and careless users—all helping to turn our dreams and ideals into nightmares.

“Annual losses from security events continued their sharp upswing, clocking in at $456 million in 2001, up from $378 million in 2000 and sharply up from $100 million in 1996.”¹ The Vectec Electronic Business Research Center at Christopher Newport University in Virginia estimates that the cost of security-related downtime over the past 12 months could be as high as $1.39 trillion.² Moreover, although most users would find it difficult to grasp the global effects of cybercrime, many have experienced firsthand the anger, anguish, frustration, and even guilt that only a virus-infected computer can produce.

Protecting Information

Attacks on information systems may include unauthorized access and modification of data, interception of communications, breaches of security barriers, or the introduction of malicious code. Information/computer security can be summarized with three concepts: integrity, availability, and confidentiality.

Integrity

As homes and businesses become increasingly networked environments, the question of information integrity—that is, reliability of data—emerges as a major issue.

“...It is up to all of us to become active and skilled custodians of our desktops, laptops, home and office networks, and the cyberhighways to which we connect through our modems...”

Malicious hackers and cyber criminals may not be interested in obtaining the latest translation of The Pilgrim’s Progress into Sanskrit. Rather, they are seeking financial data (bank account numbers, names, or credit card numbers) that can be found in accounting programs and other similar files.

Many organizations and professionals focus almost exclusively on intrusion protection, even to the point of ignoring internal security. Internal risks range from insider attacks by discontented employees to the installation of a file-sharing program (Napster and Gnutella, for example) by an enterprising teenager. It is believed that former CIA Director John Deutch lost his security clearances by succumbing to a “domestic,” rather than foreign enemy.³

Availability

In other words, what will be the impact of your computer, workstation, or network going down? Just one day after the September 11th attacks in New York, the electronic trade center of a first-line bank was up and running at 75% capacity. The next day, they were operating at 98% availability...in a redundant location across the river in Jersey City. Obviously, this is asking too much from freelance translators or agencies. However, the next best thing is a weekly or even daily data backup. I cannot imagine calling one of my customers and saying, “A virus ate your file. Can you send me another copy? And, by the way, ask the judge for a continuance!” Data availability is key to ensuring a business’ professional success.

Confidentiality

An often-forgotten factor in data security is the protection of your, as well as your client’s, data from prying eyes. Confidentiality is threatened by advances in information technology, which create powerful capabilities that are exploited by hackers and cyber criminals. “Simson Garfinkel, [a] privacy expert and MIT grad student, recently bought 158 old hard drives on eBay as an experiment with fellow student Abhi Shelat to see how much data was recoverable. Their findings: more than 5,000 credit card numbers, financial and medical records, personal e-mail, and pornography were easily obtainable on the drives.”⁴ Could Garfinkel have found one of your client’s files with patent, medical, or proprietary information? From time to time, Spy Ware software designed to track your
browsing habits is added to “free” screensavers, videos, or other “trial” programs. The same tool can easily be used to read any data residing on your hard drive. Industrial espionage is a thriving activity, and those who are knowledgeable are hunting for highly proprietary and profitable information. Many know that patents need to be translated into English or other languages. How do you know that your computer or network has not been compromised?

Know Thyself: Measuring Your Risks

Today, securing a personal computer or a network is a constant battle against an ever-evolving enemy. Hot from the box anti-virus software will be outdated by the time it is installed. A newer program that promises to do away with old security problems will only be good until malicious hackers find new holes in it. It is a never-ending process requiring users to keep investing time, energy, and money in nonproductive costs.

The translation industry has not been immune to such problems. Both agencies and translators are at constant risk. Having understood that typewriters and computers are vastly different devices, some translators migrated gracefully from one to the other. Unfortunately, others have missed the point that a computer needs more care than occasionally replacing a ribbon, thus opening themselves, and those who receive their product, up to unnecessary and costly risks.

Pirated software that can’t be updated is a breeding ground for problems, and one that is regularly exploited by malicious operators. The use of outdated software by those who cannot afford newer versions opens up other areas of vulnerability. Getting rid of familiar software is as difficult as throwing away a worn but comfortable pair of shoes. However, hackers and cyber criminals know how to exploit the documented vulnerabilities of old software.

Agencies, contractors, clients, and translators should carefully consider the impact of rock-bottom prices that make it all but impossible to invest in state-of-the-art equipment and software, placing themselves, customers, and colleagues at risk. No business can thrive or even survive without investment. Computer security and reliability concerns require that, somehow, the final equation make sense for all concerned.

Are you safe or at risk? An excellent and simple resource to help you rate your risk as a computer user can be found at www.staysafeonline.info/selftest.adp.

It is important to note that Mac users are not home free. Experts agree that the Mac and its software have received quite a lot of attention from hackers and cyber criminals. Since many Mac users tend to believe that their computers are immune to viruses or attacks, sometimes they do not properly secure their systems.

As in many other facets of modern life, in the continuing struggle to defend the integrity of information systems, the “weakest link” is the human factor. Unfortunately, we cannot bid “G’by” to computer operators or users. Security is about trust, and further technological advances are not panaceas. Thus, in many ways it is up to all of us, the users, to become active and skilled custodians of our desktops, laptops, home and office networks, and the cyberhighways to which we connect through our modems.

Knowledge is Power: Why Should You Care?

Self-preservation

Many users have experienced for themselves the almost always catastrophic consequences of a computer virus or worm attack. No one who is going through the painful process of losing a day’s or month’s worth of work, glossaries, dictionaries, the precious bookmarks, profitable clients, and all the junk we love to collect in computers, can doubt the need for a change of operating procedure. The $50 saved today by not purchasing a good anti-virus or firewall program, or renewing the license for one that’s already installed, always turns into the hundreds of dollars you’ll need to spend in technical support for the recovery of lost data. The costs of down time, the probable loss of a customer, or the wreck of a promising relationship with an agency or a top-notch translator should be convincing evidence of the need to invest in computer security.

Good Business Practices

Good business practices are based on relationships of mutual trust. A number of major corporations that can afford to spend millions on market research have come to an important but oft-ignored conclusion: customers buy from people they know and trust. Satisfied customers are repeat customers. Every time you return to the same restaurant or department store, you prove this point. And even in this day and age, when customer loyalty is waning, it is more likely than not that customer care will provide a competitive edge. Remember that it is less expensive to keep a customer than win a new one.

The Devil Lurks Behind the Cross: Hardware, Software, and Users from Hell

Hardware

How many users would let a complete stranger access their computer? None? Well, think again.

The ATA Chronicle | May 2003
Strangers are not sitting at your desk, happily hacking away. They are simply using 802.11b wireless network cards, which is about the same thing. Since I live in an 80-year-old house, wireless networking seemed to be just what the doctor ordered. There was no need to worry about expensive wiring, the whole family could enjoy easily configured and fast Internet access—what else could I ask for? Fast and simple access...therein lay the problem! My teenager was able to access my wireless network, but so was my neighbor. And any hacker or cyber criminal can...actually, they do. Although the latest equipment and software have improved security features, first generation equipment is easily penetrated and is actively exploited by rogue users. According to IBM security consultants, 70% of wireless networks “have little or no security protection; often even the most basic wireless encryption software is not installed, and many users do not change their default factory passwords.” Agencies and translators are at risk, not necessarily in terms of the information stored in their computers, but in terms of offering an easy access point to malicious operators. Many countries, and many more companies, are now thought to be actively targeting U.S. proprietary information and critical technologies. Are you making it easy for them?

Software

According to the SANS Institute and FBI, among the top 10 vulnerabilities to Windows systems, 5 are found in most home and small businesses computers: NETBIOS (unprotected networking shares); General Windows Authentication (accounts with no passwords or weak passwords); Internet Explorer (and its companion e-mail tool, Outlook); Remote Registry Access; and Windows Scripting Host. And, although it’s not listed by SANS/FBI, many experts acknowledge that without proper configuration, Windows XP® may present substantial security and privacy risks. Some of these concepts and risks may seem arcane to the average user, and some may not. The problems related to Internet Explorer/Outlook have been widely reported. However, a quick look at the statistics for my own website shows that 4% of the Internet Explorer browser users still utilize version 4.0, 67% use version 5.0, and just 22% use version 6.0. Astonishingly, I even had 37 visitors using version 3! A major source of vulnerability for computer users is having outdated, buggy software in their systems. What software is in your computer?

In many ways, Windows XP® is more resilient and secure than Windows 2000® or Windows 98®. However, and in order to facilitate connectivity and ease of use, many default settings may place unwary users at some risk, especially in combination with a home network or high-speed Internet connection. To begin with, the default setting for all the folders in the computer allows sharing of their content. This is exploited by NETBIOS attacks. Remote assistance and remote registry allow a technician to remotely access a computer and fix any software problem. However, this setting potentially allows any rogue user to hijack the computer or access stored information. Exhaustive discussion of the issue is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that there are many Internet sites devoted to this topic. You might want to read the National Security Agency (NSA) declassified pros and cons and instructions for using XP in a networked environment (www.nsa.gov/snac/winxp/).

Users

Computer users continue to be duped by false virus alerts persuading them to delete harmless—but sometimes vital—files, and then forward the hoaxes to their friends. The proliferation of Internet worms, viruses, and hoaxes proves, repeatedly, that unsophisticated users and network administrators are largely responsible for the havoc created by hackers, cyber criminals, and rogue users. People who do not update their operating system or e-mail software almost certainly will not update their anti-virus program either. The problem with these users is that they pose a risk not just to themselves but also to their customers, friends, and employers. Have we reached the point of seeking enactment of a “reckless computing” statute?

No Pain, No Gain: What Can You Do?

Hardware

Computer equipment is constantly changing. Just as we can’t buy a $15,000 car that will last for 25 years, we can’t buy professional hardware that will last indefinitely. Professional hardware must be replaced every two to four years. This is a factor to be considered by translators and agency managers. Naturally, everyone expects to extract the last drop of profit from any investment, but technology, like living language, is continuously evolving. Users need to consider the tax advantages of appropriately depreciating or leasing computer equipment. But the era of 25-year-old typewriters is gone, never to return.

Software

Update, update, update! An important, if not the major, factor in
switching to a high-speed Internet connection is the ease of updating software. Yes, being able to search Google® for an elusive concept, seek advice from another professional, or deliver a translation to a distant customer is important, but impossible if the computer or network is down. Shy away from buggy software that needs to be patched over and over again. Use only anti-virus programs certified by ICSA Labs (www.icsalabs.com/html/certification/index.shtml) or other reputable and independent organizations.

How to protect your client’s privacy? Several commercial grade “file-shredders” are available. Rather than deleting files, such programs will “shred” a folder or a file by overwriting it several times with binary data to make sure that the content is not recoverable. These programs will not protect a computer indefinitely from the FBI or NSA, but are more than sufficient for most purposes. However, it is important to make sure that the program at least complies with the U.S. DoD 5200.28-STD standard. Another layer of security can be added by encrypting your files. There are several programs that encrypt-decrypt files “on-the-fly,” but you should not try to use them unless you have a really fast processor and plenty of memory. Of course, you can encrypt-decrypt files in a batch process, but then you will need to add a file-shredding program to destroy the unencrypted files.

Firewalls will not only protect your computer or network from intrusion, but will also make sure that rogue programs (Spy Ware) don’t send outgoing messages. Most programs can connect directly to the Internet without opening a browser. A firewall is especially useful for reining in Windows XP®, Windows Media Player®, Intuit®, that from time to time seek independent connections to the Internet.

**Operations**

Become computer literate. Be savvy. Today’s complex software and hardware, coupled with sophisticated threats, require more than just proficient operation of a word processor, browser, or translation memory program. Do you know why and how to disable Virtual Basic Script (VBS)? If you use a high-speed connection, do you know if your computer is safe from prying eyes? Why do you need to migrate to IE5.5 or IE6? Are Netscape®, Eudora®, and Opera® any better than Internet Explorer®? Do you know how can you best protect your customers’ privacy? Investing in a computer security audit will pay off in the long run.

**He Who Cannot Obey Cannot Command: Best Business Practices**

- Do not use pirated software. It is illegal and cannot be updated.

- Be picky about the software you use. Free software and shareware are great for nonessential utilities. However, a mom-and-pop outfit does not have the resources needed to update anti-virus definition tables and software with the speed and strength that sophisticated attacks require.

- Update, update, update!

- Secure access to your computer.

- Do not run, download, or forward any unsolicited executables, documents, spreadsheets, and so forth. Anything that runs on your PC should be virus checked and approved first.

- Never, ever open attachments that you are not expecting, even if they come from someone you know. It is worth contacting whoever sent them to you to confirm that he or she intended to send you the e-mail. Remember to clean up your trash folder! E-mails and other deleted files may contain viruses that can cause problems.

- Do not open any files with a double file extension, (e.g., freeoffer.txt.vbs; myflowers.doc.exe; agenda.ppt.com; Microsoft.update.dll). Under normal circumstances, you should never need to receive or use them.

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**Continued on p.34**

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Global business is being undermined by tottering world economies. Governments are gripped by political turmoil and miscommunication. High-tech and other globally committed companies, who stand poised to renew their commitment to international commerce, and who represent the only true possible solution to economic and cultural prosperity, are underserved and frustrated. Blame Saddam Hussein or Enron, North Korea or the European Union; the truth remains that our industry is missing a precious opportunity. With a world in crisis over better communication and integration of global business efficiencies, we’ve neglected our roots.

Last year, I helped found the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) on the belief that our industry can, and must, foster innovative ways to raise our visibility and offer our clients unique, collaborative value. It started with 15 localization companies from 12 countries on 4 continents, and now some 60 GALA companies are projecting a joint—more powerful—voice within the industry. But is it loud enough?

Unless companies in our business find a way to unite in a collective cause, to take up the global gauntlet for localization, and to champion our industry’s role in enduringly successful global business, the answer is a resounding “no.” If we fail, in particular, to prompt corporate America to do the same, the question itself will be moot. We have to get serious. We have to get, well, sexy.

A recent New Yorker piece by Malcolm Gladwell discussed how, historically, revolutionary thinking has always come from groups—from people getting together to explore ideas, argue theories, elevate intelligence, and broaden knowledge. He argued that we view groups too simplistically because we divide them into cults and clubs, dismissing the former for their insularity, the latter for their banality. A cult is a place where, cut off from your peers, you become insane. A club is a place where, surrounded by your peers, you become feckless. Yet, by combining both notions—the right kind of insularity with the right kind of homogeneity—you create an “environment.” And environments are where great ideas are possible.

“…We need a new, illuminating visual and verbal vocabulary that presents a clear, unified message to global business: Get local or get lost…”

The conclusion bears our attention and demands our response. There has been no better time for our industry to consolidate its influence, propagate its know-how, and step up as leaders and world citizens. Amid global political and commercial turmoil, now is the time for localization to leave its “club,” move into the environment of the possible, and generate a cultural and institutional transformation in corporate corridors.

We are ambassadors of the highest kind. A sexy notion, indeed. We are Corporate Ambassadors who innately understand—though it’s notoriously difficult to prove—that money invested in localization more than validates its expense. We are Cultural Ambassadors, driven by the understanding that doing business in the world today means more than setting up a website. We are Language Ambassadors, too, adamant in our conviction that the more integral localization is to product development, the more market share companies will gain, and the more profitable they will become.

Most great political ambassadors face challenging environments armed with a portfolio of knowledge, authority, and credibility. Some, unfortunately, are ambassadors without portfolios, lacking the consolidated support and strength so desperately needed for success. Because we cannot afford to be the latter, we must confront our biggest challenges head-on: corporate machinations that obscure the value of localization and our own fragmented, confusing localization industry.

What are some of the internal corporate challenges?

• **Sales.** We must find a way to elevate the effectiveness of a company’s sales force by giving them a new unequivocal arsenal to reach and influence global markets.

• **Product Development.** We must convey the importance of integrating localization in the process from the start. (Internationalization is finally getting through to engineers, but what about content creators?)

• **Purchasing.** We must answer the eternal question, “How much did you say?”

• **Information Systems.** We must change processes and incorporate things like workflow automation, content management, and translation memory.

• **Marketing.** We must make sure client marketing campaigns, collateral, and web efforts stay focused on the right goals—branding,
product image, and the advantages of localized messaging.

• **Management.** We must explain and prove (and explain again) the influence properly localized products have on global marketshare. Did somebody say Return on Investment (ROI)?

ROI is the elusive “timber wolf” of the localization industry. In the great and widely approved effort to conserve its population, we have to prove that it still exists, measure its numbers, and nurture a supportive “ecosystem” for it to flourish and procreate. Oh yeah, and keep it from killing the sheep. There is an intrinsic challenge in the term itself. It’s too trendy. When money-holding managers hear the term ROI, they instinctively clutch their wallets. To them, ROI means “someone wants me to dump some significant money into something.” (At Enron that “something” was far too often an offshore bank account.) The manager who uses the beleaguered term ROI shoulders the burden of proof of convincing an already skeptical corporate leadership, and perhaps even the occasional congressional subcommittee.

Before we can win the ROI battle, we must deal with the fundamental weaknesses of our industry. Localization, still, is virtually invisible—a provocative statement for a multibillion-dollar industry that theoretically affects every company on the globe. How can something so obviously valuable to all of us garner so little attention outside our circles?

The reality is that localization is still confusing and intimidating. Why? In part because our industry itself wanted the clients to perceive it that way. If localization is complicated and costly, goes the argument, clients will rely on us to take care of it for them. Smart clients aren’t buying that, though, and have taken many tasks upon themselves (the jury is still out on the ROI of that approach, however).

Because our output is basically inscrutable to our clients, our services have a great deal of trust and intuition built into them. But trust can be uncomfortable, as in those therapy sessions where you fall anxiously back into the arms of strangers. Logically, trust is the opposite of strategy and the antithesis of business acumen. It’s impossible to measure, and usually is not convincing on its own. And its homely stepsister, intuition, has a negligible place in the business world. If trust and intuition come into play, many managers argue, it’s probably because every other avenue has been exhausted.

The corporate attitude toward localization doesn’t help matters either. It’s rather like the way the curator of the Museum of Modern Art might evaluate a velvet painting of Elvis: with a mixture of condescension and reluctant acceptance. Trouble is, people actually like Elvis in velvet; all across America, he adorns walls behind countless vinyl sectionals. All the sighing and rolling eyes in the world won’t change that fact. In the same way, people want to read things in their own language, and insisting “they all speak English” won’t change that fact, either.

We can’t afford to keep making the same mistakes we’ve already committed as an industry. We’ve promoted our software tools and products in the quest for long-term acceptance and exclusivity. We’ve made up our own “localization-speak” to sound impressive, but we can’t even agree on it amongst ourselves. We keep touting our benefits and echoing warnings about the bleak future that awaits all companies that fail to see the importance of localization. We have allowed ourselves to be relegated to the realm of glorified data processors, discounted to the point where our output is secondary to our cost. Ironically, what we provide, it turns out, is not very expensive at all. Common Sense Advisory, Inc., a business research and sales consulting company, has reported that our clients are getting an extremely generous “bang for the buck ratio.”

How can we effect real change? Let’s start by changing our persona, debunking the false notion that all we do is cobble together a network of dubious data-processors. Let’s take the lead on our own image, much like the IT profession that managed to change its portrayal as Dorito®-eating, socially inept geeks to invaluable, indispensable (and highly paid) cornerstones of successful corporations. If we’re a commodity, then let’s start acting like a hot commodity. Let’s manage risk, improve processes, craft credible messages, and guarantee quality. The UPS (United Parcel Service) people are doing this well—painting the world brown in anticipation.

Let’s create our own public relations monster. Remember Oscar Wilde: “The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about.” It works for all the right causes and even many dubious ones. To do this, we must dispense with the same stale verbiage that is met with stares, as Raymond Chandler said, “as shallow and glazed as the surface veneer of a cafeteria tray.” (Chandler’s books may rank with velvet Elvis paintings, but any localization company would give its eyeteeth to have that kind of colloquial power.) We need a new, illuminating visual
and verbal vocabulary that presents a clear, unified message to global business: Get local or get lost.

We must unite to create (finally!) a compelling value proposition for our industry, and glitz it with highly visible promotions. Global business consumers need to eat, drink, and sleep localization the way they do Burger King, Heineken, and Hilton. Service and information that is priceless. Passionate value and return on investment.

As we move the localization industry off the scrap heaps of disassociated vendors to a seat at the global corporate banquet table, as we rise out of basement bidding wars, let us eliminate complacency and become global leaders.

A few years ago, the Wall Street Journal called localization the “sexiest” aspect of the translation business. It’s time we started living up to it.

Like I said, “There’s a whole lotta’ shakin’ goin’ on.”

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Security and Safety Issues for the 21st Century Office Continued from page 31

- Do not download executables, unknown Word documents, or videos from the Internet. These are often used tospread viruses and Spy Ware.

- JPG, GIF, and MP3 files seem to be immune to virus infections. Still, viruses can be disguised as these file types. Jokes, pictures, graphics, screensavers, and movie files should be treated with the same degree of suspicion as other file types.

- If possible, use Rich Text Format (RTF) instead of DOC files, which can harbor macro viruses. You can automatically save all of your Word documents as RTF by selecting Tools/Options/Save, and choosing RTF as the default format from the drop down menu.

- Unless you are signed up with an official virus alert service, under no circumstances should you forward virus warnings without confirming their authenticity.

- If you work at home, make sure you follow the same procedures there as you do at the office.

- If you run an agency or subcontract work, do not risk the security of your network. Inquire not only about language proficiency, but also about software updates and even computer literacy. You risk losing more than a job.

- If you run an agency or subcontract work, recognize and reward those professionals who invest their time, talent, and money to upgrade and keep their systems updated.

Notes


3. “CIA investigators studied data on the hard drive of the home computer used by [former CIA boss John] Deutch and were able to identify various pieces of e-mail and Internet addresses that had been accessed by Deutch and members of his household though an America Online account.” Retrieved February 28, 2003 from http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/cia000202.html.


The Magic of Mastermind Groups

By Barton Goldsmith, Ph.D.

Have you ever wondered how successful business people became Great Leaders and Captains of Industry? My research on how the greats in business, the arts, politics, and life got there revealed that they had one thing in common. They were all members of some type of mastermind group.

Where do leaders go to deal with problems that only present themselves to the top dog? The old saying that “It’s lonely at the top” can be resolved appropriately in a top-flight mastermind group where there are other people to talk with who understand what it’s like to be in your position.

Did you know that Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford, and Harvey Firestone were all members of a mastermind group? This group of leaders knew something many of us do not. They knew they couldn’t create in a vacuum, and relied on each other for feedback, ideas, and accountability. They were the closest of friends and met several times a year, calling themselves the Wayfarers. They also controlled much of the industry in our country for many years.

In a business framework, a mastermind group acts as an informal board of directors/advisors. Most are composed of CEOs, business owners, and executives from 12-15 noncompeting businesses. The reason the members are noncompeting is simple: participants want to be able to share sensitive information in a safe and secure environment where everything is confidential. Occasionally, members do business with each other, but it is best to keep business out of the group in case something occurs that could damage the relationship between participants. This way, the members are able to share ideas, ventures, and both personal and professional issues freely.

The best groups are led by a professional facilitator. This precludes any personal agenda from subconsciously directing the group. It also leaves the members free to participate in (rather than lead) the meeting. Professional facilitators who lead these groups are experienced in business, the psychology of group dynamics, presentation skills, and one-to-one coaching. Their skills are needed to assure that the meetings do not become superficial. They are responsible for, and experts at, achieving deeper levels of communication. One of the best facilitators in the world is Trygve Duryea from Santa Barbara, California. He has run, rescued, and rebuilt a number of companies, as well as led mastermind groups, and knows the process inside out. He can be reached at futrprofit@msn.com.

The one-to-one coaching aspect is not available, or advisable, in nonfacilitated groups. Its purpose is to uncover and resolve deeper issues, as well as to discover topics that would be better discussed within the group. When these issues are presented properly, both the presenting member and the entire group grows from the discussion. A “coach” can also be utilized to facilitate issues within your own company. This is a distinct advantage and a great tool.

Issue presentation is a key activity in a good mastermind group. In the best cases, this is a three-step process. First, a member presents an issue to the group. Next, is the discovery phase where members ask questions to clarify the issue. Finally, the members present solutions to the member who has presented the issue. If this is done right, everyone benefits.

Another primary benefit of the mastermind group is that it gives the entire membership the ability to get schooled in other businesses without having to work in them for a decade. Many “Best Practices” are discussed and members walk away with information they can put to use immediately. Mastermind groups also hold one another accountable for achieving stated goals. It’s very easy to let goals slide when no one is looking over your shoulder.

There are a number of business mastermind groups around the world. Perhaps the best-known groups are the Young President’s Organization (YPO), The Executive Committee (TEC), The Council of Growing Companies, and CEO Clubs. Each has its advantages. For example, YPO is great for networking and TEC offers well-trained facilitators. The Council is comprised of very high growth companies, and CEO Clubs provides great speakers. You may have an idea to form your own group to assure that you get exactly what it is you want, but be careful that you are not reinventing the wheel. Choosing the right mastermind group does require some research. For a list of CEO and executive mastermind groups, send an e-mail with the word “Groups” in the subject line to wendy@bartongoldsmith.com. If you would like to discuss creating your own group, you may call my offices at 866-5-BARTON.

I have been involved in mastermind groups for over a decade, and they have been instrumental in my success as a businessman and a human being. If it’s something you’ve thought about, I challenge you to take the risk of looking further. I promise you it will be well worth the investment of your time and money.
Categories of Errors

For the past 13 years, I have been teaching technical Japanese at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (http://metj.engr.wisc.edu/). One of the goals of our program is to teach professionals (primarily engineers and businesspeople who work with Japanese counterparts) and students (principally, but not exclusively, engineering students) how to translate into English the Japanese technical documents that they might encounter in the course of their work. I would like to discuss some of the common errors that are made by advanced students—students who have completed more than three years of Japanese language study at the college level. Most of these errors can belong to one of the four categories described here.

1. Terminology

Most of these errors result from incorrect identification of (ideographic) kanji characters or from the selection of an incorrect meaning for a particular character in a word. (Many Japanese words consist of several characters, which have been combined to express a complex concept.) Another common problem is the inability to reconstruct the original word when an abbreviated form of the word is used. The latter problem occurs both with words composed of kanji characters and with words composed of (phonetic) kana symbols.

2. Grammar

Even advanced students are occasionally fooled by the position in a Japanese sentence of certain key words that indicate the relationships among individual words or clauses in a complex sentence. Such “pivotal words” and certain specific verb forms can be used as indicators when attempting to fathom the writer’s intended meaning from a list of possible meanings for a specific phrase or clause. When students overlook these grammatical devices, important information is lost, and the accuracy of the resulting translation invariably decreases.

3. Sentence Structure

One difficult aspect of a Japanese sentence is the expression of alternatives. These alternatives might take the form of a list of nouns, selected from a potentially longer list of objects, or they might take the form of representative actions, any of which could satisfy the requirement presented in the text. The failure to correctly determine which actions are alternatives and which represent consecutive steps in a sequence, or the failure to correctly group nouns within a list, can lead to a translation that strays quite far from the writer’s intended meaning.

A second issue is the question of cause and effect. Usually, either the clause that states the purpose of an action or the clause that states the reason for the action ends with a “conjunction” that not only links one clause with the other, but also indicates the role of the clause in question. Similarly, a clause that introduces a condition or a constraint usually ends with a word that indicates the function of this clause in the overall sentence. If students misunderstand the meaning of such a “conjunction,” they produce translations in which the reason, the purpose, and the condition or constraint assume roles different from the ones intended by the writer of the source text. As a consequence, the meaning of the translated sentence is dramatically altered.

4. Flow of Ideas

A student who lacks experience or who has little confidence in his or her own judgment is often too literal in his or her translations, and may fail to recognize a figurative interpretation for a term or an expression. In a similar vein, an inexperienced translator often suffers from literary “myopia,” and translates each sentence of a document in relative isolation without making use of hints or clues from preceding or subsequent sentences.

…Acquiring a suitable balance between knowledge of the source language and knowledge of the content of a document should be central to any translator’s plan for professional development…
Such hints or clues often clarify potential ambiguities in nearby sentences. The failure to make use of this information frequently leads to incorrect references or to inconsistencies within the translation.

Sample Errors

Upon reviewing the four categories presented above, one realizes that the scope of the error widens as we move from category 1 (a localized problem that appears in only one word) through category 4 (a global problem that could affect the integrity of an entire document). The severity of the error is a separate question, since the mistranslation of a single key term could be just as damaging to the overall document as a missed allusion or a jumbled figure of speech.

Example 1 (Terminology)

In a paper taken from a professional journal, a student encountered the sentence given as Example 1 below. The student offered the following translation:

“In these cases, it is important to have good high-voltage insulation when in the off state. When in the on state, in order to have low electrical losses, it is important to have low resistance.”

The Japanese term 高圧 ("TAI"), which generally carries the meaning of “enduring” or “resistant to ...,” and the kanji 高 ("ATSU"), which is usually associated with “pressure” or the concept of “overwhelming.” The focus of this paper was the fabrication of high-frequency electronic devices using wide-bandgap semiconductors. Thus, in this particular context, the kanji 高 was actually used as an abbreviation for 高圧 (“DEN-ATSU”), which literally means “electrical pressure,” but actually refers to “voltage.” Thus, the kanji compound 高圧 (or 高圧) refers to “the property of enduring /resisting voltage.” The student made the leap from “resisting + voltage” to the concept of electrical insulation, which, of course, does prevent current from flowing in an unintended direction. However, in the context of such devices, a better choice for this term is “withstand voltage.” Thus, the translation for this sentence might read as follows:

“In these cases, it is important to have a high withstand voltage in the ‘off’ state. It is also important to have low resistance in the ‘on’ state in order to reduce power losses.”

Example 2 (Grammar)

In the same paper, a student was confronted with sentence given in Example 2. In this sentence, the writer considers one aspect of the “scaling principle,” which is used in the design of semiconductor devices. The student translated the sentence in this way:

“If we consider the scaling principle, since it is necessary to keep a fixed electric field strength internal to a semiconductor, the power source voltage, relative to the element size, is also reduced.”

The important relationship in this sentence is that between the 電源電圧 (“DEN-GEN-DEN-ATSU”), which represents the “power source voltage,” and the 素子サイズ (“SO-SHI sa-i-zu”), which stands for the “size of the (semiconductor) device.” The verb in the final clause is 低下させる (“TEI-KA sa-se-ru”), which means that “(we) cause (something) to decrease.” The use of the particle も (“mo”) in this clause indicates that we “also” decrease the noun that precedes も. In this instance, that noun is 電源電圧. The remaining portion of the final clause, に比例して (“ni HI-REI shi-te”), is an example of what we at the University of Wisconsin-Madison call a “noun-following expression.” This particular expression functions in an adverbial manner to link the noun that precedes the expression (素子サイズ) with the verb that follows the expression (低下させる), and it carries the meaning “in proportion to...” The original translation could be modified, as follows:

Examples 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>この場合、オフの耐圧は高く、オンの抵抗が低いことが電力損失を減らすために重要である。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>スケーリング則によれば、半導体内部での電界強度を一定に保つ必要から、電源電圧も素子サイズに比例して低下させる。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Based on the scaling principle, since it is necessary to maintain a fixed electric field strength internal to a semiconductor, the power source voltage is also reduced, in proportion to the size of the device.”

Thus, if a device designer were to decrease the by 10%, this sentence tells us that the must also be decreased by 10%. The use of the particle も to insert the concept of “also” reinforces the conclusion that both parameters must be decreased by the same percentage.

The student’s translation implies that for the present example, the must be decreased by a value greater than 10%. In this instance, misunderstanding of a grammatical pattern led to the production of a translation that was factually incorrect.

Example 3 (Flow of ideas)

For this example, it is necessary to explain the context in some detail. The student was translating a paper that dealt with organic electroluminescence. In a section that focused on requirements for the displays that are incorporated into cell phones, the two sentences in Example 3 shown below appeared in a paragraph dealing with cost and performance for thin film transistor (TFT) displays.

The first sentence could be translated in this way: “It will be extremely difficult to reduce the price of a TFT display below that of an STN display.” The student offered the following translation for the second sentence:

“Consequently, concepts for cellular telephone products have inevitably moved toward quality, including a high-performance, quality display.”

As we move from the first sentence to the second, the writer’s focus shifts from cost to performance. However, the second sentence contains several specific terms and expressions that must be rendered correctly in the given context in order for the writer’s true message to be conveyed in the translation.

The topic of this sentence is (“KEI-TAI-DEN-WA no SHOU-HIN ko-n-se-pu-to”): “the product concept for a cell phone.” Presumably, this “concept” revolves around issues such as what the user will do with a cell phone or how (s)he will use the product. In this sentence, the writer is interested in a particular kind of cell phone. The phrase 性能的に優れたディスプレイを採用する (“SEI-N OU-TEKI-ni su-gu-re-ta di-su-pu-re-i [w]o SAI-YOU su-ru”) indicates that the writer is thinking about a cell phone that “incorporates a display with superior performance.”

To determine what the writer has to say about such a cell phone we turn to the predicate 考える (“ka-nga-e-ru”), which in this case means “we think (that)” or “it is expected (that).” The details of the expectation appear in the remaining clause, 必然的にハイグレード端末にならざるを得ない (“HITSU-ZEN-TEKI-ni ha-i-gu-re-e-do TAN-MATSU ni na-ra-za-ru [w]o e-na-i”). The adverb 必然的に means “invariably,” and the phrase ならざるを得ない is a somewhat literary expression that generally means “must turn out to be...” or “cannot help becoming...” The term 端末 has an interesting history. In the days when a computer lab consisted of many “(dumb) terminals,” which were connected to a “(smart) mainframe,” the term 端末 was used to identify a “terminal.” These days, the term 端末 can be used for almost any type of device that downloads a signal from a server or relay station. Once a cell phone has been equipped with a superior display, the potential for reading text or viewing graphics dramatically increases, and the product itself may be seen as entering the realm of a “terminal.” Thus, a 端末 could be a “high-grade terminal.”

The writer’s real message finally emerges. The primary purpose of the handset in a cell phone has traditionally been to support voice communication. Consequently, once the basic features have been provided, there is great incentive for manufacturers to improve profits by reducing costs. In this instance, if the incorporation of a new display does not allow the manufacturer to reduce costs, the company must emphasize new features in order to justify the price. Thus, the concept of a handset as a device
primarily for voice communication will be replaced by the concept of a handset as a device that is capable of sending and receiving information of various types. Combining the specific meanings of the individual pieces of the sentence with an understanding of the context, we could offer a translation such as this:

“Consequently, it is expected that the (product) concept for a cellular phone that incorporates a display with superior performance must inevitably move toward that of a high-grade terminal.”

The original translation completely missed the idea that improvements in display performance will lead to a change in the concept of what kind of a product a handset might be. This is simply one example of the degree to which an understanding of the flow of the writer’s thinking can improve translation accuracy.

Conclusions
At the beginning of this article, I introduced four types of errors that occur frequently when advanced students of technical Japanese translate Japanese documents into English. After examining the specific examples presented here, it may be reasonable to group these four types of errors, as shown in Table 1.

Although it is obvious that knowledge of the source language (and its unique features) is essential for successful translation, it quickly becomes clear that knowledge of the content of the document, or at least some familiarity with the topics under discussion, is an equally valuable asset. Acquiring a suitable balance between these two forms of knowledge should be central to any translator’s plan for professional development. My most enterprising students have learned to engage in some form of research or background reading either before or during a translation assignment in a specialized field (technology, business, politics, etc.). This recognition of the need to acquire knowledge about the topic, as well as knowledge of the source language, bodes well for their future careers in translation.

In this discussion, I have ignored the question of the translator’s ability to express concepts in the target language, since most of the students in the Technical Japanese Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are translating into their native language and have already taken courses in technical writing as part of their engineering curriculum. The ability to write well in the target language represents one of the three essential elements of the translation process, but I do not consider that issue in detail here. Based on the examples presented above, I offer the following conclusions.

1. Context is everything.
   The context of a document not only guides the translator when selecting among several possible translations for a particular term, it also indicates which topics or concepts might reasonably appear somewhere in the text. In that sense, the context helps the translator make “educated guesses” in those situations when the grammar and the sentence structure allow for the possibility of multiple interpretations.

2. Field-specific knowledge is indispensable.
   Under the heading of field-specific knowledge, I include not only the “nuts and bolts” of scientific, medical, or financial knowledge, but also the commonly accepted language of the field. In our classes, I frequently find myself saying something like, “Yes, the dictionary gives the meaning…, but people in the field usually say….” Even if a translator cannot—or chooses not to—perform the duties of an engineer, a physician, or a financial analyst, (s)he must at least be able to write like one.

3. Translating what is not stated can be just as important as translating what is stated.
   The examples here indicate the need, in some situations, for the translator to recognize what must be added to the information present in the source text in order to make the translation as meaningful to the target-language reader as the original document was to the source-language reader. This concept of producing a document that is “equally meaningful” lies at the heart of the translation process. Adherence to this concept practically requires the translator to fully understand the content, or at least the context, of the source document.

4. The translator must look forward to develop expectations regarding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of Source Language</th>
<th>Knowledge of Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence structure</td>
<td>Flow of ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on p.48
An Interview with Bob Feron

By Tereza Braga and Ines Bojlesen

Note: The following first appeared in the PLData (volume XII, issue 1, Feb 2003), newsletter of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division.

Bob Feron is the head of the Office of Language Services at the Brazilian Embassy in Washington, DC, and is also in charge of the embassy’s translation apprenticeship program. He has translated numerous speeches and articles for three Brazilian presidents, as well as a wide variety of other Brazilian government documents, including laws, treaties, diplomatic notes, trade policy texts, macroeconomic analyses, presidential letters, human rights cases, art exhibit catalogues, and a few books. He has been the official interpreter for meetings involving many high-level Brazilian visitors to Washington, including two justice ministers and quite a few governors, senators, and congressmen.

Bob grew up in England, Israel, Poland, and Switzerland, and studied political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He joined the U.S. Foreign Service as a political officer in 1983, serving at the American embassies in Ottawa (two years) and Brazil (three years). He also served four years at the State Department in Washington, DC, working on issues involving Brazil and other South American countries. Following that, he served a year as program director of the Institute of Technology Management at The George Washington University School of Management. He has been the senior translator at the Brazilian Embassy since 1994, and head of the Office of Language Services since 1998. You may contact him at bobferon@att.net.

Bob, most of us in ATA’s Portuguese Language Division have already met you or at least know who you are. You have contributed a great deal to our community through the Trad-Prt e-mail list forum and the various presentations you have given at our annual PLD meetings. As the administrator of the PLD, I take this opportunity to thank you for being associated with our division, as well as for your many contributions as a tremendously reliable and resourceful translator and mentor.

“…I have consistently tried to encourage all translators of Portuguese to move towards the long-term goal of building a stronger spirit of true professionalism among Portuguese translators worldwide…”

Thank you for the kind introduction. You and your predecessors deserve our thanks for directly contributing to the continued success of the PLD.

The growth of the Internet revolutionized translation terminology research techniques and Trad-Prt, which, as I recall, was first “launched” at a PLD meeting in 1995, was one of the earliest manifestations of this new mode of online terminological research. Renato Beninatto’s truly inspired idea of creating an international online community of Portuguese translators has greatly matured and become better organized in recent years. Specialized e-mail lists such as Trad-Prt facilitate instantaneous consultation among professional translators scattered around the world, which is something that was virtually inconceivable before the early 1990s.

My own occasional contributions over the years have been mere drops in a bucket floating on a vast flood of useful information posted to Trad-Prt by others. For several years now, I’ve tried to restrict my own participation in Trad-Prt to offering infrequent suggestions that are unlikely to be posted in precisely the same manner by anyone else. Also, both through Trad-Prt and my periodic presentations at translators’ gatherings, I have consistently tried to encourage all translators of Portuguese to move towards the long-term goal of building a stronger spirit of true professionalism among Portuguese translators worldwide.

We have provided your mini-bio as the introduction for this interview, but we’d still like to ask you to expand a bit on it. Why did you live in so many countries when you were growing up?

I grew up overseas because both my parents were journalists and my father was a foreign correspondent for the New York Times. We attended British schools, a godsend for which I am eternally grateful. The British grade school curriculum still teaches classical English writing and editing skills, two sides of the same coin, which are immensely useful to translators. As a child, I was fairly fluent in both French and Modern Hebrew, and briefly studied Latin.

How did you get involved with the Portuguese language to begin with? On what criteria did the U.S. Foreign Service base their decision to send you to Brazil as opposed to London, Vienna, or Tel Aviv? Did you speak any Portuguese at that point in your life?
I was just over 30 when I was sent to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to learn Brazilian Portuguese prior to my assignment to Brazil as a U.S. diplomat. The most junior U.S. diplomats are traditionally sent only to countries they know nothing about, partially as a litmus test to see whether or not they are adaptable enough to be suitable for the Foreign Service. In early 1985, I knew nothing about Brazil, which meant I was fully qualified. Six months of full-time study at FSI was sufficient to learn to speak and understand Portuguese at a professional level.

**How old is the Office of Language Services at the Brazilian Embassy? Did it exist before you came on board? Does every embassy have one?**

Most major embassies have quite a few fluently bilingual diplomats and locally hired staff, some of whom have professional translation experience. The hiring competition (concurso) through which I joined the embassy’s staff reestablished a full-time translator position that had existed previously, but was then vacant. Initially, I ran the embassy’s “Translation and Editing section,” but we changed the section’s name to “Language Services” in 1998 because I was no longer the only translator, and we were increasingly being assigned to do high-level simultaneous interpreting and vast amounts of editing. Overall, “language services” is probably the most accurate description of what we do.

**What role do the embassies have in securing interpreters for high-level government meetings? In books and movies we often see the State Department providing interpreters when the need arises. I’m thinking of some episodes of “West Wing” on TV. Would a high-level visitor from Portugal or Brazil, for example, be authorized to bring his own interpreter during official visits to the U.S.?**

Presidents and foreign ministers often travel with their own interpreters when needed, but senior government officials also rely heavily on their local embassies to provide any additional needed language services. The senior official directly involved on each side usually decides how it will be done.

Good transition for my next question. Just before this interview, we learned that President Lula travels with his own Brazilian interpreter. Does the State Department (Office of Language Services) have to be involved during events in Washington? Is the traveling interpreter also authorized to work into English for the benefit of U.S. hosts?

President Lula’s personal interpreter is highly skilled and is capable of doing whatever Lula requests, in either direction. Each host government is usually well organized to provide language services, and the State Department is no exception. In very formal high-level meetings, each interlocutor’s remarks are typically interpreted consecutively by his own interpreter. At lower levels and in more informal settings, such as meals, many senior officials prefer to have their own interpreters whisper continuous simultaneous interpretations in their ear, which facilitates a much more lively and natural conversation.

**How many languages is the embassy equipped to work with? How are your translation apprentices hired? Do they have to be trained at the embassy?**

In the case of President Lula’s preinaugural December 2002 visit to Washington, for example, Marcia Loureiro and I translated Lula’s lengthy prepared public remarks, after which our translation was carefully reviewed, word by word, by two senior diplomats and two members of Lula’s official party, including his personal interpreter. At the National Press Club, where these formal remarks were delivered, it was Lula’s personal interpreter who provided the simultaneous interpretation, relying heavily on the translation we had prepared in advance.

Almost everyone on the embassy’s staff is fluently bilingual, and we all use both languages in performing our daily jobs. Our translation apprentices are accepted through the embassy’s internship program, and the training they receive is mainly in the form of detailed feedback on the work they do.
What would you say is the most important quality that an embassy translator or interpreter should have?

This is a truly difficult question. I think there are several essential qualities. First and foremost, advanced bilingual fluency. Second, is an unwaivering dedication to accuracy and precision. Third, skill and experience at differentiating those meanings and nuances that truly matter from those that don’t. Fourth, lightning-fast advanced terminological research skills and relying heavily on the web, dictionaries, glossaries, and personal contacts, often including phone calls. Last, but not least, a fluently bilingual command of the key concepts, policies, philosophies, ideologies, technical terms, acronyms, and abbreviations in a wide array of international and public policy arenas is truly essential for anyone who wishes to provide professional language services in an international public policy setting such as an embassy or international organization.

In my experience, a sophisticated familiarity with key aspects of many different public policy realms is most easily acquired, and maintained, by reading high-quality weekly news magazines and newspapers in both (or multiple) languages. This can quickly become a time-consuming proposition, so perhaps this type of daily terminological research in the print media is not for everyone.

Let’s now leave diplomacy aside and talk business. You have always encouraged independent contractors to “stick to their guns” and never lower their prices. Would you still stand by this advice, notwithstanding the instability in the translation market?

I don’t recall having ever called on translators and interpreters to “never” lower prices, but I continue to believe they should do everything in their power to maintain and sustain their prices. Towards this end, I believe all professional translators and interpreters should seek truly effective ways to develop “niche” specialties and markets well suited to their professional skills and experience. It is within such carefully cultivated “niche” markets that the highest prices can be charged without much risk of losing one’s best clients.

We have news of ATA members leaving for other careers, alleging that they can no longer find work here in the U.S."

The global trend towards increasingly relying on bidding competitions to contract out technical translations, as though they were merely “commodities,” where competition is based mainly, or solely, on price and deadlines, is one of the main factors contributing to instability and revenue loss in the translation industry. The virtually inevitable side effects have included a dramatic loss of accuracy, precision, quality, idiomaticity, and translation income.

Personally, I have always argued that the best route to long-term success in the freelance translation market is for freelancers to thoroughly understand and promote market differentiation, both as individual professionals and when acting collectively, such as through ATA and the PLD.

I strongly suspect that those freelance translators who are now having the most trouble may include most of those who, in the past, have tried to compete mainly on the basis of price and deadlines. It’s simply not possible for freelance translators based in New York or Los Angeles to compete solely on the basis of price and deadline against translators (or translation firms) based in Argentina or Brazil, where the cost of living is now so much lower.

Improved and expanded client education efforts are urgently needed. All major translation clients worldwide need to fully understand that purchasing translations is analogous to purchasing legal or medical services, but is quite different from purchasing wheat or bananas by the bushel. There are a surprising number of translation clients who haven’t figured this out yet.

Have you ever had to make a living as a freelancer? Do you know many Portuguese translators who are making a very good living as independents?

I’ve never yet worked solely or primarily as a freelance translator, but one never knows what the future may hold. In the last year, I’ve done much more freelance interpretation work, and I’ve enjoyed it. I have dozens of friends who are full-time freelancers, so I hear about market conditions all the time. Market differentiation of language services is a fact of life today, so we need to adapt better and learn to deal with it.

Clients who are willing to pay a high premium for accuracy, precision, and reliability can often be found in predictable places, such as at law firms and investment houses, where virtually all translation and editing costs can be passed on to third parties. Similarly, they can frequently be found in those places where the client is far more concerned about the potential costs arising out of a translation error than the potential cost of the translation itself, as is so often true when translating high technology patents, for example. It is often still possible for highly skilled
Strategies for the Certified Translation of Semiotic Items in the U.S.

By Lúcia de Almeida e Silva Nascimento

The following study is part of a larger research project which seeks to investigate the norms governing a number of specific features related to certified translations both in Brazil (done by the so-called “tradutores juramentados” [certified translators]) and the U.S. It reports some preliminary findings on how intersemiotic translation in “certified” translation is handled by 15 translators working in the United States. In Brazil and the U.S., certified translation refers to translations used for official purposes, such as those presented to any governmental or judicial authority.¹

Certified translators in Brazil have to follow a number of rules for carrying out certified translations. Sometimes these rules are based on established norms of language usage, for instance, those stated in Normas para a Elaboração de Traduções Públicas (Norms for Certified Translations) issued by the Santa Catarina State Association of Certified Translators. Sometimes these rules are derived from traditional practices among translators (such practices have been discussed by experienced translators within the Internet discussion group Forum-Jur and in the news bulletin from the Association of Certified Translators of the State of São Paulo).

Unlike Brazil, there is no governmental agency that certifies translators in the U.S. Any translator or translation service company can produce a “certified” translation by swearing under oath that the translation is true, accurate, and correct rendering of a text in one language from another. A Certificate of Accuracy, signed before a notary public or commissioner of deeds, is attached to the translated text for that purpose (see Bierman, 161).

Most translators doing certified translations in the U.S. are not constrained by written rules or standards that indicate how certified translations should be done. However, some isolated efforts have been made to standardize and control the quality of certified translations. For instance, the Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst has issued a document that establishes some guidelines for its translations. Yet, it does not mention any specific guideline concerning the translation of semiotic items, the focus of this article.

“…Translators operate first and foremost in the interest of the culture into which they are translating…”
(Toury, 19)

Definitions

Two concepts underlie this study: translation norms and intersemiotic translation. Each is discussed separately below.

The term “translation norm” is not used in its usual prescriptive sense (to indicate rules or guidelines), but refers to “regularities of translation behaviour within a specific sociocultural situation” (Baker, 163). In this context, some current approaches to translation studies focus on the investigation of regularly repeated linguistic features which are recognized as legitimate to a certain community at a certain period of time, and which impose behavioral constraints on translators. As a consequence of such recognition, the choices translators make are regarded as being socially motivated. The researcher’s job, then, according to this descriptive perspective, is to classify these choices, or norms, as regular translational behavior, and not to establish or prescribe rules for “good” translations.

In this article, emphasis is given to how translators deal with a specific aspect of certified translations: semiotic items found in source texts. In Brazil, certified translations have traditionally included not only a linguistic rendering, but also a description of the document being translated. Any distinctive feature found in the source text should be described by the translator. Hence, a large number of paraphrases and metatranslations are expected to be found, since such features are “inherent features of certified translation” (Aubert, 17). As Aubert states, this practice is carried out by various means, including: descriptive parentheses, such as “Bottom left corner of page 1: golden seal of the Notary Office”; notes or brief comments, such as “illegal signature”; or translator’s notes (ibid., my translation). All these formalities are understood to be essential in translations in Brazil, given that such translations are to be “legally recognized as a faithful reproduction of the original” (Aubert, 14, my translation). These formalities are also important since translations are expected to produce the same legal effects in the target community as they produced in the source community.

It must be emphasized that the recipient of a certified translation is usually a government agency employee or a school or bank official. Given this fact, the recipient should be provided with information that she or he needs to know in order to be convinced of the authenticity of the original document.
The second concept informing this article is that of intersemiotic translation. This type of translation was first described by Jakobson (1959, 232) as “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.” According to Augustine (Deely, 18), “a sign is a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses, causes something else to come into thought as a consequence,” or, in Deely’s own words, “anything that makes present in awareness something besides itself.”

Expanding on both definitions, intersemiotic translation includes not only the conversion of a verbal into a nonverbal sign, but also the translation of any visual sign, such as a stamp or illustration, whether it includes verbal signs or not, into a verbal sign. It is believed that the signs found in the original documents reveal other features, such as, for example, their legitimacy as official documents (often signaled by the imprinting of a signature or stamp thereon). Hereafter, we will refer to such signs in the source text as semiotic items.

**Purpose of this Study**

The following investigation is carried out within the line of research known as Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), as proposed by Toury (1995), Chesterman (1993), and Hermans (2000). In this context, the study takes a descriptive perspective, as opposed to any prescriptive view or assessment concerning the matter under investigation. Thus, it seeks to investigate how semiotic items are dealt with in certified translations and to describe the norms reconstructed from the corpus.

**Corpus and Procedures for Data Collection**

The corpus collected in the U.S. is comprised of 154 certified translations made available by the Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts and by members of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division. The Translation Center was chosen due to the high concentration of Brazilian and Portuguese immigrants living in Massachusetts who request translation services. Thus, the Center is representative of the translation activity carried out in that region, since the translators participating in this study work for the Translation Center on a freelance basis and are not the Center’s employees. The data collected includes all of the translations into and from Brazilian Portuguese found in the Center’s files (1998-2002) that have been used for official purposes. The corpus for this research includes translations done by Brazilian and American translators only.

As for the second source of data, with the help of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division, translators working in the U.S. were invited to participate in this research project. ATA was chosen because it is the nation’s largest organization for translators/interpreters, and its members are considered representative of the country’s translator community. Translations were generously submitted by translators from various parts of the U.S. in 2002. A requirement for participating translators was to submit texts that were going to be used for official purposes.

Two procedures were followed when collecting data. As reported above, the translated texts collected from the Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts included all of the translations into and from Brazilian Portuguese found in the Center’s files. Similar texts were collected, that is, more than one sample of each text type. This was done for two reasons. First, although there was an initial concern that the data could be falsifiable, a preliminary analysis of the data revealed that there were also some inconsistencies in the procedures used by a single translator, even within the same translated text. For instance, this translator was found to use different procedures when coming across official stamps in the original text: they were sometimes described, sometimes translated, and sometimes simply omitted. Second, the time span for data collection at the Translation Center was long (five years), which allowed this particular translator to change procedures. When facing these facts, a decision was made to include all of the translations collected at the Center.

As for the translated texts sent by translators from other states, each translator was asked to contribute only one sample from as many text types as they wanted (e.g., one birth certificate, one contract, etc.). As participation was expected to be low, this procedure was used to avoid a situation in which one translator might send a large number of similar translations of the same text type.

The translations collected vary in length (from one to seven pages) and type (school reports, police record certificates, birth and marriage certificates, affidavits, etc.). They widely represent the kind of documents translators deal with in their daily practice when doing certified translations.

**Methodology**

As suggested by Baker, “one identifies norms of translational behaviour by studying a corpus of authentic translations and identifying regular patterns of translation, including types of strategies that are typically used by the translators represented in that corpus” (164).
In this study, translational behavior is identified by investigating the authentic data described in the section entitled “Corpus and Procedures for Data Collection.” The regular patterns of behavior investigated concern the strategies used by translators to deal with all semiotic items found in source texts. These included: coat of arms, seals, stamps, signatures, logos, illustrations, symbols, photographs, and fingerprints. To achieve this, the investigation included the following steps:

1. Attribution of a number to each specific translation for the purpose of identification;
2. Identification of semiotic items in all of the source texts (STs);
3. Visual display of this information by means of a table containing each instance and the total number of occurrences for each ST;
4. Investigation of the treatment given to each occurrence in each translated text (TT);
5. Visual display of this information in a table containing the strategies used by the translator; and
6. Description and analysis of findings in terms of regularities of translational behavior.

Most original texts contained at least one type of semiotic item, and many had two or three items. In the analysis below, emphasis is given to describing the regularities found in translational behavior.

**Analysis and Discussion of Findings: Strategies Used**

The analysis of occurrences revealed the recurrent use of the following translation strategies:

**Strategy 1: The sign is reproduced exactly as it is in the source text.**

One illustration of this strategy is found in the reproduction of symbols such as [%] and “&,” which appear in the translation exactly as they are used in the source text.

**Strategy 2: The sign is translated into words.**

This strategy can be exemplified by the use of the conjunction “and” in place of “&,” and the use of “jovem” (young man/lady) as a substitution for the internationally used female sign.

**Strategy 3: The sign is translated and described.**

For instance, a note is used (such as [Trans note: The following stamp appears twice, once near the top and once near the bottom of the page.]), followed by a translation of the stamp’s content. Another example runs as follows: [round stamp in every page] Centro Universitário de Jaraguá do Sul – UNERJ – Director of Academic Records.

**Strategy 4: The sign is translated and mentioned.**

In this case, the sign is simply mentioned (for example, [Seal]), followed by a translation of its content (Federal Republic of Brazil). Another example is the following: [Stamp: Office of the Civil Registry, Titles and Documents, Antonio de Araujo, Officer, Assis Chateaubriand District, Paraná].

**Strategy 5: The sign is described, but not translated.**

An illustration of the use of this strategy is the following translation of a stamp in which much more information was provided: [Stamp of Prof. Moacyr Campos High School]. Other examples of description include [illustration of car] and [Mercedes-Benz symbol].

**Strategy 6: The sign is mentioned.**

This strategy can be illustrated as follows: [official stamp]: [signature].

**Strategy 7: The sign is mentioned and reproduced.**

In this case, the sign is reproduced exactly as it is in the original, and its nature as a sign is mentioned ([logo]: ISENAT).

**Strategy 8: The sign is omitted altogether.**

Although strategies 1 and 8 are not consistent with our definition of intersemiotic translation (see Definitions), they have been included because of the high number of occurrences found.

**Summary of the Strategies Used**

The treatment given to semiotic items can be summarized in Table 1 on the following page. Table 1 shows that omitting the sign was the most frequently used strategy. Since the signs mentioned help identify the source text as an official document, this result can be considered highly unexpected. On the other hand, in several cases translators opted to mention the sign and to call the receptor’s attention to its existence in the original. Very few translators decided to mention and reproduce the sign or describe and translate it. This may be an indication that translators do not consider it necessary for receptors to be informed about the existence of the semiotic item in the source text, but only to be informed about its content. Some other conclusions can be drawn:

1. Logos, illustrations, and coat of arms were almost always omitted from translated texts;
2. Symbols were rarely omitted and frequently reproduced or translated;
3. Photos and fingerprints seldom appeared in the data under analysis, but in the two cases in which they did appear, two different translators gave them the same treatment: they were mentioned as nonverbal signs.

Overall, evidence reveals that keeping the semiotic item was the most frequent translational behavior in the corpus investigated. In other words, in 191 of 358 occurrences of semiotic items in the source text, the translator opted to signal the existence of the sign, as opposed to 167 instances in which the sign was simply translated or omitted. That is to say that although omitting the item was the most frequent strategy used, when the strategies that signal the existence of a semiotic item are considered together (strategies 1, 3, and 7), a clear preference for informing the receptor about the existence of the semiotic item is revealed.

### Table 1: Strategies Identified for the Treatment of Semiotic Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Reproduced</th>
<th>Translated</th>
<th>Translated / Described</th>
<th>Translated / Mentioned</th>
<th>Described</th>
<th>Mentioned</th>
<th>Mentioned / Reproduced</th>
<th>Omitted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coat of arms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seals</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>76</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>129</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A Brief View of Translators’ Behavior Towards Semiotic Items

Table 2 shows that sometimes the same semiotic item was given different treatments in the same translation. The numbers in each column refer to the number given to specific translated text, as explained in the Methodology section (strategy 1.) on page 45.

Some conclusions can be drawn from Table 2:

1. Inconsistency was found in the translation of seals. For instance, in translation 68, seals were sometimes mentioned, sometimes omitted. The same can be said about the translation of stamps (omitted and translated/described in translation 62; omitted and translated in 80; and mentioned and omitted in 69). The inconsistency in behavior becomes more evident in the treatment given to signatures (and initials) in the source text. For instance, sometimes the translator mentioned the signature and sometimes omitted she/he (see translations 18 and 65). At other times, the translator described and omitted signatures (see 24) or described and mentioned signatures (see 125);

2. Stamps were by far the signs receiving the most varying treatments from different translators. In most translations, their content is translated without any mention to the fact that the text appears as part of a stamp. In many translations, their content was translated after their nature as a stamp had been mentioned. In comparison to the treatment given to other signs, few translations omitted the stamps found in the source text.

### Conclusion

It is believed that the amount of data collected from the U.S. to date does not yet warrant the reconstruction of norms of translational behavior in the American community. Nor does it indicate the use of any of the strategies as being socially motivated, as it is the purpose of DTS to investigate. However, the data col-
lected does seem to suggest a “ten-
dency” towards the use of certain
strategies in the translation of semi-
otic items, as discussed in the pre-
vvious section. As commercial and
personal relations between countries
and people increase, so does the
demand for certified translations.
Consequently, more research in this
field is needed.

DTS is concerned with describing
and analyzing what translation is. In
this sense, research along this line is
nonjudgmental and purely descriptive.
However, the evidence found in this
kind of research can inform applied
translation studies, which are con-
cerned with translation criticism and
translator training, and which, there-
fore, are prescriptive in nature. It is
believed that the findings reported
above have evident pedagogical rele-
vance to both trainee and experienced
certified translators, for they offer
translators an opportunity to see how
their colleagues inform the reader
about peculiarities in the source text.

It is believed that the common
practices reported in this article are
accepted by the target community (in
this case, the American community).
As pointed out by Hermans (11):

Norms imply that there is, among
the range of options that present
themselves, a particular course of
action which is generally accepted
as “proper” or “correct” or “appro-
priate.” That course of action, it is
agreed, should therefore be adopted by all who find them-

selves in that type of situation.
Each time a norm is observed, its
validity is confirmed and rein-
forced [his emphasis].

The consequence of this approach
is that “learning to translate means
learning to operate with and within
the norms of translation” (Hermans,
12) and “the notion of what consti-
tutes ‘correct’ behaviour, ‘correct’
linguistic usage, or ‘correct’ transla-
tion is therefore a social and cultural
construct” (ibid, 13).

Finally, it should be highlighted
that “translators operate first and fore-
most in the interest of the culture into
which they are translating” (Toury,
19). The results presented above seem
to warrant the assertion that having as
precise a picture as possible of an
original document, one which will be
utilized for official purposes through
its translation, is considered an impor-
tant feature of certified translations by

translators working in the United
States. This is exemplified by the
translators participating in this study.

I am very grateful to the Transla-
tion Center at UMASS-Amherst, espe-
cially to its director Dr. Edwin
Gentzler and his assistants Lynn and
Shawn, for all the support provided
while I conducted my research at that
institution. I am very much indebted
to ATA’s Portuguese Language
Division, especially to its adminis-
trator, Tereza Braga, and to all trans-
lators who participated in this
research project. I also would like to
express my gratitude to CAPES, a
Brazilian research funding agency,
for the financial support given while I
stayed in the U.S. Finally, I owe a
special debt to my supervisor, Dr.
Maria Lúcia Vasconcellos, and to
translator Elena Langdon for their
helpful comments.

Notes
1. A word of explanation regarding
certified translations in American
and Brazilian settings is necessary
from the outset. Certified transla-
tions in the Brazilian context are
those done by translators who
have been vested with the

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</table>

Table 2: Inconsistent Translational Behavior in the Treatment Given to Semiotic Items.
legal power to attest to the authenticity of their own translations and to the faithfulness of these translations to the original text. One becomes a certified translator only after passing oral and written exams conducted by the Junta Comercial (Commercial Registry) in each Brazilian state.

2. As proposed by Holmes (1988, p 77-78).

References


Interview with Bob Feron Continued from page 42

and experienced freelance translators to be well paid in many “niche” markets such as these.

Please allow us to talk a little politics. What is your prognosis for the Lula administration as far as foreign relations are concerned? Do you expect the next four years to be much more difficult in the relationship between Itamaraty and the U.S. State Department than the eight years of the Cardoso administration?

I’m strongly optimistic that the Brazilian economy will fare much better than last year’s pundits had predicted for a national government run by President Lula. I also believe that the direct involvement of both Itamaraty and the State Department in managing bilateral and multilateral relations will definitely contribute to maintaining stability, as has already been demonstrated during then President-Elect Lula’s December visit to Washington, and in seeking a new means of addressing the ongoing crisis in Venezuela.

How do you like life in Washington, DC? Do you have family in this country? Have you lived in other American cities?

I have a wonderful Brazilian wife and two kids, one fluently bilingual and the other still in diapers. We live in the DC suburbs and we like the area. A long time ago, I lived in Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, but only during my university years.

Solving Puzzles of Grammar and Context Continued from page 39

the source text, and must also look backward to maintain internal consistency within the translation.

The translator benefits from the use of any relevant source of information, and the document that is being translated is the most relevant source of all. Paying attention to the flow of ideas within a document increases the likelihood that the translator will convey those ideas accurately. Absorbing the flow of ideas may be considered by some people to fall outside the realm of the translator’s responsibility, but I maintain that it is precisely this grasp of ideas, and not merely a grasp of words, that distinguishes a high-quality translation from one that is merely adequate.
Carrefour is Europe’s number 1 retailer, operating more than 9,200 stores in 30 countries, and the group takes customer service seriously.

So much so that store management at its superstar in Coquelles, at the French end of the Channel Tunnel, reacted quickly when staff members heard English spoken at the checkout counters. Foreign customers? Welcome, friends! Within days bilingual signs had been hoisted over most aisles in a bid to make these foreign visitors’ shopping experience more enjoyable.

“Enjoyable? It’s positively hilarious!” laughs Philip Boyden, a British shopper who photographed the signs for us. His shots confirm that good intentions and fast reflexes are not enough to ensure clear and accurate signage in a foreign language.

When we called, Carrefour headquarters in Paris told us the group has no corporate translation policy, and leaves initiatives such as bilingual signs up to local management. The company nonetheless welcomed feedback.

Back in northern France, the Coquelles team was equally keen to get it right. They explained that the signs had been cobbled together by the in-store decorating department with the help of a paperback bilingual dictionary. As linguists know, dictionary look-up is a risky option for even the shortest of translations, and signs are notoriously tricky. Example: vaisselle, which Boyden’s photos show to be dishes and tableware, is helpfully subtitled “Washing up” for English visitors. Carrefour’s sign-makers had erroneously selected faire la vaisselle, French for “do the dishes,” from the dictionary heading for vaisselle.

Yet the initiative at Coquelles is certainly timely. Store manager Pierre Fournier confirmed that English-speaking customers represent an astonishing 60% of its total sales. Many are British tourists stocking up on their way home from a holiday abroad; others are day-trippers.

Bilingual signage can cut both ways, according to Mr. Fournier, who claims that many U.K. shoppers are taken in by a giant “Cash & Carry” sign on the facade of a nearby rival.

“Their parking lot is full of U.K. license plates,” he says, “but not a single French car. The reason is simple: their prices are higher than ours. French consumers have checked it out and come to Carrefour instead. But the English-speakers, who are just passing through on their way to the tunnel, don’t know that.” Mr. Fournier is convinced that these naive Brits are given a false sense of security by seeing outdoor signs in their own language.

Some of Carrefour’s own flawed panels advertise viande (meat) as both “beat” and “heat.” Looking for charcuterie (pork products/cold cuts)? Try “Delicateness.” Eau plate (still, i.e., nonsparkling, water) is stacked under “shill water.”

For German visitors, “About us” is rendered Keine wartenden Zimmer—“no rooms that wait.” Spanish-speakers are urged to check out the site’s reparto caliente or “hot distribution” (original English: “Hot deal!”), while in Portuguese even “Welcome” doesn’t make the cut: As vindas de boas a worldwidemed.com, or “the come of well to worldwidemed.com.”

Another interpretation, says our Portuguese contact, is “the coming of the pretty girls to worldwidemed.com.”

The site’s blurs about medication on offer also raise eyebrows. Viagra, described as a “breakthrough treatment” for male sexual dysfunction, becomes a “rupture treatment” in Spanish (un tratamiento de la...
ruptura) and a “penetration treatment” in Italian (un trattamento di penetrazione); in French a garbled text raises worrying visions of piercing.

“There is hardly a single sentence that withstands closer scrutiny,” says ATA member Gabe Bokor, for whom the site is useful as a cautionary example of what happens with uncritical use of computer-generated translation.

Oregon-based edesignerz.com confirmed that they had produced the multilingual site for WorldWideMeds using raw machine translation. Did the clients know what they were getting? “They said okay.” Might it not be a good idea to remove the silly texts? “I won’t go back and do it for free!”

Our call to corporate headquarters revealed WorldWideMeds to be an offshore venture operating from a balmy Caribbean isle. The sales manager was manifestly less concerned about poor translations (“done before I got here”) than legal liability: WorldWideMeds had been forced to block some foreign-language versions, he said, since mail-order purchases of such medications are forbidden in those countries. The same contact appeared nonplussed by the garbled grammar and sheer nonsense displayed under his company’s name (“would cost too much to take it down”).

As this Onionskin went to press, all language versions were thus up and running, an excellent multilingual illustration of machine translation gone awry—and a reminder that with translation, as with any service, you get what you pay for.

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Call for Papers

44th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association
Phoenix, Arizona • Pointe South Mountain Resort • November 5-8, 2003

Proposals are invited on topics in all areas of translation and interpreting, including the following:

- Agencies, Bureaus, and Companies; Financial Translation and Interpreting; Independent Contractors; Interpreting; Language-Specific Sessions; Legal Translation and Interpreting; Literary; Medical Translation and Interpreting; Scientific and Technology; Social Sciences; Terminology; Training and Pedagogy; Translators and Computers.

Suggestions for additional topics are welcome. Proposals for sessions must be submitted on the Conference Presentation Proposal Form to: Conference Organizer, ATA Headquarters, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Fax: (703) 683-6122. All proposals for sessions must be in English.

There’s no time like the present! Download a Conference Presentation Proposal Form at www.atanet.org/abstract.htm.
As stated in the short, half-page preface, Elsevier’s Dictionary of Advertising is intended to cover terminology from the fields of “marketing and market research, creativity (graphic design, text writing and concept development, photography and film-making basics), media, prepress and typography.” The intended users are “students of advertising, advertising professionals (account executives, graphic designers, copywriters, media planners, etc.)...and business people.”

Since it would undoubtedly require a huge tome to deal comprehensively with all the terms that fall within the above fields, the authors have indeed undertaken a daunting task. The numbered English terms in boldface are listed in alphabetical order, followed by the German, French, and Russian translations, which makes for a user-friendly book. Foreign-language terms are listed in separate, indented sections followed by the number of the corresponding English entry. The hardbound volume is printed on glossy paper in easy-to-read type. Grammatical information is limited to (v) for “verb” for the English terms and singular, plural, and gender for foreign nouns; gender is not specified when the noun is part of a composite term including a verb or adjective. Not surprisingly, given the huge number of terms specific to advertising, filler words are virtually absent from these pages.

For advertising students, copywriters, and executives, the dictionary should prove extremely useful. Rich in printed media terminology, the book contains numerous entries relating to various kinds of type, layout, and copy (e.g., “marbled paper,” “posterize color,” “rotary photogravure”) and marketing terms (e.g., “market positioning,” “market challenger,” “marginal target groups”). Terms such as “boost,” “door-to-door selling,” “sales angle,” “brand awareness,” “spin-off advertisement,” “subscriber analysis,” “product attribute,” “SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis,” “sustained campaign,” “positioning map,” “positioned text,” and “blitz campaign” are not to be found in other dictionaries of advertising such as K.A. Ivanova’s English-Russian Dictionary of Advertising and Public Relations (Англо-русский словарь по рекламе и публичной религии: Санкт-Петербург, Политехника, 1998).

In its coverage of broadcast media terminology, the Elsevier dictionary is somewhat less complete, though that is hardly surprising in a field in which terms sprout overnight, burst into a bloom of short-lived popularity, and disappear with equal celerity. This also is an area of highly colloquial, often country-specific, language (e.g., “sweeps” [TV ratings competition], “big five” [top-selling records of the week]) that may escape the earnestly academic European compilers of a serious dictionary. Even such standard media terms as “slot,” “spot advertising,” “spot load,” “publicity copy,” “pay-as-you-go,” “piggy-back,” or “spin doctor,” found in Ivanova’s dictionary or in E.I. Kuryanov’s English-Russian Dictionary of Mass Media (Moscow: Moscow International School of Translation and Interpreting, 1993), are not included in the Elsevier volume. While Manoilova and Konstantinova provide “rating scale,” such related terms as “rating data,” “rating points,” or “rating service,” all found in Ivanova and Kuryanov, are omitted. Nor are “pictorial supplement,” “tie-in advertising,” “teletext,” “trial order,” or “trial package” in the Elsevier dictionary.

What seems rather odd in a volume as comprehensive as Manoilova’s and Konstantinova’s dictionary is the treatment given to “public relations” and related terms. While the English-language “public relations” has become a standard term in French, German, and Russian (Ivanova’s book, published some five years ago, includes публичной религии in the title, and the Russian daily press is filled with references to публичной религии—public relations agents”), Manoilova and Konstantinova translate “public relations” as the outdated связь с общественностью. Nor does the Elsevier dictionary include any PR terms such as “public relations...
counselor,” “public relations advertising,” or “public relations office,” all of which are found in Ivanova’s book. And Imagepflege/Imgemqestaltung could have been included (as related terms, if not as an exact translation), rather than having only PR hold the fort by rendering “public relations” in German.

Though a dictionary of this type is not intended to include slang terms, it is extremely strange that the French la pub, for la publicité, is nowhere to be found. The word is so common in France that virtually no popular publication uses the full word in place of the abbreviation. Nor is the common term “plug” included, known in France as a coup de pub. It is also not clear why publicitaire is given only as the translation for an “advertising canvasser,” when the French word also means an advertising agent or “adman.” Nor is the word “ad” to be found in Elsevier’s dictionary, except in “ad agent.” “Point-of-sale” advertising is rendered in French as a point de vente; this can also be sur le lieu de vente. The verb passer, in the sense of an advertisement/commercial being run on television (i.e., passer une publicité à la television) is not included. For “fraudulent/deceptive advertising,” the translations publicité frauduleuse/deceptive are given, but not publicité mensongère. “Spot/commercial/promo” is rendered as bref communiqué publicitaire entre deux émissions rather than with the popular term spot publicitaire. The definition is questionable, since a spot or commercial occurs just as often within the confines of a single program as between two different ones.

Regarding German terms, for which Manoslova and Konstantinova provide the accepted translations of most of the English entries, there are also a few omissions. “Window display” is given as Schaufensterdekoration, but Schaufensterauslage is not included. “Advertising rates” are translated as Anzeigentarif or Anzeigenrate, but Inseratkosten, or in the case of broadcast media, Einschaltpreise (für Werbespots), could also have been included. “Advertising space” is rendered as Anzeigenraum, Reklamefläche, Werbefläche, but Platz für Anzeigen is not included.

Several German entries sound rather “calqued” (e.g., Nacheditieren for “postedit[ing]” rather than Nachredigieren, or populäre Sprache rather than Umgangsprache for “popular language”). The term potenzieller Effekt should at least have been in parenthesis, given the inconsistency in spelling the adjective with z instead of t as in the entries in this section (potentielle Auswirkung, potentielle Verluste, potentieller Markt, potentielle Reichweite).

A preface longer than one paragraph (and written in better English) might have served to explain the principles governing the choice of terms included in this dictionary, including the decision to leave out colloquial but common terms in the field of advertising, and the choice of synonyms (generally quite good). As a basic reference work, however, distinguished by accuracy in translation, professionalism in the production of the edition, and ease of use, Elsevier’s Dictionary of Advertising can be recommended to translators in this field as a very good reference work.

Lynn Visson has been a staff interpreter from Russian and French into English at the United Nations for more than 20 years. She holds a Ph.D. in Slavic languages from Harvard University. She is the author of a textbook and an audio course on simultaneous Russian–English interpretation, and of numerous other books and articles on Russian language, literature, and culture. Contact: lisson@aol.com.

Elsevier’s Dictionary of Bird Names (Latin, English, French, German and Italian)

Author: Murray Wrobel
ISBN: 0-444-50836-8
Publisher: Elsevier Science, Inc.
P.O. Box 945
Madison Square Station
New York, NY 10160-0757
Publication date: 2002
Price: $245 (1,444 pages)

Reviewed by: Jacopo Mădăro Maro

Murray Wrobel’s first dictionary, Elsevier’s Dictionary of Butterflies and Moths, is a remarkable piece of scholarship, so it was with great anticipation that I opened his second contribution, the Elsevier’s Dictionary of Bird Names.

The volume is a hefty 1,444 pages, with 10,838 lemmata presented in standard Elsevier format. The text is organized into two columns. The scientific (Latin) names of species and varieties form the headwords and are followed by order, family, and multilingual renditions.
A few pairs are missing. For instance, the names of some varieties are offered in English only (e.g., the three threatened emuwrens \textit{Stipiturus malachurus} of South Australia or the Indian white-throated ground-thrush) or in French only (see the Mexican \textit{Atlapetes brunnneinucha apertus}, called \textit{rascadòr} in Spanish and plain-breasted brush-finch in English). Other pairs are selectively absent. The Aussie inland thornbill \textit{Acanthiza apicalis} has no Italian equivalent, while the Brazilian \textit{Asthenes luizae} and the cundinamarca antpitta (discovered in Colombia by Peter Kaestner in 1989) have no Italian or German counterparts. Similarly, the Kenyan Jackson’s thornbill, the Venezuelan tyrannulet, the Melanesian scrubfowl, the Abyssinian \textit{Zoothera crossleyi}, and the Socorro dove are not graced by German names. In total, probably 5% of the terms present one or more deficits.

These absences are good proof of superior lexicographic integrity. Let’s take two fierce little tyrants whose German names are missing, the Venezuelan \textit{Zimmerius improbus} and \textit{Z. chrysops}. Their Andean relatives, \textit{Z. bolivianus}, \textit{cinereicapillus}, \textit{gracilipes}, \textit{vilissimus}, and \textit{viridiflavus}, are all identified as sundry \textit{fliegerstecheren}. Considering how easy it would be to produce a German version of the common names “goldfaced” and “Venezuelan” tyrannulets, the only reasonable conclusion is that their absence mirrors the lack of references in the literature. Such is the case with the already mentioned \textit{Acanthiza apicalis}: Unlike Wrobel and his two Italian collaborators, Marco Isiaia e Giovanni Soldato, I could not identify this \textit{becco a spina} using all my printed references and six Italian search engines.

It is worth noting that Wrobel has listed all known \textit{Zimmeri}. I cannot verify all of the \textit{Tyrannidae} since there are more than 400 of them, but a spot check should suffice.

The website homepage.sunrise.ch/homepage/siro/Interpass-tyrannidae.htm has produced the results presented in Table 1.

Wrobel presents one discrepancy only, indicating the Italian equivalent of \textit{X. dominicana} as “\textit{Monjita bianca e nera}.” I have not found other Italian references online or in print to make an intelligent choice, but

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<td>\textit{Xolmis cinerea}</td>
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<td>Monjita cenerina</td>
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<tr>
<td>\textit{Xolmis coronata}</td>
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<td>Monjita corona nera</td>
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<td>Dominikaner Monjita</td>
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<td>White monjita</td>
<td>Monjita bianca</td>
<td>Witwen-Monjita</td>
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<td>Fire-eyed diucon</td>
<td>Tiranno occhiodifuoco</td>
<td>Feueraugen-Tyann</td>
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<td>\textit{Xolmis velata}</td>
<td>White-rumped monjita</td>
<td>Monjita groppone bianco</td>
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Table 2

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<thead>
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<td>\textit{Hylopezus fulviventris}</td>
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Table 3

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Hylopezus perspicillatus}</td>
<td>Pitta formichiera pettostrìato Brillen-Ameisenpitta</td>
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The ATA Chronicle | May 2003
the difference seems quite minor.

On a different tack, the Formicaridae are well documented at birdingonthe.net/clements/getspecies.pl?119. From that listing, I derived the results given in Table 2.

The comparison with homepage.sunrise.ch/homepage/siro/Interpass-formicariidae.htm produces the results presented in Table 3.

The only discrepancies between the two sources concern H. fulviventris and ochroleucus. Wrobel solves this by listing both English names each time, while including every other antpitta mentioned.

Although homepage.sunrise.ch/homepage/siro/Interpass-vireonidae.htm does not list any member of the subgenus Vireosylva, a quick search produces several varieties. I randomly picked The Nebraskan V. olivacea, Belize’s V. virescens and Yucatan’s V. magister. Wrobel does not include them as such in his listing, limiting himself to Vireosylva propinqua. Nevertheless, due to the existing denomination uncertainty, two out of our three Vireosylvae reappear after a quick sex change as Vireo olivaceus and Vireo Magister.

The popularity of birdwatching has generated a plethora of eco-touristic initiatives. A particularly nice site for our purposes, organized by Tragon Travels (home.tiscali.be/fr018787/trogon/list.htm), offers a lengthy listing of birds sighted in North Venezuela. The list is randomly organized and offers the opportunity to truly check a wide variety of genera and families. I have excerpted the following data presented in Table 4.

Continuing with our spot checks, let’s consult the solid the Dizionario di Zoologia, published by Rizzoli in 1987 in Milan. Among the most common Italian representatives of the Columbiformes, Rizzoli lists Columbus palumbus, Columba oenas, and Columba livia. Wrobel needs six pages to exhaust his Columbine recueil. Similarly, neither Rizzoli nor Wrobel miss the gambecchio frullino (o L. falcinellus) as the lonely representative of the Limicolae, but both ignore the sub-varieties L. f. falcinellus and L. f. sibirica, probably because they do not seem to have specific common names.

In the end, considering that there are some 9,700 avian species, it seems safe to assume that Wrobel’s 10,838 lemmata cover the field in the most exhaustive manner ever attempted.

Therefore, I regret to point out a few shortcomings. To start, since January 1, 2001, the German consonant “ß” has been abolished and replaced with a double “s.” Its survival within Wrobel’s text two years after the fact seems more a product of carelessness than a political statement against linguistic normalization.

Furthermore, the indexing is quite puzzling. If French, Italian, and, I assume, German are fine as they are, the English list is alphabetically organized not by nouns but by adjectives, thus inhibiting a true synoptic view of the rich material at hand. How am I supposed to find a sunbird if I do not know that it is a Nectarinia, an Aethopyga or an Anthreptes, and/or that the common English name “sunbird” is preceded by qualifiers such as Little green, Rufus-winged, Beautiful, Purple-breasted, White-flanked, Elegant, Pigmy, Violet-backed, etc.?

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English (Tragon Travel)</th>
<th>Wrobel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dysithamnus mentalis</td>
<td>Plain Antvireo</td>
<td>✓ 9 other Dysithammni are listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysithamnus leucostictus</td>
<td>White-spotted Antvireo</td>
<td>✓ 4 more English synonyms are offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrmothylura schisticolor</td>
<td>Slaty Antwren</td>
<td>✓ The list of Myrmothylurae is 3 pages long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herpsiloichnus rufimarginatus</td>
<td>Rufous-winged Antwren</td>
<td>✓ There are 13 other Herpsiloichmi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formicivora grisea</td>
<td>White-fringed Antwren</td>
<td>✓ 3 other English synonyms are also included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinclodes fuscus</td>
<td>Bar-winged Cinclodes</td>
<td>✓ 12 more Cinclodes are listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leptasthenura andicola</td>
<td>Andean Tit-spinetail</td>
<td>✓ All 10 known Leptasthenurae are listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizoeaca coryi</td>
<td>Ochre-browed Thistletail</td>
<td>✓ All 9 thistletails are represented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on p.57
The Translation Inquirer  
By John Decker

Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmoor Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail address: jdecker@uplink.net. Please make your submissions by the 25th of each month to be included in the next issue. Generous assistance from Per Dohler, proofreader, is gratefully acknowledged.

Be not dismayed if you see a query that does not involve English as the origin or target of a translation. If you wish to contribute an English interpolation of the problem, please do so. It will probably help in the long run in solving the problem. His instincts tell the Translation Inquirer that this type of query, in which English plays no role (examples: Italian to German; Spanish to Dutch; French to Portuguese), will only become more numerous as the history of this column unfolds. And after all, why not?

[Abbreviations used with this column: Da–Danish; D–Dutch; E–English; F–French; G–German; I–Italian; Po–Polish; R–Russian; Sp–Spanish; Sw–Swedish.]

New Queries

(E-Da 5-03/1) In the field of antibiotics, *lite reagent* caused head-scratching in a ProZ-er who was attempting to provide good Danish for this antibiotics text: *FT4 in the patient sample competes with acridinium ester-labeled T4 in the Lite Reagent for a limited amount of polyclonal rabbit anti-T4 antibody. What is it, and what Danish is appropriate?

(E-Sp 5-03/2) A ProZ member had trouble with *upflow add-on evaporation coils* in a piece regarding air conditioning. The full context: …designed to operate with a full line of air handlers and *upflow add-on evaporation coils*. Is it reasonable to expect that there is someone out there familiar with these critters?

(E-Sp 5-03/3) Renato Calderon wonders if “tortitas de sartén” could possibly be a reasonable translation of *pancakes*, in place of the literal “*panqueques.*” His reasoning is based on the use of “sartén” in reference to the kind of kitchen utensil in which pancakes are prepared. The fact that in English the word *pan* happens by dumb luck to mean *bread* in Spanish has only confused things. No individual, nor the Spanish Academy, has ever attempted to solve this problem.

(E-Sp 5-03/4) Same problem as above, except that Renato wants to get a good Spanish version of *birthday cake.* “Pastel de cumpleaños,” as used in Mexico and northern Latin America, seems inferior in that “pastel” is actually a *pie*. The version seemingly preferred in Spain and South America, “torta de cumpleaños,” seems superior. Any opinions?

(F-E 5-03/5) Jetinder Poirier of Sydney, Australia, needs to know whether *handyman* is even close to being a proper translation for “agent de maintenance;” a qualification awarded by the Maintenance and Facility Management Society of Switzerland. He suspects that *handyman* fails to do the title justice.

(F-E 5-03/6) Also from Jetinder Poirier, and related quite intimately to the query directly above, is “serrurier-construcuteur.” An apprenticeship for this qualification lasts no less than four years, so perhaps *locksmith* or *welder* does not rise high enough for such a person.

(G-E 5-03/7) For the compound word “Typschadenhalter,” Cappie is concerned that “-schaden” might possibly have been substituted for another component that was really meant. The context is automotive: “Typschadenhalter für eine Stoßstange.” What can be made of this?

(G-I 5-03/8) In an engineering context, “Elektro-Rasentrimmer” posed problems for a correspondent working within ProZ. A fuller description of this device, which must find its way into good Italian, is “Elektro-Rasentrimmer: Doppelfaden mit Vollautomatik, 30 cm Schnittkreis.”

(Sp-D 5-03/9) “Numero PGDR 20, - procuraduria” involves the problem abbreviation which made it difficult for a ProZ member to get a full grip on this patent text. Can anyone break out the individual words and shed light where uppercase letters obscure it?

(Sw-E 5-03/10) This patent-related sentence caused dismay to a ProZ correspondent working from Swedish into English: “Den egendom som inte räknas upp i äktenskapsförordet utgör giftorättsgods.” The final, bold-print word caused the problem. Can you solve it?

Replies to Old Queries

(E-F 2-02/3) (snap-ring pliers [closing type]): Gunter Strump says he has always used “pinces (à fermer) pour circlips” for this.

(E-R 10-02/3) (bring or recover in an action): Horrors! Michael Ishenko asserts that, due to a typo or other misunderstanding, the text of one of the replies found on page 65-66 of the January 2003 ATA Chronicle, instead of speaking of minority rights, speaks of *fellatio* [!] rights of shareholders. This relatively simple legal phrase has been completely misinterpreted by Mr. Bourenin, says Michael. His translation literally means *fetch or obtain recovery in an action*. Apparently, Mr. Bourenin (again, according to Michael) did not realize that the phrase means *bring an action and recover in an action*, as his Russian translation implies that recovery should be both “brought” and “obtained.”

(E-Sp 10-02/5) (set the table): All his life, says Lorenzo Montoya, he has heard and said “tender la mesa.”

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A Yahoo! search with that phrase in quotes produced 8,790 sites for that phrase. Other equivalents that yield thousands of hits are “disponer la mesa” and “arreglar la mesa.” “Colocar la mesa” sounds absolutely atrocious to him, and “poner la mesa” is only slightly better. “Montar la mesa” sounds as if someone was about to ride the table, as when you “montar” a horse or bicycle. It could also mean setting up the table, as you would if it were the folding type. But to him, it definitely does not sound like setting out the china and silverware.

Ximena Oliver is so sure that “poner la mesa” is correct that she thinks the time has finally come to close off discussion on this. Just like “ponerse el sombrero” means to put the hat on your head, not cut your head and hat out of your body and put them somewhere else!

(F-E 2-03/5) (“langue d’Esopé”): Charles Ferguson found this faintly familiar, but nonetheless had to look it up. It denotes anything that can be praised and criticized equally. A perfect example is the story of how Aesop’s master ordered him to purchase the best thing the market had to offer and nothing else. Aesop returned with tongues he had bought, but as a culinary item it soon became wearisome to the master and his guests. Aesop defended his decision by pointing out that the tongue is the source of eloquence, inspiration, persuasion, and beauty. Ordered again to go to the market, but this time to buy the worst there was, Aesop returned again with tongues.

Bill Keasbey says it sounds like the Aesopian language Russian writers used to escape the censors. Krylov’s fables were purportedly about animals, but actually aimed sharp criticism at government officials. Soviet writers continued the tradition of hidden meaning in stories, forcing the censors to read between the lines. Alan Siegrist comes close to agreeing with this, saying that it is language in which the literal meaning of a fable also carries a hidden “moral” or second meaning. He quotes this definition of “Aesopian” as conveying meaning by hint, euphemism, innuendo, or the like (Random House, second edition, unabridged).

David Goldman was thinking simply of …or the language of Aesop as the solution to this.

(G-E 11-02/9) (“Jetzt-erst-recht-Stimmung”): Dr. Fred Thomson has always translated this as vindictive mood. One gets into a vindictive mood whenever another has somehow wronged one or hurt one’s feelings. Vengeful mood is probably another good possibility. The problem, he admits, is that these two suggestions lack the down-to-earth flavor contained in the German expression.

(G-Po 2-03/6) (“Blauwärme”): Gunter Strumpf has no idea what this might be in Polish, but has learned that blue temper heat is how Ernst’s dictionary renders it into English. Chris Hollingsworth states that the Girardet Wörterbuch der Technik (1979) calls it the blue heat range.

(I-F 2-03/7) (“eccezioni di sorta”): Paul Hopper believes that the English for this is exceptions of any kind or any exceptions whatsoever. Charles Ferguson breaks down the last two words to mean of any kind or whatever. Gunter Strumpf calls it exceptions of any kind, and provides no exceptions of any kind could be raised as the fuller translation. David Goldman took a stab at the entire phrase also: without the contracting party having the right to raise any exception whatever. In French, he says, it would sound something like “…sans que le parti contractant ait le droit de soulever aucune exception…”

(R-E 2-03/8) (установление воспреждений установочных элементов KB p/cт - Ядро-НЕ): Roy Cochrun reveals that KB is simply короткая волна (short wave) and p/cт is радиостанция. Ядро radio models are installed on airplanes and helicopters. Alexander Aron states that the damaged parts in question which require troubleshooting are installation software for a shortwave transceiver.

(1-E 2-03/9) (“recurso de suplicación”): Ximena Oliver states that this is the application made to a court higher than the trial court, and is the civil equivalent to an appeal in criminal matters for an amendment or motion to quash an interlocutory order made in the proceedings of a civil action. The document, he says, could have originated in any Spanish-speaking country.

(Sw-D 2-03/9) (“recurso de suplicación”). Gunter Strumpf calls it as the...
Finally, and not for the first time, Elsevier’s proofing is below standards. Just to quote a few examples, the common pigeon is a *Piccione torraiola* instead of *torraiolo*. The *Hylopezus ochroleucus* is a *pitta formichiera dai copraccigli bianchi* while it should be *dai sopraccigli bianchi*. Island is spelled *Issland* when the Dirk Hartog Island Southern Emuwren is mentioned, and its cousin, the *S. malachurus intermedius* is called a *Fleurieu PeninsulaSouthern Emuwren*, as if spaces were optional. Also, *Hylophilus decurtatus* is a *Vireo verdino minor* instead of the expected *minore*.

Still, we should remember that even the Goddess Venus was cross-eyed. Minor blemishes aside, Wrobel has achieved astounding results and his work is destined to become the avian reference *par excellence*.

Our January survey indicated broad interest in establishing ATA accreditation for these languages, but we need more candidates. To register your interest, please complete the form at http://hometown.aol.com/planbusa/questionnaire.html.

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<th>Exam Date</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Gardena</td>
<td>July 12, 2003</td>
<td>June 27, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Boulder</td>
<td>September 13, 2003</td>
<td>August 29, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>August 2, 2003</td>
<td>July 19, 2003</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>Regensburg</td>
<td>May 24, 2003</td>
<td>May 9, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Guadalajara</td>
<td>June 7, 2003</td>
<td>May 23, 2003</td>
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Preliminary information, along with the Registration Form, will be mailed in July to all ATA members. The conference rates are listed below. As always, ATA members receive significant discounts.

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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ATA Member</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
<th>Student Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early-Bird (by October 1):</td>
<td>$245</td>
<td>$335</td>
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<td>One-day:</td>
<td>$125</td>
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<td>After October 1:</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-day:</td>
<td>$195</td>
<td>$270</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Students and one-day participants do not receive a copy of the Proceedings. All speakers must register for the conference.

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The Pointe South Mountain Resort, the host hotel, is the largest all-suite resort in the Southwest located on 200 acres at the base of South Mountain Park. It is conveniently located at 7777 South Pointe Parkway, just six miles from Sky Harbor International Airport.

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### Directors

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Fax: (305) 532-0885  
paellero@aol.com

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Englewood, CO 80111  
Tel: (303) 779-1288  
Fax: (303) 779-1232  
bea@batanet.org

**Mr. Robert A. Croese**  
204 Neely Crossing Lane  
Simpsonville, SC 29680  
Tel: (864) 967-3955  
Fax: (864) 967-4808  
rcroese@charter.net

**Ms. Marian S. Greenfield**  
2619 Holly Avenue  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
Tel: (908) 561-7590  
Fax: (908) 561-3671  
msgreenfield@msgreenfieldtranslations.com

**Prof. Alan K. Melby**  
1223 Aspen Avenue  
Provo, UT 84604  
Tel: (801) 422-2144  
Fax: (801) 377-3704  
akm@byu.edu

**Mr. Robert E. Sette**  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15221  
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Kent, OH  
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**Active Membership Review**  
Leland D. Wright  
Kent, OH  
Tel: (330) 673-0043  
Fax: (330) 673-0738  
lw1341204@aol.com

**Dictionary Review**  
Boris M. Silversteyn  
Venice, FL  
Tel/Fax: (941) 408-9643  
Fax: bms36@yahoo.com

**Divisions**  
Dorothee Racette  
Saranac, NY  
Tel: (518) 293-7494  
Fax: (518) 293-7659  
cracette@direcway.com

**Education and Training (Non-ATA Programs)**  
Gertrud Graubart Champe  
Surry, ME  
Tel: (207) 664-7448  
gchampe@proxar.com

**Ethics**  
Muriel J. Jérôme-O’Keefe  
Alexandria, VA  
Tel: (703) 548-7570  
Fax: (703) 548-8223  
muriel@jg-inc.com

**Finance**  
Jiri Stejskal  
Melrose Park, PA  
Tel: (215) 635-7090  
Fax: (215) 635-9293  
jiri@cetrav.com

**Honor and Awards**  
Vacant

### Division Administrators

**Chinese Language**  
Frank Mou  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Tel: (412) 767-4788  
Fax: (412) 767-9744  
Frank_Mou@yahoo.com

**French Language**  
Michèle Hansen  
Hinsdale, IL  
Tel: (630) 323-4720  
Fax: (630) 323-4917  
hansentranslations@attbi.com

**German Language**  
Dorothee Racette  
Saranac, NY  
Tel: (518) 293-7494  
Fax: (518) 293-7659  
cracette@direcway.com

**Public Relations**  
Chris Durban  
Paris, France  
Tel: 33(1)42935802  
Fax: 33(1)43877045  
customerservice@compuserve.com

**Special Projects**  
Ann Macfarlane  
Seattle, WA  
Tel: (206) 541-8242  
Fax: (206) 546-5065  
info@russianresourcesint.com

**Terminology**  
Sue Ellen Wright  
Kent, OH  
Tel: (330) 673-0043  
Fax: (330) 673-0738  
swright@kent.edu

**Translation and Computers**  
Alan K. Melby  
Provo, UT  
Tel: (801) 422-2144  
Fax: (801) 377-3704  
akm@byu.edu

### ATA Representatives

To International Federation of Translators (FIT)  
Peter W. Kravetschke  
Kalamaazoo, MI  
Tel: (269) 387-3212  
Fax: (269) 387-3103  
peter.krawetschke@wmich.edu  
FIT: www.fit-ift.org

To Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL)  
Christophe Réthoré  
Harrisonburg, VA

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