SOAP NOTES: Getting Down and Dirty with Medical Translation
**FROM THE PRESIDENT**
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**ATA's Annual Conference: A Gauge for Professional Growth**

Sailing in the open water can be both exhilarating as well as somewhat disorienting. Lots of people rely on the sun, the stars, or more likely on GPS equipment, to keep track of their location. But sometimes the best way to determine not only where you are, but also where you’re headed is to make sure that you come ashore every now and then.

When we think of ATA, one of the largest landmarks for the Association is our Annual Conference. The conference provides the opportunity for the Board and the membership to come together in a place of both celebration and collaboration. It’s an event that should be on every member’s calendar each year.

The conference attracts upwards of 1,500 attendees each year, with the 2009 New York conference attracting over 2,400 attendees, which was close to almost a quarter of the Association’s membership. ATA’s Annual Conference is one of the largest conferences in the language industry in the world, and attracts translators, interpreters, academics, agency owners, government officials, and people from the realms of technology.

With over 175 conference sessions tailored to both beginners and experienced translators and interpreters, there can be a lot from which to choose. (The Preliminary Program is included with this issue of The ATA Chronicle.) The conference is an excellent time for you to get your bearings in our own career, decide on any new directions you would like to pursue, and learn any tips and tricks of the trade to get you there.

One of the most important reasons attendees cite for returning to the conference is the opportunity to network. Many attendees find that meeting just a few key contacts and landing a large job or two can pay for the entire event. With such a diverse group of players you are certain to find people who not only share your language, but also your occupation, area of interest, and often your experience. Attendees looking to connect with potential clients can find them at special events such as the new Job Fair or in the Exhibit Hall. The Brainstorm Networking event combines both speed networking and the chance to share solutions to common problems that translators and interpreters may face. Many attendees are thrilled just to meet people who understand what it is they do for a living.

The Annual Conference is often described as a “family reunion,” where folks can reconnect with old friends and network with new business contacts. The conference is unique in that it offers special programs developed to help first-time attendees feel at home. The Buddies and Newbies program does an excellent job of matching veteran attendees with first-timers so that they can learn tips about the do’s and don’ts and the “must-attend” events at each conference.

One of the biggest “must-attend” events is the Meeting of All Members that is held on Friday morning, during which members can raise their concerns, ideas, and comments directly to the Board. The Meeting of All Voting Members is held on Thursday morning, where members have the chance to meet the candidates that are competing for positions on the Board. Three directors are added to the Board at each conference.

If you’re looking to see the Board in action, the Board meetings are also open to the public. The Board meeting is held on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. There is a special time at the end of the meeting for members to address their comments directly to the Board. At many conferences, there is also the opportunity to get to know a member of the Board more closely at specially marked tables at breakfast.

After three days of meetings, sessions, and merriment, attendees and members find themselves revitalized and their careers re-energized. ATA’s Annual Conference also provides the Board with a chance to touch base with the membership in person and to use the experiences and exchanges to help guide the Association forward on our journey.
Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns and more can now be found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.atanet.org/chronicle-online!

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U.S. Immigration Benefits for Professional Translators and Interpreters

The immigration options available to foreign-born translators and interpreters are varied. An immigration attorney and a certified translator explain the benefits and drawbacks of applying for immigration benefits for foreign-born translators and interpreters.

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International Payment Updates

Sending and receiving international payments within the language services industry is a requirement of doing business, but it can also be expensive. Payment options available to our industry are changing constantly, so here is an overview of recent updates to the international payment landscape.

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Where Does Language Fit in with Big Data?

What is “big data” and how did it become part of the language sector? How should translators and interpreters approach it?

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SOAP Notes: Getting Down and Dirty with Medical Translation

Progress notes and patient records are the medical translator’s bread and butter, but this doesn’t prevent even the most experienced medical translators from making mistakes.

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How to Read and Translate R and S Phrases in Technical Texts

Risk phrases and safety phrases are among the most ubiquitous text units encountered in chemical documentation. Let’s explore the origin of these phrases to get a better idea of how they work and their place in documents for translation.
New for San Francisco: Advanced Skills and Training (AST) Day

In looking over the attendee evaluations of past ATA Annual Conferences, several trends stand out. Most of our attendees rave about the conference and say that whether they’re attending for the first time or the 30th, they always learn something valuable and make new connections. Another ever-present comment is “More advanced sessions!” Although approximately one-third of each year’s attendees are first-timers who are looking to learn the fundamentals of our industry, an additional third are longtime ATA conference participants who have been in the industry for several decades.

For ATA’s 57th Annual Conference in San Francisco, we’ve restyled Wednesday’s preconference sessions into an entire day of offerings to meet the demand for in-depth and highly specialized sessions, and for training that is delivered better in person than online. We’re hoping that this Advanced Skills and Training (AST) Day will become a must-attend “conference before the conference” for all attendees. We have a total of 16 sessions, including preparation sessions for the English>Spanish and Spanish>English certification exams.

All AST sessions will run for three hours. They will be led by trainers who are experts in their topics and who have received outstanding evaluations for their presentations at past conferences offered by ATA and by other professional associations. (A number of presenters are on the faculty at the world-renowned Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.) Each AST session also includes a networking event exclusively for participants in that session, and many sessions will include hands-on practice in the topics being covered. You can view the full lineup of AST sessions in the Preliminary Program (included with this issue of The ATA Chronicle), but here’s an overview of what’s in store!

**Interpreting:** We have a variety of offerings for our interpreter members: Holly Mikkelsen’s sight translation session, Katharine Allen’s note-taking session, Barry Olsen’s session on presentation skills for simultaneous interpreters, or Laura Burian and Jacolyn Harmer’s session on memory development for consecutive interpreters.

We’re thrilled that these highly acclaimed presenters have accepted our invitation to present in San Francisco...

**Business and Marketing:** Nearly all of us can benefit from some advanced tips on business skills and marketing, especially marketing to direct clients. If that applies to you, check out Kristine Carey’s session on using the Get Clients Now system to identify and market to new clients, or Judy Jenner’s session on direct client marketing strategies.

**Technology:** Maybe your goal for 2016 is to get your technology skills up to speed. If so, then we invite you to attend Jon Ritzdorf’s session on translating digital media, Andrew Levine’s session on Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software (including live demos), Jill Sommer and Allison Bryant’s session on advanced Microsoft Word formatting and optical character recognition techniques, or Tuomas Kostiainen’s session on advanced skills for Trados Studio users.

**Writing Skills:** If you’re looking to move up in the market by improving your writing skills, check out Karen Tkacyk’s session on editing techniques for into-English technical translators, Grant Hamilton’s session on marketing and advertising translation for into-English translators, or Philip Boehm’s session on the voice in literary translation. (Philip was the recipient of ATA’s Ungar German Translation Award in 2007 and 2013.)

**Financial Translation:** We even have a session for our advanced financial translators—always the hardest track for which to recruit sessions. Robin Bonthrone will be presenting on International Financial Reporting Standards.

**ATA Certification Exam Preparation:** Rounding out the AST lineup are two sessions for ATA certification exam candidates (one English>Spanish and one Spanish>English), offered by experienced graders Jane Maier, Holly Mikkelsen, Diego Mansilla, and Mercedes De la Rosa Sherman.

We’re thrilled that these highly acclaimed presenters have accepted our invitation to present in San Francisco, and we’re also excited to have an entire day of the conference devoted to advanced-level sessions. In our highly interconnected world, it’s easy to assume that online training offers everything we need to succeed as translators and interpreters. Online training does open up a huge array of opportunities, as the success of ATA’s webinar series shows. But it’s also important to look at in-person training not as an expensive hassle, but as an investment in our businesses, an opportunity to ask questions with the trainer right there in the room, and the chance to make connections with other dedicated professionals who share our specializations and interests.

I’m excited about our inaugural AST Day and hope to see many of you there! ☀
FEATURED FACEBOOK POST

American Translators Association
June 27

A letter to a younger Alex—
Become a translator. You won’t regret it!

"Dear Alex…You will receive a lot of offers from private universities to study (almost) whatever you want, but you will be always thinking about studying translation, and you know what? DO IT! You won’t regret studying a career that will ALWAYS make you learn. Through every document, through every project, through everything you translate you will learn a lot of things. You will be helping a lot of people to understand something that without your help they won’t be able to understand."

Read more:

TOP TWEETS

Brexit—What it could do to Britain’s translation industry
#translator #interpreter:
#translator; #interpreter
JUNE 27 / @ATANET

Instagram will soon have a translation button:
JUNE 24 / @ATANET

Just previewed the preliminary program for #ata57…looks amazing! So many great sessions and events on tap. @atanet
JUNE 22 / @CORNINEMCKAY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AN HOURLY FEE FOR TRANSLATION?

Here are few thoughts on John Milan’s article in the May-June issue. Other than tradition, there are numerous advantages to the per-word rate. It is verifiable, and there is no temptation to “fudge” the total hours billed. Experienced translators can project their source/target word ratios and thus bill by either one if asked to do so. For example, per-word rates can be adjusted to account for extra research and formatting.

However, there is a larger issue. Lawyers, the professionals with whom we most frequently work, don’t hesitate to bill by the hour. While rates of $1,000 per hour may be only for deep-pocketed clients, no one thinks $200 an hour is too much. Yet, if I were to quote a client $150 an hour—which is in fact what I frequently earn, based on my words per hour—that would be met with incredulity and “What?!!!? Never mind….” Of course, I can quote a per-project rate, but that begs the question.

We will be respected as professionals only when we can charge the hourly rates we deserve for the highly skilled work we do. That time has not yet come, and I doubt I will see it in my lifetime.

Eve Hecht | Elizabeth, NJ

ANOTHER TAKE ON HOURLY FEES

John Milan presents an interesting concept, but I would suggest taking it to the next logical step. Instead of determining an hourly fee, use your estimated productivity (words per hour) and desired hourly income to calculate a fee for the entire project. After all, with respect to cost, the client is only concerned with the total cost to them, not the hourly or word rate.

I have begun moving to quoting on a “per project” basis, factoring in the time required for research, translation, post-editing, and review. Even agency clients appreciate a “bottom line quote.” This is because it makes it easy for them to determine their profit margin, since they have often (usually?) quoted a flat fee to their end client.

Ted Wozniak | New Orleans, LA

SPICING UP YOUR TRANSLATION

In my experience, people do want to read clichés. Not a lot and certainly not all the time, but a sprinkling of clichés in your translation reassures the reader that they have the text under control. Let’s face it, unless we’re talking about literary translation, most people do not read for enjoyment. They read to get a job done.

However, this doesn’t mean you can’t spread your wings a little every now and then. Using a thesaurus, as Percy Balemans suggests in her article, can be stimulating, but you don’t want to send the reader off to the dictionary every 11 words or so. Genius has its place: a textbook on AngularJS (an open source JavaScript framework) can’t read like Finnegans Wake. In most cases, good translation is invisible, like good design.

One thing that makes writers valuable is that they have the freedom and the courage to get candid and bring who they are into anything they write. One might say that writers interpret their own souls, whereas translators interpret somebody else’s work. Function comes first, poetry second.

Jorge Machado
Client Outreach Update

Colorado paralegals, multilingual educators and government employees in Washington, DC, a national gathering of technical writers in Anaheim, California—what do they all have in common? They were the recent benefactors of client outreach efforts by ATA leaders. By speaking to potential clients we are getting the word out about working with professional translators and interpreters and how ATA can help.

As we continue to expand these outreach efforts, we want to keep you informed about what the Association is doing by sharing photos and reports in The ATA Chronicle and the Chronicle-Online. And this goes beyond ATA leaders. If you plan to speak about translation and interpreting services or careers to a group, please contact Chronicle Editor Jeff Sanfacon (jeff@atanet.org). He can give you guidelines for submitting a report and photos.

ATA offers a Client Outreach Kit that provides the information you need to present—from getting an invitation to speak to preparing a presentation to handling a Q&A session (www.atanet.org/client_outreach). ATA can also send you the booklets Translation: Getting it Right—A guide to buying translation and Interpreting: Getting it Right—A guide to buying interpreting services for your audience (www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right.php).

These speaking engagements and their promotion are working in parallel with the Public Relations Committee’s campaign to publish “penmed pieces” where they will be seen by those most likely to need translation and interpreting services. These penned pieces are written by ATA members and reviewed by ATA Public Relations Committee Chair Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo. The articles are reviewed again by an outside public relations firm, which subsequently places them in trade association magazines and regional business publications.

By writing these penned pieces we are controlling the message (versus working with reporters, where you have much less control over what they write). The articles, which are written to appeal to business people, have so far addressed two of the industry’s key issues: first, for the non-linguist, a review of what machine translation cannot do; and second, a cautionary tale about going international without professional translation and localization. To see where these articles have been published, please check out the Client Education Reprint Index (www.atanet.org/pressroom/client_ed_article_index.php).

To further promote these timeless client outreach articles, they have been published in The ATA Compass, ATA’s blog dedicated to client outreach (https://theatacompass.org). The Compass features a number of other articles and posts with information and tips for clients.

The bottom line for all ATA client outreach is to promote you and your professional services. Share these publications with potential clients. Reference them in your company’s marketing material. Link to them from your website and blog. Use them and let ATA’s outreach program work for you!

ATA 57TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

The Preliminary Program for ATA’s 57th Annual Conference is included with this issue of The ATA Chronicle. This is your first chance to look at the over 175 sessions planned and the breadth of activities set for San Francisco, California, November 2–5, 2016. Please see President-elect Corinne McKay’s column on page 4 for more on the Annual Conference. It’s not too early to make your hotel reservations at the Hyatt Regency and to register for the industry’s largest professional development gathering of the year (www.atanet.org/conf/2016/hotel).
Update on ATA Finances

There have been some pleasing developments in ATA’s finances since my last report:
- The final figures are in from the Annual Conference in Miami.
- The working budget for the next fiscal year has been approved by the Board.
- A new conference pricing tool has been developed and is being tested on ATA’s 57th Annual Conference in San Francisco.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The equity deficit has been eliminated! Thanks to various cost-cutting and revenue-enhancing measures during the past several years, but most recently due in particular to a financially successful Annual Conference in Miami, the Association’s unrestricted net assets (equity) moved into positive territory for the first time since 2008, reaching $322,869 as of February 29, 2016 (previous year: negative $205,732).

Net Assets Increase: For the first seven months of FY2015/16, our change in net assets (net income) was $505,647, a 2,102% increase over $22,966 for the same period last year. This development was due in part to increases in revenue, with total revenue for the period reaching $2.347 million, up 6% from $2.211 million for the same period last year. Membership revenue was up + $21k (2%), certification revenue rose $26k (24%), and professional development gained $6.5k (84%).

However, the most significant change in revenue compared to the same period last year was the almost 11% increase in revenue from the Annual Conference, rising from about $87k to $920,483. (See below for additional information about budgeting for the Annual Conference.) Offsetting these revenue increases were year-on-year declines in Chronicle revenue (-$8k, or 22%).

Changes in other revenue sources were due to:
- Continuing education point renewal fees, which peak every third year.
- Changes in certification exam revenue.
- Reduced Chronicle revenue due to the change in the publication schedule (bimonthly as opposed to monthly) and the switch to the electronic format.
- A slight increase in publications and ATAware sales at the Miami conference versus Chicago.

Decline in Total Expenses: Lower expenses also contributed to the equity turnaround. Total program expenses fell from $1.738 million in the same period last year to $1.364 million (-22%) for the first seven months of FY2015/16. Aggressive cost negotiation for the Miami conference was responsible for part of the almost 31% drop in conference expenses, while its location in a right-to-work state meant that some costs (audiovisual and food and beverage in particular) were already below the Chicago levels even before lower costs were negotiated. Attendance below the number of attendees in Chicago also contributed to lower conference expenses, with total conference expenses of $633k for Miami versus $915k in Chicago.

Lower Chronicle Expenses: The Chronicle continues to show lower costs as expected from recent changes, dropping almost 31% year-on-year from $321k to $188k. The other program services (divisions, professional development, and publications) posted slight increases as expected, in particular from Headquarters expenses for division website support and increased webinar offerings for professional development.

Expenses for Support Services Unchanged: Total expenses for support services, which are the expenses that are not allocated to a specific program, remained almost unchanged at $454k, while individual items saw significant proportional increases, which were not material in absolute terms. Public relations and marketing posted an 115% increase as planned, rising almost $13K to just under $24k from last year’s $11k baseline. Volunteers and governance also posted a large percentage increase of 116%, from $7k to $15k, primarily because of dues increases for the Joint National Committee for Languages and the International Federation of Translators. General and administrative expenses dropped almost 16% to $197k, while salaries and benefits rose by just under 7% to $163k.
TREASURER’S REPORT continued

Cash Balance Up: Our Statement of Position (balance sheet) as of the end of the first seven months of FY 2015/16 also shows positive development. With respect to assets, our balance of cash and cash equivalents is up 61% year-on-year to $1.428 million. We have no outstanding accounts receivable, and prepaid expenses posted a decline of 20% to $42k. Our investment funds saw an 8.5% decline to $328k, while our property and equipment assets declined by 14% to $137k due to depreciation. Total assets improved by almost 33% to $1.944 million.

Liabilities Unchanged: Our current liabilities remained nearly unchanged, declining by 2% overall to $1,578k, consisting almost entirely of deferred revenue from unearned dues of $1.495 million. This is normal for this period as dues are paid at the beginning of the calendar year, so we owe our members 10 months of services. Our noncurrent liabilities, which consist entirely of deferred rent, declined by 28% to $43,000. Our net assets (equity deficit) increased by 257%, from negative $206k to positive $323k.

The elimination of the equity deficit is a very pleasing development. Please note, however, that it highlights the impact that the financial success (or failure) of the Annual Conference can have on the Association’s finances. The $286k net income from the Miami conference accounts for roughly 56% of our total net income before investments. Proper planning, including accurate cost estimates and deliberate pricing of the conference, is crucial to a financially successful Annual Conference.

WORKING BUDGET FOR FY2016/17 APPROVED

The Board of Directors approved the working budget for the next fiscal year at the Board meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, on May 1. The budget forecasts total revenues of $3.189 million, total expenses of $3.019 million, and a change in net assets (net income) of about $150,000 for the next fiscal year.

Individual items of note include a projected further decrease in Chronicle expenses of $64k, an increase in professional development revenue to roughly $22k due to increased webinar offerings and in-person seminars, and an increase in public relations/marketing expenses to about $60k, as requested by ATA’s Public Relations Committee.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE BUDGETING/PRICING TOOL

To improve our ability to forecast the financial result of an Annual Conference, and to give the conference organizers and Headquarters better information on which to base the registration fee, ATA Director Evelyn Garland and John Milan, a member of ATA’s Finance and Audit Committee, spent several months developing a conference pricing tool. Kirk Lawson, our accounting and finance manager, and I then tweaked the tool a bit. It is now undergoing beta testing.

When budgeting for the Annual Conference and developing the new conference pricing tool, very conservative estimates are used. We use lower-than-expected attendance to forecast registration revenues and actual expected attendance to calculate expenses. Ideally, the actual net income from the conference will therefore always be higher than the forecast. But this conservative approach is necessary because we can never be quite sure about attendance and, more importantly, expenses are very difficult to estimate accurately in advance of the conference. Exhibitor and sponsorship revenues, which can comprise around 10–15% of total revenue, are also rather uncertain this far in advance. This is where the new conference pricing tool should help.

The tool uses both historical data (financial, geographical, and other) and the best available cost estimates (primarily for audiovisual and food and beverages, which together comprise 65–75% of total conference expenses) to estimate total revenues and costs for the upcoming conference under a range of attendance scenarios. This allows us to project the “per attendee break-even point,” which equates to the early registration fee necessary to avoid a loss. The Board of Directors believes that the conference should be at least cost neutral (i.e., it should not be subsidized by the dues of members who do not attend).

This tool will continue to be refined and improved as we gain more knowledge from future conferences and increase the accuracy of our forecasts.

OTHER ITEMS

Certification Decoupling: With regard to the motion for “decoupling” the Certification Program from membership approved by the Board on April 19, 2015, and the financial conditions set therein, it is probable that Condition 1 (positive operating revenue for at least one year on June 30) and Condition 2 ($500,000 of contingency funds) may well be met this year. $200,000 was transferred to our money market account at the end of April, bringing the balance of that account to just over $400k. The remaining financial condition (cost-neutral pricing model) cannot even be worked on until the logistical condition precedent regarding delivery of the certification exam is met following whatever changes are made by the Certification Committee and the Board.

No Dues Increase: In accordance with the Dues Increase Policy adopted on April 18, 2015, the U.S. Consumer Price Index—All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), as reported for March 31, 2016 by the Department of Labor, was 237.920 (unadjusted), as compared to 235.859 on March 31, 2015. Adjusted for inflation, associate/active/corresponding dues of $190 for 2015 would therefore rise to $191.66. As such an increase would be less than $2.50, there will not be an automatic dues increase in 2017.
ATA Presents at the Annual Conference of the Society for Technical Communication

Well over 600 technical writers, authors, illustrators, project managers, and software developers gathered in Anaheim, California, for Summit '16, the 63rd Annual Conference of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). STC represents over 6,500 technical writers and related professionals and provides networking and continuing education opportunities in a wide range of technical fields.

The language industry was well represented among the exhibitors, with several language services providers and software vendors specializing in translation management. The conference had over 80 educational sessions in seven unique tracks, including three sessions on translation: one from a technical writer, one from a software developer selling translation project management software, and my own session, entitled “Internationalized Texts: Writing for Translation and Globalization.”

The main message of my presentation: in a global world, having documentation in multiple languages is key to many companies’ success. Many technical writers are given the task of handling the translation of documentation, and potentially even coordinating the localization of software. Few of them see this as part of their regular job descriptions, and fewer of them have any real language background or education in the field of translation. As a result, their thirst for knowledge is deep.

I addressed the steps that technical writers should take to ensure an accurate and successful translation. Topics included:

- Clarifying terminology (e.g., translation, transcreation, localization, internationalization, etc.).
- Understanding the pros and cons and differences between machine translation and computer-assisted translation tools.
- Recommendations for ensuring an effective translation project, including vendor selection, scheduling, suggested reference material, and handling third party reviewers.
- Tips for avoiding English writing conventions to make the translation process easier for the translator (e.g., no noun-strings!).

The response to the session was quite humbling. As fellow writers and “word people,” the technical communicators in the room could identify clearly with the challenges that translators face. Many had detailed questions about the process of translating and project management, including:

- How do you find a good third party reviewer?
- What kind of information should be in a glossary?
- How do you keep the sentences simple and still provide all the necessary information?

They were eager for any additional references and advice I could give, and they quickly snapped up all the brochures and pens from ATA I provided. Another positive result of the session was that I was asked to submit a webinar proposal for STC based on the presentation.

The idea to attend the STC conference was a part of the ATA Public Relations Committee’s strategy to focus on the end users of translation—those people who are actually involved in coordinating the translation. Based on their response, this targeted strategy appears to be paying off.

If you would like to learn more about STC, please visit www.stc.org.

David Rumsey is the president of ATA. A long-time veteran of the language industry since 1990, he has been a project manager, localization engineer, and a freelance translator and editor focusing on Scandinavian and German technical documentation. Contact: president@atanet.org.
Education in the Spotlight: A Report from ATA’s Education and Pedagogy Committee

ATA is committed to promoting high standards in translator and interpreter training and to the development of translation and interpreting programs within the American educational system.

At the ATA Board of Directors’ January meeting, the Board was briefed on the expanded charge for the Education and Pedagogy Committee. The committee will broaden its reach and scope of activities to monitor translation and interpreting (T&I) programs in the U.S. at every level. It will also cultivate and maintain relationships with several allied organizations. (For example, the committee serves as a liaison to the American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association.)

As experts in our field who are part of a professional association founded to advance the translation and interpreting professions and foster the professional development of individual translators and interpreters, we have an opportunity to disseminate our knowledge to academia and to the public. We can also influence research priorities and public policy on matters that affect ATA members and those who use our services. ATA stands to benefit from reinforcing its position as the expert in all things T&I, as well as from attracting professionally minded newcomers who choose to become members of ATA.

HELPING EDUCATORS GAIN SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES

A growing T&I industry needs students with excellent language skills, which means that traditional language studies must be supported and supplemented by time abroad. Heritage language programs also need attention. Committee members envision a system where a year (or two!) of study abroad is the norm rather than the exception. It's an uphill battle, especially with declining enrollment in language studies in secondary and postsecondary programs. This is partially due to strong social and political support for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs. (For example, Florida senators approved a bill allowing high school students to take computer coding classes in place of language credit requirements.)

ATA is in a position to help educators and department administrators build a strong case for not only beefing up language course offerings, but also incorporating T&I skills-building courses and/or developing solid certificate or degree programs. In addition, strong growth in the T&I sector is compelling for college students (and their parents), who are amassing debt and need to see the potential for building a career with their qualifications.

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MONITOR, SUPPORT, PROMOTE

The ATA Board counts on the Association’s committees to provide information so that they can understand the issues before them. Our charge to monitor T&I programs influences a large part of the committee’s activities.

Students have a hard time finding comprehensive information about T&I programs. Assembling this information is a fundamental task of the committee, as is making the information available to those who need it most. We envision a project to create an online database of U.S.-based programs (possibly expanding this to international programs later on) that provides potential students with a one-stop solution for finding a program that suits their needs. Having this database in place would also simplify our task of keeping tabs on the academic landscape and provide us with solid information to support any policy recommendations.

Language departments—where many university-level programs are housed—have long been targets for budget and job cuts. The committee already fields requests from programs threatened by budget cuts, so tracking and forming relationships with language programs will reinforce our ability to offer support.

We want ATA to be the expert body people reach out to when they want to beef up their T&I program offerings. As a result of the work that has already been done on ATA’s Certification Program, we have an outline of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to translate. This kind of information is exactly what’s needed when new programs are being established. Having this information might even lead to some exciting new avenues (e.g., potential grants to assist language programs, developing a consultancy program with an allied organization with the goal of solidifying ATA’s reputation as an expert in interpreter and translator preparation.)

HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

Strength in numbers means that ATA builds and maintains relationships with organizations that support its mission. ATA is a long-time member of the Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies, which bring together a myriad of schools, associations, and businesses that all have a vested interest in influencing public perception and policy for language acquisition.
Promoting Language Study in Washington, DC

The Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS) hosted a Language Advocacy Day and Delegate Assembly in Washington, DC, earlier this year. Over 100 education and language representatives came together to lobby for the advancement and funding of language education and the language industry. ATA was represented by Past Presidents Caitilin Walsh (who is also chair of ATA’s Education and Pedagogy Committee) and Peter Krawutschke (who is ATA’s representative to JNCL-NCLIS).

Advocacy attendees met with their legislators to build relationships and raise awareness about the direct tie between growth in the T&I industry and world language education. The focus was on funding for programs that support both heritage and study abroad programs—which are key to the professional proficiency level demanded by our industry.

On Capitol Hill, ATA Past President Caitilin Walsh met with legislative staffers from her home state of Washington, including Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and Representative Suzan Delbene. She also joined a larger team from the JNCL-NCLIS delegation to meet with key staff at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Past ATA President Caitilin Walsh joined other ATA representatives in Washington, DC, for the Language Advocacy Day and Delegate Assembly, where she met with legislative and National Endowment for the Humanities staffers.

(See the sidebar highlighting the advocacy efforts of ATA representatives.)

Committee members also attend national and regional gatherings of language educators, where we are carrying the message that growth in the T&I world—both current and projected—means we need all hands on deck to cultivate professionally proficient language students. ATA is also there to help as an organization whose members are experts in the field.

ONWARD

ATA’s Board and the members of the Education and Pedagogy Committee are excited about the positive reactions we’ve received from our colleagues in education and look forward to future endeavors. Look for more developments as our plans take shape, as well as the occasional call to contact your lawmakers to change the tide in language education and professional T&I preparation. ☞

NOTES


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International Payment Updates

For companies of all sizes, the cost of each international payment transaction can result in a significant cost of doing business. Read on to find out what’s changed regarding the international payment options available today.

What is the most efficient and cost effective way for translators and other language-industry vendors to receive international (and domestic) payments and for agencies and other clients to pay their suppliers?

The translation industry’s focus on subcontracting and the use of vendors worldwide has resulted in a high volume of payments being made across international borders. For companies of all sizes (from 1 to 1,000), the cost of each transaction can result in a significant cost of doing business. For this reason, it is worthwhile to investigate the various options available for sending and receiving international payments within the language services industry. I covered this topic initially in an article in The ATA Chronicle in 2014.¹

However, due to the ever-changing financial landscape of online transactions, payment options should be revisited periodically. The following addresses various updates to the international payment options available today.

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment methods common within the language services industry include electronic funds transfer, checks, wire transfer, PayPal Here, and Skrill.² The types of payment accepted by a translation provider depend on many factors, including where clients are located, client industries, and the amount of funds being transferred. The types of payment a client is willing to make depend on similar factors. Let’s look at each of these payment methods in turn.

Electronic Funds Transfer: This method is slowly becoming more common in the U.S., and is most often used by large corporations to pay vendors. However, its use still lags far behind that of other countries, where transferring funds is common in everyday life.

Due to the ever-changing financial landscape of online transactions, payment options should be revisited periodically.

Paper Checks: Checks are still common in the U.S. banking system, but are rarely used in most countries. They may get lost or stolen when sent overseas and can be expensive to cash in a foreign currency.

Wire Transfer: This method is commonly used in the language services industry to pay international vendors, but wire transfers are expensive to send and receive. They may also include “hidden fees” due to the number of banks involved in the process. Another problem inherent to international wire transfers is that the receiving bank controls the exchange rate offered, and the rates offered by banks are not usually favorable.

PayPal Here and Skrill: Payments received by PayPal Here and Skrill are subject to per-transaction fees based on the amount of money being transferred. When foreign currencies are involved, they are subject to unfavorable exchange rates as well. Additional fees may also be involved, since PayPal Here and Skrill have complicated rate structures that depend on how payments are funded by the sender as well as in which countries the sender and receiver are located.

Using PayPal Here and Skrill, however, may be advantageous, particularly when a payment is under a certain threshold.
Since each individual business should decide what this maximum is, one of the most important questions to ask is: At what point do PayPal Here’s fees surpass those charged for transfers using other methods (such as wire transfer)? If, for example, PayPal Here’s fees exceed what bank wire transfer fees would be for an international payment of $500, then it probably makes sense to request that all payments under $500 be paid by clients using PayPal Here (for the speed and efficiency of this method). In such cases, you would probably request that all payments over $500 be paid via wire transfer (for the lower fees at this theoretical cut-off amount, as well as for the convenience of direct deposit).

**ALTERNATIVES FOR ACCEPTING CREDIT CARDS**

There are more options available for small (and large) businesses to accept credit cards on an ad hoc basis today than in the past. Even if accepting credit cards is not required for the bulk of your business transactions, it may be useful in certain situations (e.g., when working for a large client to encourage faster payment by avoiding the normal procurement process, or when accepting projects from private individuals from whom you require advance payment). Credit card solutions through companies like PayPal Here and Square allow smaller companies, or one-man/woman shops, to accept credit card payments without having to pay the set of fees that go along with full-fledged credit card merchant services. For retail stores and other businesses with a high volume of payment transactions, it may make sense to pay annual or monthly fees, equipment fees, and per-transaction fees to be able to process up to hundreds of credit card transactions per day. However, for most language services providers, especially freelance providers, this level of service is not required.

Square and PayPal Here are both services that can offer flexibility in accepting credit card payments without requiring much upfront or ongoing investment. Both companies offer mobile solutions that require only a smartphone or tablet to accept credit cards from clients. Both companies also offer a free app to accept and manage payments, a free card reader for swiping cards, and other features that vary slightly between the two companies. You can also enter card payment information directly into your account online or in the app (but at a higher cost than if you are able to physically swipe a card, which may, in fact, be an infrequent act when accepting payment from clients who are remote).

Square offers its credit card processing services to residents of the U.S., Canada, Japan, and Australia. Square allows you to process internationally-issued credit cards (from international clients) if you are in the country where your Square account was activated. However, if you are physically outside your home country (traveling abroad), you cannot process payments. PayPal Here’s rules on the exact point of physical location are not evident on its website, but, in general, the company does accept international credit cards. Both companies charge additional fees for currency conversion (if required) and for processing internationally-issued credit cards.

**There are more options available for small (and large) businesses to accept credit cards on an ad hoc basis today than in the past.**

To decide if accepting credit cards under these circumstances is advantageous for your business, make sure you understand all of the fees involved so you can compare total fees along with expected profits. Neither Square nor PayPal Here require contracts or charge termination fees. This allows you to accept credit card payments when it suits you for a particular situation or client and avoid being locked into an expensive long-term merchant agreement. This allows for the flexibility of periodically accepting credit card payments with low risk.

**FOREIGN EXCHANGE COMPANIES**

Foreign exchange companies are an option for small and large companies alike working in the international arena. These companies include American Express FX Payments, Cambridge Mercantile, OANDA, and Western Union. Other similar foreign exchange companies exist and can be found through a simple online search. (Please see the sidebar on page 15 for links to these companies, along with other resources for information on international payment.)

Before working with any foreign exchange company, perform the appropriate due diligence so that you’re comfortable with their rules and regulations and having them access your bank account. These companies normally allow for foreign transfers to take place both into and out of U.S. funds. However, you should confirm that the company with which you wish to work can transfer funds between the countries you require.

Foreign exchange companies make a profit from the interest on the “float” when they are transferring money. Therefore, they can usually offer exchange rates that are more competitive than those offered by banks. These companies are international financial institutions, but they are not banks. To use their services to transfer funds, a translation professional needs to be approved through an application process and to provide the company with direct access to a business bank account. This will allow the translation provider to facilitate making payments to bank accounts in other countries and in various currencies. Recipients of the funds sent only need a bank account. They do not need to sign up with the foreign exchange company being used by the sender and should not be charged a recipient fee.

These foreign exchange transactions should have lower fees than wire transfers and are normally completed within one to three days. Note that the exact services offered by foreign exchange companies will vary, so you should compare services to find what best fits your needs. For additional information about foreign exchange companies, please refer to my article “International Payment Options for Translators and Agencies” from 2014.

When transferring large sums of money, or small sums over time, these companies’ advantageous foreign exchange rates can result in savings of hundreds or even...
thousands of dollars. Calculating the potential long-term monetary benefits of working with a specialized foreign exchange service provider can help you craft an appropriate international payment strategy.

**TRANSFERWISE**
TransferWise is another alternative to traditional banks for transferring money internationally. It is considered to be a peer-to-peer money transfer service and was created by the original founders of Skype. TransferWise targets various audiences within the international community, including expats, small international businesses, and students studying abroad. To use TransferWise you do not need a business bank account as you do with foreign exchange companies. TransferWise offers exchange rates that should be more attractive than those offered by banks. Again, as with foreign exchange companies, TransferWise does need access to your bank account to complete transactions.

**FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES AND PER-TRANSACTION FEES**
My previous article on international payment options contains a more detailed discussion on how fees and foreign exchange rates can affect payments made through various methods, including electronic funds transfers, wire transfers, PayPal Here, Skrill, foreign checks, credit card payments, or payments made through foreign exchange companies. For the purposes of the present article, be aware that the exchange rate you receive when an international transaction is executed is very important and will fluctuate depending on the type of payment service used. Be sure to consider the different exchange rates offered by various services. The volume of money you transfer and when it is transferred will also affect the exchange rate. For example, foreign exchange companies will probably offer better exchange rates than banks, and banks will probably offer better rates than PayPal Here. Since there are many factors at play, you need to verify each case for your particular situation.

Per-transaction fees also play a role in the bigger picture. These are the one-time fees charged for wire transfers, per PayPal Here transaction, or various other financial transactions. It isn’t always possible to eliminate or reduce per-transaction fees. For example, PayPal Here probably won’t change their fee structure for you, but a foreign exchange company might be open to negotiating theirs. Keeping both per-transaction fees and foreign exchange rates in mind is important as you map out your international payment strategy.

**MULTIPLE BANK ACCOUNTS**
In my previous article from 2014, I discussed using bank accounts in more than one country to facilitate a coherent international payment strategy. However, since that time, U.S. tax law and international reaction to it has made it increasingly difficult for individuals to open bank accounts in countries outside their country of residence. This is the case even if an individual is a citizen of the targeted country (but does not currently live there). For example, if a French national is a permanent resident of the U.S., it can be very difficult for that individual to open a bank account in France, even though French nationals are guaranteed access to French banking services by French law.

The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) became law in the U.S. in March 2010. This law requires U.S. taxpayers to report certain types of foreign financial accounts and offshore assets to the U.S. government and tax authorities. It also has provisions for punitive actions against foreign financial institutions (outside U.S. borders) not reporting information about accounts held by U.S. citizens. As a result, European and other non-U.S. banks have made it very difficult for U.S. citizens (even when they physically reside in Europe, for example) to open—or even maintain previously established—bank accounts in countries outside the U.S. For these reasons, if you are a U.S. resident (U.S. citizen or not) and have a foreign bank account outside U.S. borders that is still accessible to you, consider yourself very lucky. As a result, currently basing an international payment strategy on the use of multiple bank accounts around the world is not a viable option for most people or small businesses.

On the American side, it may still be possible for non-U.S. residents to open bank accounts in the U.S., but residency and citizenship requirements do come into play. Some credit unions or other financial institutions are amenable to opening accounts for non-residents, but due to stricter international banking rules focused on money laundering and terrorism, this can also be difficult. At this juncture, for most people, using various international payment methods that fit your business practices is a more profitable way to manage an international payment strategy so that it works to your advantage, rather than having to depend on multiple bank accounts in multiple countries.

**DEFINING YOUR INTERNATIONAL PAYMENT STRATEGY**
It is to your benefit to try and get the most for your money when performing
international payment transactions, whether you are the vendor or the client. To do so, you must assess any international payment method you are considering carefully. You should also periodically assess and reassess the current (or default) payment methods you use. It is worthwhile to consciously define your payment strategy rather than simply staying with old habits.

**Credit card solutions through companies like PayPal Here and Square allow smaller companies, or one-man/woman shops, to accept credit card payments without having to pay the set of fees that go along with full-fledged credit card merchant services.**

As you define what is the right approach to international payments for your business, ask these important questions:

- Do you work with direct clients or agencies?
- Who are your vendors or customers?
- What are their industry norms for payment?
- What currencies do they prefer?
- In which countries are they located?
- Which payment service providers offer services in these countries?
- What are the typical amounts of money involved in your transactions (many small amounts or less frequent larger sums)?
- Which foreign currencies are you willing to accept?
- What payment terms do you accept (upon receipt, 15 days, 30 days, 45 days, 90 days, or other)?

By reviewing your replies to these questions and the services offered by each international payment provider, you can assess which payment methods best fit with your various clients, vendors, and payment scenarios. You can mix and match your options as needed and not be locked into using only one payment method. And, of course, be sure to consider international accounting/tax issues and consult with the appropriate tax professionals so that you adhere to the rules of each country in which you hold funds. Finally, if you use another international payment method that is not mentioned here, I’d be interested in hearing about it. Please feel free to contact me at eve@bodeuxinternational.com.

**NOTES**


2. Note that Bitcoin will not be covered in this article. It’s still a fairly new addition to the payment options available to the business world and is very complex. It operates outside regulated financial systems, and I have no anecdotal or other evidence of Bitcoin being used for payments in the translation industry, though there may indeed by instances. If you have examples of Bitcoins being used for the payment of professional services within the language services industry, please contact me.

3. A reader that can process chip cards is provided for purchase from either company.

4. See each merchant’s site for exact details: PayPal Here at www.paypal.com/webapps/mpp/credit-card-reader-how-to and Square at https://squareup.com. In addition, here is another article that provides a detailed comparison of each provider’s mobile payment services: Johnson, Melissa. “Square vs PayPal Here” (Merchant Maverick, November 22, 2015), www.merchantmaverick.com/square-vs-paypal.


7. Ibid.


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**Resources for Information on International Payment**

- **American Express FX Payments**
  americanexpress.com/ip

- **Cambridge Mercantile**
  cambridgefx.com

- **OANDA**
  www.oanda.com

- **PayPal Here**
  www.paypal.com/webapps/mpp/credit-card-reader-how-to

- **Skrill**
  www.skrill.com/en

- **Square**
  https://squareup.com

- **TransferWise**
  transferwise.com

- **Western Union**
  oninefx.westernunion.com/business

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Where Does Language Fit in with Big Data?

For the diverse universe of digital content generated by big data to be useful, it requires transformation for different channels (such as web, mobile, and print), conversion for various applications, and localization for other markets. This is an area of opportunity for translators and interpreters.

Go to any conference and you’ll find a few new additions to the usual buzzword bingo of industry jargon—“big data” and numbers with lots of zeroes. You’ll hear about the massive growth in digitized data, how often a given sector’s knowledge base doubles, and what companies are doing to manage and interpret that flood of data. This burgeoning trove of bytes includes structured databases, application code, images, videos, and text. You’ll also hear about machine learning and how big data contributes to making software more responsive and useful to customers’ needs.

Just how much data are we talking about? Already huge, the digital universe of content, code, and structured data grows by a mind-blowing amount every 24 hours. Each day the world creates another 2.5 quintillion bytes of data.¹ This data comes from many sources, including documents, social media posts, electronic purchase transaction records, and cellphone GPS signals. That daily infusion is estimated to pump the global repository of information from the 7.9 zettabytes (7.9 x 10²¹ bytes) available in 2015 to 176 zettabytes by 2025.² Keep in mind that 1 zettabyte equals 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 bytes—an incomprehensible number.³ And that total doesn’t include the inestimable amount of content that is spoken every day.

Whatever the content being created, this truly immense volume includes massive, unrealized potential for translation or localization. So, what does this mean for the language industry, both humans and machines?

What Is Big Data and Why Does It Matter?

When we talk about big data, we refer to new ways of taking large amounts of data and using software tools to identify previously undiscovered patterns, trends, correlations, and associations. If you’ve ever bought a book because an online retailer told you that customers with viewing histories like yours have enjoyed it, you’ve been the beneficiary of big-data analytics.

This practice became possible because of the digitization of business, government, and everyday life over the past few decades. This information is stored in massive databases of structured data and repositories of documents large and small. We feed this growing beast with more bits and bytes every day. While all organizations rely on data to run their operations, a small but growing number use it to better understand behaviors, preferences, and trends in their world. Then, using those insights, organizations can make better decisions about how they market their wares, help their customers, improve operational efficiency, or build the next great thing.⁴

How do they do it? It’s not easy given the diversity of structured data and text. For highly structured data, software specialized to deal with big data draws from very large databases, often distributed around a network. Then, analysts employ a new generation of business intelligence and textual analysis tools to turn this raw data into usable information and actionable insights.⁵ They may combine transaction data with server logs, clickstream data, social media content, and customer e-mail texts, sensor data, and phone records to extract insights. They also extract insights using advanced analytical tools, including statistical analysis, data and content mining, predictive analysis, and text analytics. Traditional business intelligence and modern data visualization software help analysts present their findings in human-readable formats.

The language industry was actually one of the first areas of interest for big data applications. One of the early mainstream
applications was in the statistical machine translation (SMT) efforts of Google and Microsoft. A 2011 Common Sense Advisory (CSA) report on MT trends characterized these statistics-based approaches to MT as big-data applications because they leverage large repositories of bilingual content. For example, they compare source documents in English to their human-translated Russian variants.6

In simplistic terms, SMT translates by comparing the zeroes and ones of the source file with the translation to find correlations and patterns. In other words, massive processing power allows computers to disassemble texts and their translations, analyze the patterns, and predict translations for texts they have never seen before. Such analytics has increased the speed of language support over earlier MT solutions that relied on teams of linguists to create grammars, code them as rules, create dictionaries of bilingual translations, and then constantly modify or add to the rules as they found exceptions.

The 2011 CSA report predicted that experts would apply these mathematics-based big-data algorithms to crack inter-language communication and marketing issues as they processed more languages and a huge volume of multilingual content. And that, in fact, is what has happened.

Over the past several years, MT based on big-data analysis has drawn far more usage than the first-generation rule-based solutions. Google Translate draws massive numbers of users, which is a testament to its easy access and perceived, if not actual, improvement of the quality of MT output. Although academic research shows improvements using popular quality assessment systems such as BLEU7 (bilingual evaluation understudy), these changes are not cumulative and results vary widely between languages and translatable content types (e.g., regular text, audio, video, and social media). Thus, data on quality improvement is anecdotal and may be balanced by lowered user expectations for quality.

The availability of cloud-based computing with unlimited horsepower from the likes of Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure supports these big-data practices. This kind of harvest and analysis will continue to grow into the “Internet of Things” as many billions of devices come online (e.g., sensors, embedded controllers, wearables, health checkers, and widgets not yet invented). To be useful, much of this content requires transformation for different channels (such as web, mobile, and print), conversion for various applications, and localization for other markets.6 Corporate and government planners already know it’s not enough to have all that digitized information available in just a single language. Their mission is to use as much data as possible to support customer experiences for the populations that really matter to them. Otherwise, it will be impossible to engage and retain international or domestic multicultural audiences.

Just consider the requirements necessary to translate that information into other languages to make it available to a broader audience. It’s estimated that it takes 14 languages to reach 90% of the world’s most economically active populations, but most websites max out with support for just six languages or locales.5 Product and document localization at many companies lags even further behind. Spoken-language interpreting is even more limited.

As the volume of data organizations produce grows, so too will ambitions to reach a greater audience for goods and services. Client-side respondents to a recent CSA survey reported that they plan to increase translation volume by 67% over the next three years, from an average of 590 to 990 million words per year.10 This increase is one that the language industry cannot meet with current methods, and that buyers in the CSA survey sample expect to address with a combination of post-edited content from their suppliers and raw MT.

WHERE BIG DATA FITS TODAY—AND IN THE FUTURE

Organizations are stating to realize that their plans for more translation could very well exhaust the capacity of all current translators, as well as those who will enter the field in the foreseeable future.11

To help keep up with the demand, many organizations are employing both productivity enhancements for human translators and MT to overcome the challenges associated with volume, turnaround time, the need to deal with more target languages, and flat budgets. Companies invest in human translation and post-edited MT for essential business content, such as product and marketing materials that are reasonably stable. For example, translation buyers rely on a large and growing cohort of providers that employ MT to pre-process the source material and then edit the output with human linguists. A small percentage of client-side organizations also use unedited MT output for business content, such as FAQs and knowledge bases.

Besides translating a limited set of business-oriented text, some buyers have increased the use of MT to process user-generated content, such as product evaluations, hotel reviews, and forum discussions that few organizations have bothered to translate in the past. But as research conducted by CSA indicates, online consumers and business buyers alike would prefer to have user reviews translated, even if these reviews are all that gets translated.12

WHY THE VOLUME OF BIG DATA CONCERNS TRANSLATION BUYERS AND SUPPLIERS

Big data represents enormous numbers, and it turns out that one day in the translation industry barely puts a dent in its volume. Let’s focus on just the written word and how it relates to that 2.5 quintillion bytes of data being generated every day. Despite today’s objective of making humans more productive to save time and money, the world is far from the nirvana of having enough online content available in all languages. From years of research and consulting, we know that any discussion about whether or not to invest in translation, localization, and interpreting has to begin with a review of available data.

CSA decided to investigate the enormous challenges facing the localization industry in terms of translating what should be translated from the totality of all data that could be translated. We decided to start with a given day’s output of digital content and determine what could actually be
WHERE DOES LANGUAGE FIT IN WITH BIG DATA? continued

translated if we had the entire language industry working on just that content and none of the backlog of existing data.

What is this data? It’s everything that is digitally created every day, from documents to SQL data and telemetry to digital multimedia. For this hypothetical exercise, we began with the expenditure for outsourced services. It’s estimated that translation in various forms—human, post-edited, transcreation, plus website globalization and text-centric localization—accounts for US$26.4 billion of the US$38.1 billion market for language services and technology.13

We then calculated the daily amount spent by the word. We divided US$26.4 billion by 365 days and estimated that the translation sector is worth US$72 million per day. At a hypothetical rate of 20 cents per word, we estimated that professional translators would process nearly 362 million words every day. We then converted that to bytes at the rate of 9.71 characters per word, which equates to seven billion bytes of double-byte characters. (Note that some languages have fewer characters per word on average and others have more).14

Finally, we compared it with the daily volume of content creation. When we divide the 2.5 quintillion bytes by the amount of target-language content produced by language services providers, we estimate that translation firms could potentially process just 0.0000000009% of the content created every day. However, we can safely assume that much of that data will never be translated—either the material isn’t translatable or translating it doesn’t make sense.

But some of what isn’t translated today (e.g., user reviews and social media posts) is on the future agenda of enterprise translation buyers as they strive to improve the customer experience. Even if we exclude all but an infinitesimal percentage of those daily bytes, the amount of content outsourced for translation is far less than 1% of what’s created every day. And remember that we are talking about the shortfall in translation for just one day. That number doesn’t address the backlog of content not yet translated.

As the results from this hypothetical exercise indicate, if the content is translated at all, it’s typically into just six languages online (and often fewer elsewhere). This is far short of the total number of online languages that really matter for both global and domestic communication and commerce.

Of course, there are many other variables and mitigating factors that affect these calculations. For example, consider in-house translation, languages for which you should translate but don’t, and the many zettabytes of existing content. The bottom line is that there’s an enormous amount of content that will never be translated or localized. That means opportunity for the language sector, and not just the technology companies.

WHAT BIG DATA MEANS TO THE LANGUAGE SECTOR

The big data and translation needs we discussed represent an opportunity for the language sector, but many translators look at the situation and worry that widespread deployment of MT will take work away from them. Our research estimates that translators will, in fact, lose some lower value jobs to MT, but that the total amount of work they have will increase at a steady rate for the foreseeable future.

If we also consider the expansion in post-editing—a contentious topic to be sure—we see that reliance on human professionals will grow faster than the current pipeline of future translators can add capacity. As a result, translators and interpreters will require productivity benefits from big data if they are to keep pace with demand. A few will take a much bigger step and become specialists who can build, train, and improve MT engines.

On the productivity front, we see that big data today trains statistics-based MT engines and could be used to supplement the post-editing processes of other MT models. Connections to MT are available in CAT tools such as Kilgray memoQ, Memsource Cloud, and SDL Trados Studio. Meanwhile, startups like Lilt use MT output in a CAT-like tool to accelerate human translation. We have also been briefed by software developers who are evaluating big-data machine learning techniques to improve terminology, translation memory, disambiguation, and a variety of other content creation, localization, and reviewing tasks. In short, big data will underpin most of the software tools translators use. Interpreters will also benefit as MT technology evolves for spoken languages.

What does big data mean for professional linguists? Just as they saw with translation memory and terminology management, linguists will have another tool at their disposal. Employers on both the end-buyer and agency sides will expect them to use this software to speed up their work and improve the usefulness
of the output because of improved analysis of the source content.

Our 2016 survey of language services providers found that 49% of respondents have already committed to post-editing MT as a service. As early as 2012, our research showed that 21% of freelancers had experience using the technology.

Some will move away from the classic translation agency structure to become big-data specialists. They will create clusters of industry- and domain-specific memories and harvest, analyze, and translate content. Content curation positions in which language professionals work with data applications to integrate relevant results to “enrich” them with useful metadata (e.g., topic categorization, classification of names and entities) are just now emerging. These positions will allow localizers to add market-specific value to content. Some will take the next step into the global marketing mainstream, adding to their portfolio services such as transnational business intelligence to help companies better understand their markets, or cross-language semantic and sentiment analysis to cull the opinions of consumers and business buyers out of multilingual content.

Big data has increased the volume of content dramatically. At the same time, automated content enrichment and analytical tools based on big-data science will enable the training of more sophisticated tools to help humans translate the growing volume of content and enable machines to close the yawning gap between what’s generated and what’s actually translated. No doubt some linguists will view these big-data-based innovations as threats. Others will view such advances as opportunities that will help them enhance the meaning of the source content, increase the usefulness of the other tools they employ, and increase their productivity in the process.

Although it has not happened yet, we speculate that MT driven by these phenomena could remove the “cloak of invisibility” from translators, giving them greater recognition and status. Even if machines generated the lion’s share of translation and humans did a smaller percentage, the sheer absolute volume of human translation would increase for high-value sectors such as life sciences, other precise sectors, and belles lettres. In turn, the perceived value of human translation could increase. Why? Because when you bring in a live human, it means the transaction is very, very important. It’s not so different from accounting. Software can handle routine tasks, but when problems arise or something is critical, you bring in a high-paid accountant to deal with it.

As interlingual communication becomes transparent, we predict that the number of situations where high-value transactions occur—i.e., those requiring human translators and interpreters—will go up, not down. If provider rates increase and companies use MT to address a larger percentage of their linguistic needs, human translators could benefit as they’re paid well to render the most critical content supporting the customer experience and other high-value interactions.

NOTES
8 “Content Strategy for the Global Enterprise” (Common Sense Advisory Research, April 2011), 11–14.
10 “MT’s Journey to the Enterprise” (Common Sense Advisory Research, May 2016).
11 “Translation Future Shock” (Common Sense Advisory Research, April 2012), 16–18.
12 “Can’t Read, Won’t Buy” (Common Sense Advisory Research, February 2011), 46–47.
14 This is a conservative estimate. The Unicode Consortium’s UTF-8 character encoding representation, which accounts for 87% of all non-binary data on the Internet, requires one to four bytes per character. However, European languages Roman script uses mostly one-byte characters. For more details, see pages 12-14 of “Translation and Localization Pricing” (Common Sense Advisory Research, July 2010) and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UTF-8#Description.
15 “Post-Editing Goes Mainstream” (Common Sense Advisory Research, June 2012), 6.
16 “Translation Future Shock” (Common Sense Advisory Research, April 2012), 12.
18 “How Google Translate Will Increase Demand for Human Translation” (Common Sense Advisory Research, March 2010).
SOAP Notes: Getting Down and Dirty with Medical Translation

For medical translators, a closer examination and dissection of the SOAP note format is key to understanding how doctors think.

Progress notes and patient records are the medical translator's bread and butter, but this does not prevent even the most seasoned medical translators from making mistakes. While most medical translators are experienced in translating these documents, failure to fully understand the nuances of their structure, language, and rationale limits a translator's ability to replicate the style and voice of health care practitioners. Furthermore, it creates roadblocks when attempting to decipher strings of murky acronyms and seemingly unintelligible scribbles.

The SOAP note (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan) is a basic template for documentation employed by health care providers to write out notes in a patient's chart. It has four sections. A closer examination and dissection of the SOAP note format is key to understanding how doctors think. A thorough understanding of this tool makes it clear why “BS” could mean “blood sugar,” “breath sounds,” or “bowel sounds” (among others), depending on the context. If followed correctly, this linear format can point translators to the correct terminology for bodily systems or examinations, regardless of seemingly impenetrable and opaque source language.

SOAP NOTES: SECTION BY SECTION

SUBJECTIVE

The SOAP note format starts with the subjective component. This section of the medical record is considered “subjective,” since it's based on the doctor's initial interview with the patient and the patient's chief complaint (CC) or history of present illness (HPI). Essentially, this is the reason for the patient's visit or hospitalization. While it may seem straightforward, this section can often be murky and truncated, particularly when a patient has a long, complicated, and/or known history, and when the translator has only been given an excerpt of the medical record.

In such cases, it's helpful to know what information physicians and nurses are looking for when gathering and compiling information regarding the patient's CC. This is where the classic “OLD C(H)ARTS” medical school mnemonic device is particularly useful for translators. The mnemonic below refers to the information a physician should ask the patient about before referring to the patient's previous “old charts.”

- Onset
- Location
- Duration
- CHaracter (sharp, dull, etc.)
- Alleviating/Aggravating factors
- Radiation
- Temporal pattern (every morning, all day, etc.)
- Symptoms associated

Understanding that health care practitioners are seeking to record these eight attributes of symptoms will help
templates for a variety of common exams, such as those dealing with burns, motor vehicle accident history, cardiac risk, and a Thrombolysis in Myocardial Infarction (TIMI) risk score. These templates are invaluable for both experienced and novice medical translators, as they are framed for physicians, thus helping translators generate more authentic and transparent translations.

**ASSESSMENT**

The name of the third section, assessment, should not be confused with assessments or tests ordered, which would be found in the objective section. Rather, this section is where we find the medical diagnosis for the CC, or reason for hospitalization. This is where the physician assesses the situation and condition of the patient, based on the subjective and objective data gathered previously. This section is generally written in descending order of the severity of symptoms and may also include hypothetical language when referring to possible or likely etiologies of the disease.

Translators should pay particular attention to the modal verbs used (e.g., could, should, would, might), since diagnoses and etiologies may not always be clearly understood. Translators put on their Sherlock-style thinking caps to fill in any glossed source notes or illegible handwriting. While translators should be warned that complete sentences are not necessarily required when translating SOAP notes, they should be reminded that the message must remain clear and succinct.

Health care practitioners are not writers and have a tendency to mix tenses and acronyms. Translators should remember to use the present tense as much as possible in SOAP notes when translating a provider’s observations, although other tenses may be necessary to show a chronology of events. Furthermore, it’s good practice to expand acronyms the first time they are used. (For example, PID should be written as “PID [pelvic inflammatory disease]” the first time it occurs in a note, but “PID” will suffice in the rest of the document without the need for expansion.)

In addition, translators should be careful not to translate acronyms directly, but rather to expand them and research usage before choosing (or not choosing) an equivalent acronym. For example, “HCD [hypochondre droit]” is literally “right hypochondrium” in English. While theoretically this should be understood, in actual practice physicians use “right upper quadrant” or “RUQ.” Translating “HCD” as “RHC” would only cause confusion and could even be mistaken for “renal hydatid cyst” or “right hemicolectomies,” among others.

**OBJECTIVE**

As opposed to the subjective section, the objective section of the SOAP note is based on objective data gathered through observation and measurements, such as vital signs (height, weight, blood pressure, etc.), physical exam, laboratory tests, or imagery. The objective section is often based on the review of systems (or ROS), which dictates the general order of subheadings in the note and literally moves from head to toe. This is why it’s important to remember the following order of the review of systems when reading notes (general, skin, head, eyes, ears, nose, throat, neck, respiratory, cardiovascular, abdomen, extremities, neurological), since these are often represented by symbols in handwritten notes. An easy example would be a heart symbol for cardiovascular (Figure 1), but a symbol that might be less clear would be two triangles to signify lungs/pulmonary.

The World Health Organization ICD-10 codes are another useful resource for translators struggling to narrow down appropriate terminology for the signs and symptoms that fill up this section of the SOAP note. Merely entering a general term, such as “pulmonary,” in the search box will generate a complete list of pulmonary-related diseases, their codes, and precise descriptions. The official ICD-10 is available in both English and French, while other languages are available on local country sites.

A final resource for the objective section is www.soapnote.org, a site that provides

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**Figure 1:** A standard handwritten SOAP note (French), illustrating the need to decipher acronyms, symbols, and the review of systems.
be clear and the differential diagnosis may merely be a point of departure for further tests and procedures. It’s vital that the translator remain as faithful to the source language as possible in terms of degrees (e.g., very, slightly, mild, severe) and that a correct doctor-facing register be employed (i.e., using Latin terms, such as “myocardial infarction” rather than “heart attack,” or “urticarial” rather than “hives.”)

Finally, this section is also likely to contain the results of any laboratory tests ordered. A useful resource for translators (although not translation-specific) is Lab Tests Online.2 This site provides a glossary and cross-references for tests and results by symptom, condition, and screening panel.

**PLAN**

The final section of the SOAP note consists of the next steps to be taken to treat the patient’s concern(s), based on the assessment. This may include ordering lab tests, radiological work-ups, referrals, check-ups, prescriptions, and monitoring. As in the assessment section, the plan, which may even be a bulleted list, tends to be numbered in descending order of severity and/or urgency. This section is often a bit sloppy in the source language, riddled with mixed tenses and typos. For example, if the plan is in list format, translators should opt for the imperative. Also, do not rely on the source language for the correct spelling of drug names or medical devices, and beware of your own spell checker, which may automatically correct drug names that are very close to “real” English words.

**The advent of electronic medical records has only further cemented the SOAP note format as the basis for modern clinical reasoning and the means for health care providers to communicate and provide evidence of patient contact.**

Finally, beware of the use of Latin acronyms in prescriptions. For example, the use of “TID” for “three times daily” or “h.s.” for “at bedtime” may be commonly used, but SOAP notes may often be reviewed by non-medical professionals as part of clinical trial adverse event reporting or insurance claims. Therefore, it’s a good idea to keep the language as “clean” as possible.

Translating SOAP notes certainly requires technical accuracy, but translators should also be facilitating the communication of medical information, while remaining faithful to the meaning of the source language. To help achieve this goal, here a few key things to keep in mind:

- Practice being succinct: use plain language to give a snapshot of a patient at a particular moment in time.
- Avoid excessive use of acronyms or abbreviations. Including them only augments confusion.
- Document your research: don’t waste time researching twice.
- Read online SOAP notes to get a feel for the standard physician style in your source-target combination.

**ABOVE ALL, BE SUCCINCT**

Understanding the structured system of the SOAP note is essential for translators to maintain a global view of the translation at hand. In medical translation, it’s very easy to get bogged down in terminology and trapped on the word level, while losing sight of the purpose of the document. It can be difficult for translators to get a feel for the register that is required in these types of patient records. But remember, SOAP notes are neither literature, nor a shopping list. Succinct and plain language facilitates medical communication and accurately give a snapshot of the patient’s condition at a specific point in time. Excessive use of acronyms or abbreviations and hedging language are a disservice to medical communication. Proper research, strong language, and a physician-facing register will help guide translators toward accurate and fact-based translations that read like a professional document and not like a translation.

**NOTES**


2 Index of Glossary of Terms (American Association for Clinical Chemistry), https://labtestsonline.org/map/gindex.

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How to Read and Translate R and S Phrases in Technical Texts

R (risk) and S (safety) phrases occur extensively in chemical documentation. The following explains their origin and set wording, along with their successors—the H (hazard) and P (precautionary) statements.

Numbered R-phrases (risk phrases) and S-phrases (safety phrases) are among the most ubiquitous text units encountered in chemical documentation. Although they appear frequently, many translators are unaware of the official set translations that employ established and accepted terminology. This article will cover risk and safety phrases within the context of the standardization bodies working on them and point to resources for the terminology in European languages.

WHAT ARE R AND S PHRASES?
Risk (R) and safety (S) phrases are statements of 1-16 words that are used to describe the risk and safety aspects of hazardous substances. The wording is standardized in each language (and sometimes country-specific). Each phrase is associated with an identifying letter-number code for brevity (e.g., R1 through R68; S1 through S64). These phrases were initially developed by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and further modified and the list expanded by the European Union (EU). The list has been incorporated into official notifications, links to which can be found in the resources sidebar on page 26. These phrases appear in Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs); chemical, analytical, and manufacturing procedures; cargo statements; product brochures; customs declarations; and many other documents related to commercial chemicals.

Examples in English include:
- **R10**: Flammable
- **R3**: Extreme risk of explosion by shock, friction, fire, or other sources of ignition
- **S2**: Keep out of the reach of children
- **S25**: Avoid contact with eyes

WHERE DID R AND S PHRASES ORIGINATE?
As stated previously, these phrases can be traced back to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC was the administrative agency established by a treaty ratified in 1952, designed to integrate the coal and steel industries in post-WWII Western Europe. The original members of the ECSC were France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. The organization subsequently expanded to include all members of the European Economic Community (later renamed the European Community) and the European Union (EU). When the treaty expired in 2002, the ECSC was dissolved.

In 1957, the ECSC issued a list of commercial chemical substances and a set of safety phrases in the four languages of the member states: German, French, Italian, and Dutch. (Note that English played no role at that point!) These phrases were to be included with the packaging of commodities that moved between member states to describe the potential risks and provide safety advice regarding dangerous substances and preparations (e.g., risks: Gefahren/risques/risch/gevaren; safety: Sicherheit/prudence/prudenza/veiligheid).

Well before the ECSC fully segued into the EU in 2002, it was developing as a proto-EU with more affiliated nations. In 1967, the European Economic Community revised the legislative bases for safety labeling requirements. Directive 67/548/EEC defined seven types of hazards and provided the R and S phrases for use on product labels in five languages, including English.1 For example, R5 was officially worded as:

- **French**: Danger d’explosion sous l’action de la chaleur
- **Dutch**: Ontploffinggevaar door verwarming
- **English**: Heating may cause an explosion
- **German**: Beim Erwärmen explosionsfähig
- **Italian**: Pericolo di esplosione per riscaldamento

The scope, content, definitions, and other provisions of these requirements were consolidated and expanded in EU Directive 2001/59/EC,2 and updated further in EU Directive 2006/102/EC.3 This latter version defined 21 categories of substances and 10 categories of hazards, complete with identifying symbols and pictograms. The geographic and linguistic
of the phrases frequently appear in combinations, such as R51/53 and S20/21 above. Occasionally one finds differences in punctuation, but these phrases should always be used in the standard forms for the respective languages. In other words, they should appear word-for-word as they appear in the original list.

**DE NOVO LITERAL TRANSLATIONS ARE NOT APPROPRIATE!**

In many cases, the phrases are linguistically equivalent across languages; that is, each would be considered the obvious translation by a technical translator who is familiar with the subject matter. However, in some cases, and for reasons best known to the members of the working groups who derived the official forms, the sense of meaning seems different to some extent. Regardless, a translator who comes across the phrase in a source document should always provide the official form in the target language, even if it seems to be an imprecise translation.

One example is the phrase R15 in German, which is *Reagiert mit Wasser unter Bildung leicht entzündlicher Gase*. This could be translated into English literally as "Reacts with water to form readily flammable gases," but the standardized English form of R15 is "Contact with water liberates extremely flammable gases." The two English versions are roughly equivalent, but only the latter is legally correct.

In another example, R33 in Japanese is くりかえし蓄積すると危険なもの，which could be translated into English literally as “Repeated accumulation is hazardous.” However, the standardized English form of R33 is "Danger of cumulative effects." The two English versions are roughly equivalent, but only the latter is legally correct.

In these cases, a translator who provides a literal translation, or who translates the meaning of the source according to his or her professional preference, will be doing the end client a disservice if the target phrase differs from the standard form.

**WHERE ARE R AND S PHRASES FOUND?**

Generally speaking, these phrases show up in any type of documentation associated with commercial chemicals and products in which the chemicals are ingredients. These include product labels, shipping manifests, customs documentation, MSDSs, safety data sheets (SDs), product safety data sheet (PSDs) and documentation, as well as manufacturing instructions and batch records, and related legislation and regulations.

As an example, a portion of the label for a glyphosate-based herbicide produced in the U.K. bears the following R and S phrases:

- **R38:** Irritating to skin
- **R51/53:** Toxic to aquatic organisms. May cause long-term adverse effects in the aquatic environment
- **S2:** Keep out of the reach of children
- **S13:** Keep away from food, drink, and animal feeding stuffs
- **S20/21:** When using, do not eat, drink, or smoke
- **S25:** Avoid contact with eyes
- **S26:** In case of contact with eyes, rinse immediately with plenty of water and seek medical advice
- **S35:** This material and its container must be disposed of in a safe way
- **S57:** Use appropriate containment to avoid environmental contamination

Sometimes the phrases alone are used, sometimes only the letter-number codes, but often both are present. Some of the phrases frequently appear in combinations, such as R51/53 and S20/21 above. Occasionally one finds differences in punctuation, but these phrases should always be used in the standard forms for the respective languages. In other words, they should appear word-for-word as they appear in the original list.

**WHAT ARE H AND P STATEMENTS, AND WHERE DO THEY ORIGINATE?**

As can be seen from the discussion so far, the evolution of R and S phrases has followed a winding course, formulated by national government working groups...
(e.g., the national and Union-wide working committees within the EU, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the U.S.), often as a reaction to, or revision of, what has gone before.

In the background, a separate effort within a UN framework had begun as early as 1992 to harmonize and supersede the extant separate systems used in the European Economic Community, the Americas, and other regions of the world on a global basis. The result was the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals, or GHS for short. To avoid the appearance of this effort being a further grafting of modifications onto the original R and S phrase stock, the new system was organized around H (hazard) statements and P (precautionary) statements.

H and P statements are intended to serve the same purposes as R and S phrases (i.e., in documentation of commercial chemicals and products in which the chemicals are ingredients). The first version of the GHS was released in 2003, and recognized 17 physical hazard categories, 10 health hazard categories, and two environmental hazard categories (aquatic toxicity and the ozone layer).

H and P statements are the result of a revision and refocusing of R and S phrases. To avoid confusion, the statement numbering range begins at higher values than those used in R and S phrases. Hazard statement numbering runs from H200 to H413, and precautionary statement numbering goes from P101 to P501, although not all numbers in the sequences are used. The statements were initially published in 2003 in the six official UN languages: Arabic, English, Spanish, French, Russian, and Chinese.

For example, taking the place of R25 (Toxic if swallowed), we have H310:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>تهديد ذاتي</td>
<td>吞咽会中毒</td>
<td>Toxic if swallowed</td>
<td>Tenir au frais</td>
<td>Хранить в прохладном месте</td>
<td>Mantener fresco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>باردة بشكل عام</td>
<td>保持低温</td>
<td>Keep cool</td>
<td>Mantenir frío</td>
<td>Mantener fresco</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The GHS has been updated every two years since 2003, and final (voluntary) adoption timeframes differ by country. For example, Mexico published its national implementation of the GHS on October 9, 2015, as an alternative to the national system. The final adoption for the U.S. officially occurred on June 1, 2015. Of course, as with many declarations and directives by the UN, compliance is optional and is highly variable in practice.

In 2008, the EU homologated the GHS system into its new Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation. This EU regulation appended a set of “EU-H statements” (EUH 001–EUH 401), which are essentially substitutes for R phrases that were not represented among the H statements present in the GHS. My best guess as to why they were not represented is that the UN working group decided that some phrases could be retired due to perceived redundancy or possibly inaccuracy, but that the EU working group didn’t share that perspective.

In North America, the U.S. has incorporated the GHS system into its Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. In
Resources for R and S Phrases and H and P Statements

**ChemSub** http://chemsub.online.fr
(This site allows you to search on full or partial substance names to find equivalent names and synonyms, substance data, and information on R and S phrases and H and P statements in multiple languages.)

**EU CLP Hazard and Precautionary Statements in 24 EU Languages** http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/chemicals

**Hazard Statements (H statements)**
www.ilpi.com/msds/ref/hstatements.html

(This is an excellent resource for R and S phrases and H and P statements in 35 languages. You can search for H and P statements or R and S phrases by the codes and/or by language.)

**MSDS Europe (CLP)**

**MSDS Hyperglossary**
www.ilpi.com/msds/ref
(Provides links to English keyword definitions)

**Precaution Statements (P statements)**
www.ilpi.com/msds/ref/pstatements.html

**Risk Phrases (R phrases)**
www.ilpi.com/msds/ref/riskphrases.html

**Safety Phrases (S phrases)**
www.ilpi.com/msds/ref/safetyphrases.html

*In addition to the sites above, the PowerPoint presentation on which this article is based can be accessed at: http://bit.ly/Risk-Safety-Vernacular-Phrases.*

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Canada, the GHS is being implemented through the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS). In Mexico, the GHS has been incorporated into the Norma Oficial Mexicana (NOM), a set of mandatory technical regulations, and the Norma Mexicana (NMX), the official standards.

**REGIONAL COMPARISONS**

A comparison of the wording in a few examples of the Mexican Spanish versions of the statements with those from the EU (i.e., Spain), with reference to the English version, showcase how the same meaning is conveyed in a different form in regional language variants.

**H240:**
(Heating may cause an explosion)

**European Union (Spain):**
Peligro de explosión en caso de calentamiento

**Directive No 1272/2008 (Mexico)**
NMX-R-019-SCFI-2011:
Puede explotar al calentarse

**P270:**
(Do not eat, drink or smoke when using this product)

**European Union (Spain):**
No comer, beber ni fumar durante su utilización

**Directive No 1272/2008 (Mexico)**
NMX-R-019-SCFI-2011:
No comer, beber o fumar mientras se manipula este producto

**START BUILDING YOUR TRANSLATION MEMORIES**

R and S phrases and H and P statements are standardized text strings that describe the properties of commercial chemicals and ingredients. The H and P statements are officially standard now, but R and S phrases still turn up. They are found in many contexts related to international and domestic chemical product commerce. These phrases/statements belong in your translation memory (TM), since they are fixed regulatory terminology.

Old World Spanish.

In cases where you are dealing with confidential information, this process could be done separately to create a TM “add-on” that could be incorporated into a TM that might be kept confidential for use with a particular client.

**KEY POINTS**

Here are a few important facts to keep in mind.

- R and S phrases and H and P statements are fixed regulatory terminology.
- Like much legal language, their development might appear illogical, but the wording is nonetheless binding.
- In addition to language-based differences in wording, there are also country-specific differences (e.g., New World vs. Old World Spanish).

Use of the fixed wording in translation work is easy to implement by incorporating the official versions into a TM.

- Don’t translate these phrases and statements literally—use the official equivalents.

Hopefully this basic overview will give you a better idea of how these phrases work and their place in documents for translation.

I would like to acknowledge the extensive assistance of Salvador Virgen (chemical engineer and ATA-certified English>Spanish translator).

**NOTES**


U.S. Immigration Benefits for Professional Translators and Interpreters

Linguists are an invaluable asset to the U.S.—a fact that has been recognized by the federal government, which offers preferential immigration treatment through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services under certain circumstances.

Many foreign-born linguists working in the U.S. are unaware that they might be eligible to take advantage of immigration benefits offered by the federal government in recognition of their invaluable work to this country. Under certain circumstances, the federal government offers preferential immigration treatment through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. This means that foreign-born interpreters and translators may be eligible for H-1B Specialty Worker Visas, Green Cards with and without sponsors, or Special Immigrant Visas.

How does the process work? Co-written by an immigration attorney and a certified translator, this article explains the benefits and drawbacks of each program and how to pursue these immigration options.

H-1B SPECIALTY WORKERS

H-1B visas, which are fairly well known, can be pursued by translators and interpreters of any nationality. H-1Bs are “specialty worker visas” for foreign professionals with a degree or the equivalent (three years of experience is the equivalent of one year of higher education) who perform work that requires a related degree. For example, a medical publishing company might be successful in petitioning for a translator who performs highly sophisticated or complex translations if the company normally requires its translators to have a degree. On the other hand, a doctor’s office that serves a multilingual population would not likely receive H-1B approval for its bilingual receptionist who does not have a degree or one related to translation.

There are 65,000 H-1B visas available per fiscal year, although USCIS generally runs out of them within a few days after applications are accepted on April 1 (six months before the start of the federal government’s next fiscal year). However, nonprofit research institutes and institutions of higher learning are usually not subject to the fiscal cap.

Prospective employers file a “Labor Condition Application” through the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration’s “iCERT” portal—usually, but not necessarily, with the assistance of an immigration attorney.

In addition, the following information must be submitted to the USCIS Service Center with jurisdiction:

- Department of Homeland Security Form I-129 “Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker”
- Proof of the linguist’s credentials
- A statement regarding the employer’s need for this employee

Approximately 225 H-1B visas were filed for the 2015–2016 fiscal year on behalf of translators and interpreters for positions in New York, California, Texas, Florida, and Illinois. Job titles ranged from “interpreter and translator” to “technical writer,” “editor,” and “author.”

Adjudication can take anywhere from 15 days with premium processing (for a one-time $1,225 filing fee) to several months without the expedite fee. The visa can be granted from abroad or from within the U.S. The H-1B is generally valid for up to six years, but there are stringent limitations. For instance, H-1B holders may work only for their petitioner, and the status does not lead to permanent residency or citizenship.

www.atanet.org
Useful Links for Information on Immigration Benefits

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
Glossary of Terms
www.uscis.gov/tools/glossary

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
National Interest Waiver Requirements

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
Naturalization Requirements Exceptions and Accommodations

United States Department of Labor
H-1B, H-1B1 and E-3 Specialty (Professional) Workers
www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/h-1b.cfm

United States Department of Labor
iCERT Visa Portal System
https://icert.doleta.gov

United States Department of Labor
Program Electronic Review Management
www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/perm.cfm

EB-3/PERM

Employers may petition for Lawful Permanent Residency (the Green Card) for a translator or interpreter under the Employment Based Third Preference (EB-3), also known as Program Electronic Review Management (PERM). This can be onerous and expensive for the employer, as it requires multiple recruitment steps that may only be paid by the employer. The PERM process is also lengthy, especially considering that the Department of Labor (DOL) and USCIS are involved.

PERMs first require the DOL to certify the offered wage—an online process that takes approximately three months. Once the wage is certified, the employer must place two Sunday classified ads with a newspaper of major circulation, an online posting for 30 days, and an in-house posting for 10 days. In all likelihood, professional positions such as translators and interpreters will require two additional postings that can include a radio or professional trade journal ad, on-campus recruitment, or an in-house incentive program.

The labor certification application must be filed no less than 30 days, but no more than 180 days, after the last recruitment step. It can take 10 months to a year for the DOL to process such cases, during which time the applicant does not have immigration status. For that reason, the applicant may need to wait abroad or already possess temporary status, such as F-1 Student or H-1B, if filing from within the United States. If a case is certified and a visa is available, a full adjustment of case status may be submitted to the USCIS, where the file could take several additional months to process.

EB-2/NATIONAL INTEREST WAIVERS

The Employment Based Second Preference (EB-2)—also known as the National Interest Waiver (NIW)—is a little known and not widely used immigration benefit. Because many translators are independent contractors and/or work part-time, they are precluded from sponsoring themselves via the traditional PERM/EB-3 route. The NIW can lead to a Green Card and, potentially, U.S. citizenship, and does not require employer sponsorship. However, the legal standard is high, and cases can take anywhere from a few months to over a year to be resolved, especially for Chinese and Indian applicants. Premium processing is not available for these cases.

To file for an EB-2, the translator or interpreter should document possession of an advanced degree (which more than 25% of linguists possess) and/or three of the following factors:

- A college degree
- At least 10 years of experience
- Licensure
- A history of high remunerations
- Membership in a professional association
- Recognition of past achievements
- Comparable evidence may also be submitted (such as certification by a national body in lieu of licensure)

In addition, applicants must also prove that their work has substantial intrinsic merit, that the benefit they provide is national in scope, and that the national interest would be affected negatively if the case were denied.

The translator or interpreter may live and work legally in the U.S. while the case is pending, and he or she is not tied to a particular employer upon approval. One example of a previously approved case is a multilingual technical writer in the nuclear field who had a master's degree in rhetorical and communication theory. However, another application submitted by a bilingual counselor at a university was denied.

Those who receive residency via an employment-based route can file for U.S. citizenship after five years.

SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISAS

“Special Immigrant” Visas (SIVs) are available to Afghan and Iraqi translators or interpreters if they have worked directly for the U.S. Armed Forces or under the authority of the Chief of Mission for a period of at least one year at any time since October 7, 2001. (The Iraqi Refugee Assistance project estimates that around 50,000 Iraqi and Afghan nationals have served as translators/interpreters over the past decade.) To qualify, an applicant must have experienced a serious threat due to their employment by the U.S. government and be otherwise eligible. A background check is required. The following documentation must be sent to the USCIS Nebraska Service Center:

- Department of Homeland Security Form I-360
- A favorable written recommendation from the U.S. officer for whom the translator or interpreter supported

Upon approval, a SIV is issued at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad.

Special Immigrant Visa petitions can take months or years to process due to complex policies, heavy security screening, statutorily dictated timeframes, and the numerical restriction of 50 visas per year. If successful, special immigrants become lawful permanent residents upon arrival to the U.S., and may eventually become U.S. citizens. Their families may accompany...
CAREFUL RESEARCH IS KEY

The immigration options available to foreign-born translators and interpreters are varied. Each has its own regulations, fees, and pros and cons. Professional translators and interpreters should explore their options carefully before filing for a U.S. immigration benefit.

NOTES

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GREGORY RABASSA, ATA GODE MEDALIST AND LEGENDARY TRANSLATOR

March 9, 1922–June 13, 2016


Gregory Rabassa, 94, esteemed translator of Latin American writers Julio Cortazar, Vargas Llosa, Jorge Amado, and Gabriel García Márquez, died on June 13, 2016. Rabassa, a longtime ATA member, was the recipient of ATA’s Gode Medal (1980), the U.S. National Book Award for Translation (1967), the PEN Translation Prize (1977), and the National Medal of Arts (2006), among others.

Literary critics often cite Rabassa’s work, and particularly his English translation of Nobel Prize laureate Gabriel García Márquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude, as playing a pivotal role in the Latin American literary movement of the 1960s. Márquez often praised Rabassa, saying he regarded the translation of One Hundred Years of Solitude as a work of art in its own right. “He’s the godfather of us all,” Edith Grossman, the acclaimed translator of Don Quijote and several of Márquez’s books, told The Associated Press. “He’s the one who introduced Latin American literature in a serious way to the English-speaking world.”

In 2001, Rabassa received a lifetime achievement award from the PEN American Center for contributions to Hispanic literature. He received a National Medal of Arts in 2006 for translations that “continue to enhance our cultural understanding and enrich our lives.”

Language was a lifelong fascination for Rabassa, whose father was Cuban and mother from New York City’s Hell’s Kitchen. He was born in Yonkers, New York, in 1922, and raised on a farm in Hanover, New Hampshire, near Dartmouth College, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Romance languages.

He served as a cryptographer during World War II, later joking that in deciphering secret messages it was his job to change English into English. After the war, Rabassa studied Spanish and Portuguese as a graduate student at Columbia University and translated Spanish- and Portuguese-language works for the magazine Odyssey. He broke into mainstream publishing in the 1960s when an editor at Pantheon Books asked him to translate Julio Cortazar’s Hopscotch, for which he won a National Book Award for translation in 1967. Around the same time, Márquez asked Rabassa to translate One Hundred Years of Solitude. Rabassa’s other translations included Márquez’s The Autumn of the Patriarch, Vargas Llosa’s Conversation in the Cathedral, and Jorge Amado’s Captains of the Sand.

Rabassa taught at Columbia University from the late 1940s to the late 1960s, when he joined the faculty of Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He retired in 2007.

SPANISH- AND PORTUGUESE-LANGUAGE WORKS

Gregory Rabassa with the manual typewriter he used to do his work. (Photo by Chester Higgins, Jr./The New York Times)

Literary critics often cite Rabassa’s work, and particularly his English translation of Nobel Prize laureate Gabriel García Márquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude, as playing a pivotal role in the Latin American literary movement of the 1960s.
An Interview with Dirk Goepfert, Localization Engineering Manager

Readers of recent columns will have noticed that OWOW has been visiting different planets in our linguistic universe, boldly going where not many translators have gone before. The space travel metaphor is, in my opinion, apt here, since we are going to be talking about localization, which involves adapting ideas, products, and services to languages and cultures all over the known world. If we ever find digital life anywhere else, there will be great demand for the services provided by my guest today. Dirk Goepfert is the localization engineering manager at Siemens Product Lifecycle Management Software Inc. in Milford, Ohio (www siemens com/plm).

Thank you for talking to us, Dirk. Please tell us a little about yourself.

I was born and raised in Germany and obtained my MA in technical translation with a specialization in software localization from the University of Applied Sciences in Flensburg, Germany, in 2000. I started my professional career working as a freelance English>German translator for various international language services providers as well as some direct clients. In 2001, Interpro Translation Solutions, a small Chicago-based translation services provider offered me an in-house position as an English>German translator. After about six months I was promoted to project manager for small-scale localization projects (e.g., user interface, online help, training documents). In my role as a German localization specialist, I performed localization activities and managed teams of localization specialists working on Windows and IBM iSeries user interface localization projects.

In 2002, UGS Corp. (now Siemens PLM Software) needed a native German localization specialist and offered me a position at their location in Maryland Heights, Missouri. Later, I moved to their location in Milford, Ohio, where I was made the localization engineering manager responsible for all localization activities for German, Italian, Spanish, and French markets. My team (five localization specialists) is responsible for localizing user interface strings, online help, training documentation, and multimedia deliverables, and for testing the appropriate local language applications/deliverables.

When you graduated with an MA, how extensive was your knowledge of computer programming? If technical translation and computer programming were two languages, which would be your dominant one?

When it comes to software localization, having a good understanding of both those languages can be extremely beneficial. I do see an emphasis on technical translation, supported by the relevant programming or software framework information. My university’s curriculum provided students with an introduction to programming, which was meant to create a foundation for future learning activities.

As a software localization student, what were the basics of your training?

My training entailed getting to know the basics of translation theory, translation methodology, terminology research, and terminology management. It also included an introduction to computer-aided translation tools. Students were taught the basics of technical infrastructure (operating systems) and certain programming languages.

How much programming must a translator know to work on a software localization project?

That really depends on a variety of factors, the scope and complexity of a solution requiring localization being one of them. When I started my professional career as a freelance translator, I was involved in a range of projects, some requiring hardly any programming skills (localizable content was pre-processed, so all that was required was to complete the text translation), and others requiring front-end pre-processing, code editing, scripting, compiling, and testing the localized deliverables. Scripting can be very beneficial for localization engineers, since certain tasks can be automated. When properly internationalized, software localization activities do not include any code changes.

There are many online descriptions and definitions of localization. What’s yours?

Indeed, there are quite a few different definitions available. My focus is the global local-language end user, so, to me, localization stands for adapting a product or deliverable based on the requirements of a defined target market and locale.

Would you say that the localization process stands on the shoulders of terminology management?

Terminology management is a very important support process that enables successful localization activities. Terminology is what conveys corporate identity and helps differentiate one product from a competitor’s. In my opinion, a well-defined and effective approach to terminology management must consider both the source and target locales, using high levels of automation and minimizing manual tasks. I would say that only a highly automated terminology management process can be scaled up to support very comprehensive solutions suites.
Your team is responsible for localizing user interface strings. Could you give us some examples and explain what they are doing? The linguists on my team are called localization engineers because their duties go well beyond translation. They localize user interface strings; perform dialog resizing; translate the online help, courseware, presentations, marketing collateral, and videos; perform post-editing of machine translation output; evaluate third-party translations using our quality assessment model; and participate in research and process definition. Our localization engineers also test all our localized software and perform language engineering activities, such as local language synthetic text-to-speech customizations.

In a major localization project, what is the range of required skills? Who else is involved? Strictly from a localization perspective, most projects will involve localization management (local language release planning), project managers, localization engineers, subject-matter experts, and additional global or in-country project stakeholders. All activities are workflow-based and each project stakeholder can be assigned to one or multiple workflow roles.

As manager, you are responsible for localization activities in German, Italian, Spanish, and French. Are you equally at home in all those languages? As a localization engineering manager I do not have to be fluent in any of those languages, since we have in-house localization experts. In my role, I resolve issues, facilitate local language activities, keep an eye on current and upcoming projects and activities, schedule localization work, connect team members with project stakeholders, provide application and process support, and make sure my team members’ training needs are addressed in a timely manner.

What sort of cultural issues does localization address? If a product is internationalized properly, many potential cultural issues will already have been resolved. Localization engineers make locale-specific decisions on a daily basis—from deciding whether or not a formal way of communicating with an end user is applicable for a particular locale to considering different versions of a language (e.g., Spanish for European versus American markets).

When it comes to software localization, having a good understanding of both those languages can be extremely beneficial.

Are there any truly global concepts that can be understood everywhere? Which come close? I think ROI (return on investment) and TTM (time to market) may be concepts that are used and understood globally.

Translators are involved with terminology research, editing, proofreading, and, in some cases, formatting. Where do translation and localization overlap? Localization engineers are constantly involved in terminology research, editing, and proofreading. All those activities form a substantial part of a successful localization strategy.

When I think of certain texts in my computer software, and imagine them expressed in Asian characters, for example, I begin to get a sense of the complexity of this process. Tell us something about the systems required to manage that complexity. For an application to be localized, it must first be internationalized. As part of the internationalization activities, the English code base will support localization activities for double-byte languages (Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.), different scripts (Latin, Cyrillic), and right-to-left languages. The internationalization activities are performed on the code base. Thanks to XML using Unicode encoding, all local language versions can be created and maintained using a workflow-driven unified and standardized localization infrastructure.

What are your thoughts on volunteer-driven open source projects? Are they useful? How? Developing free and open-source software (FOSS) is a great way to address a very specific need in a very short timeframe using a global community of developers and contributors. During my freelance translator years, I contributed to quite a few FOSS projects. I think it’s a great way to contribute one’s specific expertise to a common goal, to be part of a global team and expand one’s skill sets.

If someone wanted to volunteer as a translator for one of those projects, how would they do that? There are plenty of FOSS projects out there, and localization and/or translation activities seem to be in high demand, for certain locales at any rate. Some projects may require a contributor to sign up directly to be able to work on a particular deliverable, but crowdsourcing projects are also available. I would suggest looking for potential projects of interest and checking with their owner(s) or coordinator(s).

There are so many separate pieces in a localization project. How do you keep everything current? It all starts with the right planning and the proper production tools. We use our translation management system to keep track of all local language production activities using highly customized workflows. Given our Agile software development lifecycle model, certain localization activities have to be launched or re-launched at certain stages during the overall cycle. Our planning tools enable us to keep track of current activities and plan future ones.

How have online translation sites (Google Translate, etc.) affected the formal, professional world of localization? There are so many separate pieces in a localization project. How do you keep everything current? It all starts with the right planning and the proper production tools. We use our translation management system to keep track of all local language production activities using highly customized workflows. Given our Agile software development lifecycle model, certain localization activities have to be launched or re-launched at certain stages during the overall cycle. Our planning tools enable us to keep track of current activities and plan future ones.

Is there any reciprocity? I don’t know whether the use of online translation sites has affected the professional world of localization, since our organization does not use such sites/services. We do use enterprise-level machine translation systems to support our localization activities for certain deliverable types. Both our internal localization engineers and our language

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services providers post-edit machine translation output before handing off any translations. This ensures that machine translations are always reviewed/revised by a human localization professional. The use of machine translation systems has enabled us to localize more content in shorter intervals, thus reducing overall time to market.

How do you keep a language’s localization current?
Once a new release is in progress our translation management system compares the source assets against the previous version, and all new and changed assets are processed, analyzed, and launched for translation. If an existing local language deliverable version needs to be updated, we use our translation management system to launch a “maintenance project” that our localization engineers can use to implement any required changes or updates.

How does localization manage the rapid evolution of slang in most languages?
The English version of our software is designed to address English speakers worldwide. This means the English versions must be understood by end users in the U.S. and Canada, the U.K., India, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand, to name a few. To provide this “international” English version, software developers and content authors have to standardize simplified technical English as much as possible, minimize the use of variants and synonyms, and refrain from using country-specific slang. Authoring activities are governed by authoring style guides and verified/enforced by content editors. Using a standardized English source also supports higher translation memory matches and higher quality machine translation, which result in reduced localization cost.

Has the widespread use of smart phones affected localization in any significant way?
From an end user perspective it’s great to have a choice, since (local language) content can be accessed in so many different ways, whether on a workstation, laptop, tablet, mobile device, or a combination of any or all of the above. This gives the end user a lot of flexibility. To support such a wide range of display devices, different content types and delivery systems had to be established. Cloud content delivery, in particular, provides a great deal of added flexibility. Using cloud-based content delivery systems, we are no longer constrained by scheduled releases or defined release vehicles, but can “push” content to the cloud whenever needed.

Have spell checkers and grammar checkers become standard everywhere?
I’m not sure they have become standard everywhere else, but both our internal localization engineers and our external translation services providers have been required to perform spelling and grammar checks for a long time.

Localization is referred to as “L10N.”
Would you explain, please?
L10N is a numeronym, a number-based word created as an abbreviation of a much longer word. In a numeronym, the letters between the first and last letter of the longer word are replaced with a number representing the number of letters omitted, such as I18N (internationalization) or globalization (G11N).

Is there a founding father of L10N or a country of origin?
I don’t know whether a “founding father” of software localization can be determined, but I think the need for software internationalization and software localization surfaced once English software was adopted worldwide and U.S. software companies were faced with the challenge of providing non-English versions of their product. According to “The Evolution of Localization,” an article by Bert Esselink (a solution architect at Lionbridge), Microsoft opened sales offices in Tokyo in 1978 and started its expansion into Europe in 1979.

In a global project, translation and terminology management provide suitable equivalents in other languages, but some languages are so much wordier than others.

What does localization do about that?
During the software internationalization phase, text expansion/contraction rates are designed and tested to make sure the software supports local language text expansion (“wordier” languages) as well as text contraction (selected double-byte languages). Our organization is responsible for verifying the display of local language strings within the localized user interface as part of our localization testing activities.

Where does localization go from here? What do you see as the future of your field?
Personally, I can see software being used in areas where it once played a minimal role, or none at all. The Internet of Things (IoT) will spawn generations of devices and systems that communicate with each other. I imagine my future smart home will be able to monitor the inventory in my refrigerator, notify me regarding expiration dates, and order a gallon of milk when needed, which will be delivered to my doorstep by a drone and put in my refrigerator by my in-house personal assistant (droid). Whether speech recognition or a touchscreen human-machine-interface is used, information will have to be localized to be conveyed to the (human) end user effectively. I am convinced that localization will be required in an increasingly expanding range of projects as time goes by.

Thank you, Dirk, for those fascinating insights into the localization process, and for your very futuristic vision of what lies ahead. I’m sure our readers were as rapt as I was as they read this column.

NOTES
2. IoT: the network of devices, vehicles, buildings, and other items in which embedded electronics, software, sensors, and network connectivity enable the collection and exchange of data.

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

A few months ago, I was asked to be part of an extensive on-site translation and review project. The catch was that the job was not located in my adopted hometown of Las Vegas, but across the country.

I've worked as an in-house translator, but had not done an on-site project as a small business owner. I really enjoy new experiences, so I made a few phone calls, picked a colleague's brain and recruited her to the project, scheduled my husband's visit to come see me, packed, and signed up for up to four weeks. The client, a legal services firm, agreed to my terms, so I was all set. I didn't really know what to expect, but I was up for the challenge.

I can't reveal the project details, but I can provide some general information so you know what an on-site project might entail.

**Limited Information:** Before arriving at the job site, I had essentially no information about the project. It was so highly confidential that I had to commit to the job without knowing what it entailed. Naturally, this made me uncomfortable. I wasn't sure I'd be the right linguist, but the client assured me that my background was well suited for the assignment.

**Long Hours:** I had committed to working at least 50 hours a week. Since I usually work that much anyway, the amount of time wasn't a problem. However, I had to dedicate 50 hours to just that one client, which meant that I put in at least another 25 hours at night and on weekends to keep up with my other clients. I have a great team that works with me, and my twin sister and business partner managed a lot of projects for me, but I still had unusually long workdays and was pretty exhausted.

**Limited Resources:** As the nature of this particular project was confidential (and it's my understanding that most on-site projects are), we weren't allowed to bring in outside laptops. Most of my best and favorite dictionaries are on my hard drive, so I felt a bit lost without them. While we were encouraged to use whichever online resources were available, there's only so much you can do without top-notch dictionaries. I found myself wishing for better resources. When working on a project like this you have to be prepared to work without your usual resources, including CAT tools.

**Different Working Relationships:** I had the opportunity to work with some highly talented ATA colleagues on this project. Others were not translators, but rather bilingual professionals (the client wasn't looking for translators exclusively for this project). There was definitely a skill differential in terms of translation abilities, but we all worked independently of each other, so my colleagues' performance did not affect my own. This might not always be the situation for on-site assignments, depending on the performance metrics the client has established.

**Different Work Space:** I'm used to working from a home office or from a shared office that's open and light. For this assignment, we were in a room with long tables and computer terminals and no windows. That was a bit difficult to get used to.

**Autonomy:** We did have quite a bit of autonomy during this project, so I didn't feel micromanaged, but we did have frequent check-ins with a project manager who provided us with as much information as possible. It was a bit of a shift for me to have check-ins, and not everyone who has had their own business might like this aspect.

**Things Change:** The project ended sooner than originally planned, and that can be par for the course for these on-site projects as something changes along the chain of command. Any changes trickle down to everyone, including the translators.

To sum it up, I'm glad I took this assignment and had this experience. While certain things were challenging (the lack of resources, the windowless room, etc.), it was an interesting assignment. Most importantly, I deepened my relationships with linguists I already knew and I met some fantastic new colleagues as well.

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This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com.

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“Welcome to the largest multilingual summit this office has ever organized. Congratulations on making it here. You are the best of the best.”

With these words, the chief interpreter of a top international organization greeted the 70 or so interpreters who gathered around the u-shaped table for the pre-event briefing in Washington, DC. Half of the group had heard similar praise before and took it for what it was. The rookies among them received the compliment sheepishly, trying hard to act matter-of-factly while secretly wishing their mothers had been there.

Ours is a funny business. As interpreters, we tend to get rated in relation to someone other than us—and whose prestige we hope will rub off on us for a brief moment in time. It’s not uncommon to refer to a colleague as “the interpreter of President Such and Such,” or to elevate someone instantly by saying “she interpreted for ______” (fill in the blank: Madonna, the Pope, Obama). No word seems to be needed regarding how well she performed at the job. The distinction of having been picked for such a salient assignment seems to suffice as a tag of success.

Now, while we all occasionally play the celebrity card and name-dropping to our advantage—as we well should—anybody who has been in this business long enough understands that true success in our line of work lies somewhere else, usually a few notches down the superstar scale.

Chief interpreters are aware of the power of applause and criticism and will dispense them accordingly, on an as-needed-basis. And while preemptive praise can go a long way in terms of team building or as a confidence booster, it more often than not aims at imparting a sense of responsibility rather than importance. Stripped of the heightened sense of self it is designed to trigger, at its core the message means, simply: “Please, don’t screw this up.”

Yet, in the absence of a true benchmark against which to gauge your progress, how can you tell if you’ve made it? Are you truly the best interpreter out there? Before you start racking your brain for answers, here is another question you may want to ponder along with the rest: does it really matter?

As freelancers at the mercy of market conditions, we compete against one another for a dwindling number of contracts. Hitting a few homeruns, while a great achievement, is not a reliable long-term measure of success, especially if flashy assignments are few and far between. There is nothing wrong in enjoying the exposure high-level assignments provide, and you should by all means capitalize on them as openly as you ethically can. But at the end of the day, success is not determined by how royal the ball or how tall the celebrity in whose shadow we stand. In fact, who hires us matters less than the fact that they do or how often they do.

Also, past success is said to breed failure if you indulge in it too soon, while tomorrow still needs to be filled with work. In a career as long as ours, stamina beats speed. We’re all in it for the long haul. Consistency rules. If you want to know how successful you truly are, look at your calendar.

But the question still begs an answer. Have you made it? On a good day, we all like to think we have. We’re still around, after all, with a growing track record behind us and the promise of greener pastures ahead. As for bad days, of which there will be a few, you can always dust off that picture of you and ______ (fill in the blank).

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Korytowski is not a lexicographer, so the dictionary does not include such information as part of speech, transitivity, etc., but it does include usage notes in some cases.

Equivalence
The comparisons below show what you can expect to find in general-purpose bilingual dictionaries and what you will find in the Translator’s Dictionary. In these examples, I used two bilingual dictionaries: Webster’s Dicionário Universitário Inglês, Português, by Antônio Houaiss and Ismael Cardim, and Michaelis Moderno Dicionário Inglês-Português, by H. Michaelis.

As translators, we all know there are words that are more difficult to translate because their meaning cannot be expressed by a single word in Portuguese. Let’s take, for example, the word “accountability.”

English: Accountability
Michaelis: responsabilidade final
Houaiss/Cardim: Not listed. For “accountable”: Responsável, Explicável
Korytowski: responsabilização, chamada à responsabilidade, contabilidade por responsabilidade, responsabilidade, prestação de contas, controle (give accountability = controlar), cobranças (do gerente aos subordinados)

The translator into Portuguese will appreciate the variety of alternatives Korytowski proposes for different contexts. Take the entry “Cobranças (do gerente aos subordinados),” for example. Although it would be a figurative usage, the “to hold accountable” meaning given is widespread in the Brazilian corporate world.

Other interesting examples are “attitude” and “landmark.” Korytowski provides several alternatives for the figurative meaning, while the general-purpose dictionaries lead with the literal meanings.

English: Attitude
Michaelis: attitude, postura, posição, jeito, intento, propósito, Aeron inclinação da nave relativa ao vento, ao solo ou a outra nave.
Houaiss/Cardim: attitude, porte, postura

Korytowski: maneira de ver e sentir, ar desafiador (a streetwise teenager with attitude)

English: Landmark
Michaelis: marco, baliza, ponto de referência
Houaiss/Cardim: marco divisório, marco miliário, (fig.) ponto de referência
Korytowski: proeminente, memorável, (landmark account), fundamental (landmark paper), histórico (landmark elections), clássico (one of the landmark studies), ponto de referência terrestre, local importante (New York City landmarks)

Korytowski’s dictionary also brings good translation solutions to an area barely covered by bilingual dictionaries: adverbs of manner. Consider these examples:

English: Famously
Michaelis: famosamente, excelentemente
Houaiss/Cardim: Not listed
Korytowski: de forma memorável, notoriamente

English: Haphazardly
Michaelis: Not listed
Houaiss/Cardim: acidentalmente, por acaso
Korytowski: aqui e ali, arbitrariamente, aleatoriamente, negligentemente, desordenadamente (Bullet-riddled bodies were piled haphazardly in front of the execution wall.)

English: Ironically
Michaelis: ironicamente
Houaiss/Cardim: Not listed
Korytowski: contrariando as expectativas, paradoxalmente, contraditoriamente

Tips
In some cases, Korytowski includes comments or, better yet, useful tips to help the translator avoid pitfalls. Here are some examples:

English: Balanced scorecard
Korytowski: balanced scorecard (normalmente não se traduz; tradução literal: cartão de escore balanceado)
English: Cross
Korytowski: cruz, cruzado (boxe), cruzamento (futebol), cruzeiro, cruzar; atravessar; fazer o sinal da cruz, discordar (no one ever dared cross him), inter (hifen antes de H e R; p. ex., cross-cultural = intercultural), transversal; zangado, irritado

Korytowski: remar contra a maré, dar murro em faca de ponta, lutar/rebelar-se contra a sorte

English: Lame duck
Korytowski: fraco, inapto, ineficaz, ineficiente, incapaz, não reeleito, em final de mandato, politicamente derrotado

Domain-Specific Terminology
The Translator’s Dictionary includes lots of domain-specific terminology, probably acquired during Korytowski’s many years of translating translations. The following are a few entries in specialized fields:

English: By-law
Korytowski: estatuto, regulamento

English: Concealer
Korytowski: creme contra rugas

English: Core air
Korytowski: ar dentro do núcleo (nos motores a jato—ver também bypass air)

English: Crawler
Korytowski: crawler (no contexto de mecanismos de pesquisa)

English: Cross-crease
Korytowski: através da área retangular (hóquei no gelo)

English: Disposal of assets
Korytowski: alienação de bens

English: Green fee
Korytowski: taxa pela utilização do campo (de golfe)

Even though the Translator’s Dictionary could be used as a first source for clues, it would probably be a good idea, as always, to double check it against specialized dictionaries. For example, “correctivo” could be a more precise translation for “concealer.”
Something for Everyone

Whether you need to brush up on your listening skills, perfect your pronunciation, improve your writing, expand your vocabulary, practice reading, or all of the above, you will find many ideas to help you achieve your goals. Designed for advanced learners of a second language, the book is organized into sections related to various skills and resources (e.g., visual content, podcasts and radio, audio books, and taking courses). You can read through the entire book from beginning to end, trying different suggestions as you go, or you can jump to the section that addresses what you would most like to work on.

Many of the suggested activities tackle several skills at once. For instance, if you decide to play a word game like Taboo in your second language, your listening, speaking, and vocabulary will all get a workout.

The sheer number of strategies and approaches ensures that there will be something for everyone. One person might embrace the challenge of trying to write poetry in their second language, while another person who wouldn’t willingly touch a poem in any language might love to get in some writing practice by keeping a journal, creating lists, or commenting on social media in their second language.

Want to improve your speaking fluency? Talking to native speakers is great, but we don’t all have a ready supply of native speakers on standby to help us practice. How about reading aloud, shadowing (which involves listening to a recording and repeating what the person is saying while they are still speaking), or memorizing and mimicking a scene from a movie, part of an interview, or a few minutes of a comedy routine?

Resources as Well as Techniques

One of the things that I really appreciate about this book is that it not only suggests activities, but also recommends resources. In the “Podcasts and Radio” section, for example, there are numerous suggestions for how and where to access podcasts and radio broadcasts. The book even offers an entire section on slowing down media playback, which can be used not only with podcasts, but also with audiobooks, videos, and more.

To be honest, it had never occurred to me to slow anything down, but thanks to the very clear instructions in this section, I’m sure that I will try it not only for myself, but also for my students. The ability to slow down a video or a song just a little could make it so much easier to understand.

Maintaining Your Second Language offers a wealth of concrete ideas for advanced learners wanting to cultivate their second language skills. There’s something for everyone!

To offer another example, in the section dedicated to reading, there are ideas not only for how to decide what to read (like checking out what’s popular on Goodreads and similar sites), but also suggestions for finding books available for free online, ordering books, using foreign library materials online, and more. There is also a section dedicated to ordering resources from abroad that offers even more tips and tricks.

It’s Up to You

Near the beginning of the book, there is a series of eight questions designed to help you set your language goals. Bodeux suggests creating a formal plan, and the questions in this section are designed as a guide to help you choose specific goals (such as learning a certain number of new words per week) and to decide on specific steps you will use to achieve your goals (like reading one book per month in your second language). Once a plan is in place, you can assess your progress periodically and decide if you want to revise your goals. By doing so, you’re essentially setting your own curriculum for a personalized language class.

The book even includes a section on self-study techniques. The great thing about this is that nobody knows you better than you, and you probably know exactly what you should work on to enhance your language skills. The downside (at least for some of us) is that you’re not only the student, you’re also the teacher, so you have to be disciplined enough to find books to read, podcasts to listen to, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and so on, and then actually put what you learn to use.

This is where having a formal, structured plan can be helpful. Plus we’re already people who love languages, so the chance to learn new things and improve our skills can be seen as a treat rather than a chore.

Overall Evaluation

As translators and interpreters, maintaining our language skills is a major job requirement. Yet working on those skills doesn’t have to be painful or boring; it can be fun. Yes, we have all spent many years studying our various languages, and yes, you will already be familiar with some of the suggested activities and resources in Maintaining Your Second Language. But I am willing to bet that everyone will also find some fresh ideas. For instance, it would have never occurred to me to improve my second-language skills by using them to study a third language!

I recommend Bodeux’s book for anyone looking for new ways to expand their language skills. Even if you only did the activities suggested in the “Try This” tips section periodically and decide if you want to

Beth Smith

Beth Smith is a French>English translator and high school French teacher near Houston, Texas. She specializes in advertising and marketing, travel and tourism, and literary translation.

Her translation of Renaud Gaucher’s La finance du Bonheur was published in May 2016. Contact: BethSmith@itranslatefrench.net.
Language Chairs Meeting and Update on New Computerized Exam Option

Here’s an overview of the ATA Certification Program’s annual Language Chairs Meeting, including a report on the new computerized exam option.

On April 30 and May 1, a group of 45 graders for ATA’s Certification Program gathered in Alexandria, Virginia, for the annual Language Chairs Meeting, a day and a half of intensive training sessions and discussion. Among the subjects addressed were key language-specific challenges to be considered during passage selection and the fine-tuning of error point decisions. There was also wide-ranging discussion of the results of the new computerized certification exam sitting, which had been held a few weeks earlier in Charlotte, North Carolina.

At that April 3 pilot test, 12 candidates working in eight different language pairs took the exam on their own laptops, saving their work as plain text files onto an ATA-supplied USB drive. They also had Internet access, with which they were allowed to consult online dictionaries and certain other resources. I personally served as head proctor for the exam sitting so that I could collect feedback firsthand, in hopes of tweaking the process and developing this method of exam delivery into a regular offering.

Overall, the first computerized exam sitting was a success, and the handful of issues that arose were discussed at length during the Language Chairs Meeting and by the Certification Committee, which met that same weekend. The biggest question was whether to allow grammar and/or spell checker utilities will not be allowed in the computerized exam. Candidates will work in WordPad, which allows some amount of formatting, but does not have grammar/spell check capability. Mac users will use TextEdit with the built-in spell checker disabled. This will be an improvement over the Charlotte sitting, where candidates were instructed to use the bare-bones Notepad program. Even without the availability of grammar/spell check functions, everyone will surely agree that using WordPad and TextEdit is preferable to writing by hand.

The bigger issue of how closely the certification exam should reproduce a translator’s actual working conditions remains a subject for debate, and we will continue to address it as our environments and tools evolve. But just as a limited three-hour exam like ours cannot test all the knowledge, skills, and abilities that reflect competence as a working translator, it is also impossible for a proctored sitting format to fully mimic a translator’s day-to-day working conditions. The certification exam is an evaluation of core translation skills, and through computerization we have now eliminated two constraints that have detracted from that evaluation process for too long: the need to write by hand and to rely on print resources. This is real progress, and we will continue to build on it as we phase in computerized sittings in the second half of 2016 and beyond.

David Stephenson serves as chair of ATA’s Certification Committee. Contact: david.translator@gmail.com.

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

- **English into Chinese**
  - Ying Wang
  - Clemmons, NC

- **English into French**
  - Virginie LeFrancois-Ross
  - Portland, OR

- **English into Hungarian**
  - Peter Simon
  - Arnhem, Gelderland, Netherlands

- **English into Portuguese**
  - Elenice B. Araujo
  - São Paulo, Brazil
  - Antonio R. Santos
  - Brasilia, Brazil
  - Cristiane M. Tribst
  - São Paulo, Brazil

- **English into Spanish**
  - Brian E. Kendall
  - Minneapolis, MN

- **Dutch into English**
  - Elias Shakkour
  - Chicago, IL

- **German into English**
  - Karin C. Millett
  - Chevy Chase, Maryland

- **Italian into English**
  - Benedetto H. Cataldi
  - Acquapendente, Italy

- **Russian into English**
  - Laurel B. Nolen
  - Chicago, IL

- **Spanish into English**
  - David M. Cuddihy
  - Springfield, VA
  - Kerstin Trimble
  - Springfield, VA
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