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Focus: Technical Translation

Pinecones bring visions of winter.

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A report on The 2nd Brazilian International Translation Forum—Translating the New Millennium: Corpora, Cognition, and Culture.

*Translation and Technology: Bridging the Gap Between the University and the Marketplace*
By Edwin Gentzler .............................................. 17

Recently, the skills required of translators have changed dramatically. What once was primarily a linguistic activity has evolved into a complex practice requiring both advanced language and computer skills. While universities supply linguistic training, they often fall short on the technology part. Based on a new course at the Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, this article covers a range of new technologies (including multilingual word processing, desktop publishing, Internet codes, e-mail, translation dictionaries, and Internet discussion groups) designed to help the translators better transition to the new demands of the marketplace.

*Common Words in Technical Language: Hot*
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The technical translator must know the basics in those fields that might likely intersect with the one in which he or she is specializing. This way, the translator can gradually develop the mental connections needed among meanings, expressions, and terms to evaluate the suitability of any analogies uncovered. This article steps, if only partially, through a mental process for resolving problems in technical translation, discussing technical terminology and linguistic issues.

*Is Sports Translation Technical? An Italian Translator’s Perspective*
By Floriana Bivona-Lockner (Edited by Michèle Hansen) .......... 24

Is sports translation worthwhile? For those who have the tools of the trade at their disposals, the answer is yes, for two reasons: 1) it’s a growing field, and 2) it flexes your mental muscles. Your brain needs exercising, and sports translation is one way to keep up the cross-training.

*Challenges in Localization*
By Alessandra Muzzi (English text edited by Anne Milano Appel) .... 28

The software and Website localization market, in spite of the recent economic slow-down, is still active and able to offer interesting opportunities to those translators possessing, or willing to acquire and develop, the required technical knowledge. This article will attempt to explain what is meant by localization and to give an idea of what challenges it presents to localizers, particularly Italian localizers.
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225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590
Alexandria VA 22314
Tel: (703) 683-6100; Fax (703) 683-6122
E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org
Website: www.atanet.org

**Editor**
Jeff Sanfacon
Jeff@atanet.org

**Proofreader**
Margaret L. Hallin

**Design/Layout**
Ellen Bankez/Amy Peloff

**Advertising**
Brian Wallace, McNeill Group Inc.
bwallace@mcneill-group.com
(215) 321-9662 ext. 38
Fax: (215) 321-9636

**Executive Director**
Walter Bacak
Walter@atanet.org

**Editorial Advisors**
R. Michael Conner, Leslie Willson, Mike Stacy

**Membership and General Information**
Maggie Rowe
Maggie@atanet.org
Document-on-Request: 1-888-990-3282
Website: www.atanet.org

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

1. Articles (see length specifications below) are due the first of the month, two months prior to the month of publication (i.e., June 1 for August issue).
2. Articles should not exceed 3,500 words. Articles containing words or phrases in non-European writing systems (e.g., Japanese, Arabic) should be submitted by mail and fax.
3. Include your fax, phone, and e-mail on the first page.
4. Include a brief abstract (five sentences maximum) emphasizing the most salient points of your article. The abstract will be included in the table of contents.
5. Include a brief biography (five sentences maximum) along with a picture (color or B/W). Please be sure to specify if you would like your photo returned. Do not send irreplaceable photos.
6. In addition to a hard copy version of the article, please submit an electronic version either on disk or via e-mail (Jeff@atanet.org).
7. Texts should be formatted for Word, Wordperfect 8.0, or Word-perfect 5.1 (DOS version).
8. All articles are subject to editing for grammar, style, punctuation, and space limitations.
9. A proof will be sent to you for review prior to publication.

**Standard Length**
Letters to the editor: 350 words; Opinion/Editorial: 300-600 words; Feature Articles: 750-3,500 words; Columns: 400-1,000 words
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Influences of English in Technical Translation into Italian
By Roberto Crivello ................................. 32

This article shows how, through overuse, semantic and syntactic loan translations and loanwords become fixed, “ready-to-use” forms. This leads to an impoverishment of terminological and stylistic choices that tend to standardize and, in the end, erode the quality of the translation. This problem, regardless of the country in which the translator lives, can be remedied only through the careful use of language. I will illustrate more accurate or less banal solutions to the problems discussed.

Doing the “Write” Stuff: The Translator’s First Duty
By María-Luisa Arias-Moreno .......................... 36

Everybody agrees that a translator must be, above all, a good writer. They must identify different text types and be capable of reproducing them in the target language. Therefore, writing courses must be an integral part of a translator’s professional training. This article is about what should be taught—and how—in writing courses for translator training. Areas to be covered include both the students’ native and foreign language.

Assessing the Spanish Translations of Marcel Proust’s First Volume
By Herbert E. Craig .................................. 40

The first, and often acclaimed, Spanish translation of Proust’s initial volume, Por el camino de Swann (1920), has been challenged by four recent versions. Using the principles of translation assessment of Katharina Reiss (Translation Criticism—The Potentials and Limitations, 2000), the author of this article compares the strengths and weaknesses of this first translation by the Spanish poet Pedro Salinas with those by Julio Gómez de la Serna (1981), Carlos Manzano (1999), Mauro Armijo (2000), and Estela Canto (2000).

Within Translation: An Epistemology of the écriture of Hélène Cixous
By Michael C. Walker ............................... 45

Hélène Cixous defies categorization as both a writer and an individual. Her application of the conventions of French turns the language upon its head, personifying the nonpersonal, making material the non-tangible, and playing on metaphors hidden within other metaphors.

2002 Chronicle Editorial Calendar

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Please see page 4 for detailed submission guidelines.
Anne Milano Appel specializes in commercial and literary translations from Italian to English. Formerly a director of public libraries, she has also taught English, Italian, and English as a Second Language, and holds a Ph.D. in Romance languages and literature. Contact: aappel@aol.com.

María-Luisa Arias-Moreno is currently the coordinator of the Translation Section in the Department of Modern Languages of the University of Guadalajara in Jalisco, Mexico. She received her B.A. in translation from the Instituto Superior de Intérpretes y Traductores in Mexico City and an M.A. in translation from the University of Ottawa in Canada. She translates from English, French, and Portuguese into Spanish. She is also a professor at the University of Guadalajara in the B.A. Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Contact: marialuisaa@hotmail.com.

Floriana Bivona-Lockner, a graduate of the Scuola Superiore Interpreti e Traduttori of Naples, Italy, is a Chicago-based freelance medical and computer translator. In addition to ATA, she is also a member of the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association and the Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti. Contact: floriana@compuserve.com.

Herbert E. Craig has examined, in numerous articles, papers, and an upcoming book, the literary relation between the French novelist Marcel Proust and Spanish American narrative. He has taught Spanish and French at Bethany College (Lindsborg, Kansas) and Spanish, Spanish American literature, and translation at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. With the prospect of teaching literary translation again, he studied translation criticism and, in particular, the large number of Spanish versions of A la recherche du temps perdu. Contact: craigh@unk.edu.

Roberto Crivello has been a freelance technical translator for 10 years. Born and raised in Palermo, Italy, he lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. He holds graduate degrees in engineering in both Italy and the U.S., and has held engineering positions in both countries. He is ATA-accredited (English>Italian). He is editor of Tradurre, the newsletter of ATA’s Italian Language Division. Contact: roberto@rcrivello.com.

Edwin Gentzler, director of the Translation Center and associate professor of comparative literature at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is author of Contemporary Translation Theories (London: Routledge, 1993; 2nd rev. edition Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001) and co-editor (with Maria Tymoczko) of Translation and Power (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, forthcoming). He is also co-editor (with Susan Bassnett) of the Topics in Translation Series for Multilingual Matters (England) and serves on the editorial board of several journals, including Metamorphoses (U.S.), Cadernos de Tradução (Brazil), and Across (Hungary). Contact: gentzler@complit.umass.edu or www.umass.edu/transcen.

Harvie Jordan, ABC, was Chair of the Active Membership Review Committee for 2000-2001, and was the first assistant administrator of the ATA Spanish Language Division. He is President-elelct of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA). A cofounder of AATIA, he later founded and coordinates its 80-member Spanish Special Interest Group (SpanSIG). He holds ATA accreditation from Spanish into English, and is one of 750 communications professionals worldwide who is an Accredited Business Communicator (ABC), a public relations credential conferred by the International Association of Business Communicators. A freelance and staff Spanish<>English translator since 1972, his independent translation, voice talent, and public relations practice is based in Austin, Texas. Contact: hjc@texas.net.

Michele Hansen is a French>English translator in the Chicago area. She is the current assistant administrator of ATA’s French Language Division, the past treasurer of the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association, and a member of the American Medical Writers Association. Contact: mhtranslations@yahoo.com.

Jonathan Hine has been a freelance translator for more than 40 years and is ATA-accredited (Italian>English). He is a regular presenter at ATA conferences. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, his post-graduate work included project management (Master of Public Administration, University of Oklahoma) and translator education (Ph.D., University of Virginia). His current research interest is the evaluation of translator education and the related areas of accreditation, certification, and assessment. Contact: hine@cstone.net.

Alessandra Muzzi was born in Rome in 1964. She graduated with a degree in foreign languages and literature from the Università di Roma La Sapienza in 1993, then completed a postgraduate course in literary translation at the same university. Her passion for computers, stemming from previous work experience as a computer programmer, led her towards technical translations in the IT field, and eventually towards the software and Website localization fields. Contact: almuzzi@tiscalinet.it.

Michael C. Walker is a health sciences researcher, cultural theorist, and writer. Representative publications include research proceedings in Diagnostic Imaging, DI Europe, Translation Journal, AirMed, CATScan, and Acta Medicina Slavica, and poetry in The Church Wellesley Review, Fetishes, and Meanie. In addition, he has three previous publications in the ATA Chronicle. His primary research interests include medical jurisprudence, literature and medicine, the orthography of non-Latin writing systems, transliteration, and interactions between gender and aesthetics. With regard to literature, his primary scholarship has concerned Hélène Cixous, Arthur Rimbaud, Emily Brontë, and Kate Chopin. He is affiliated with the Savannah College of Art and Design and with the Københavns Universitet. For this article, he acknowledges the support of those institutions as well as the personal influence of Adam Fair, Ryan Swanson, Megan Masana, Lynn Wright-Buckingham, and Chris Tial. Contact: Algonquin@medscape.com.
Welcome New Board Members, Thanks to the Outgoing, and More

Welcome. ATA’s success and growth directly reflects the efforts given by so many ATA members who have volunteered their time and energy. Please welcome the new officers and directors who were elected at the ATA 42nd Annual Conference in Los Angeles. Thomas L. West III moved from president-elect to president for a two-year term. ATA Director Scott Brennan was elected president-elect for a two-year term—following his term he becomes president. Courtney Searls-Ridge was re-elected secretary for another two-year term. Jiri Stejskal was elected treasurer for a two-year term.

As for new directors, Beatriz Bonnet was re-elected—this time to a three-year term. Rob Croese and Robert Sette were elected to three-year terms. In addition, Madeleine Velguth was appointed to fill the final year remaining in Scott’s term as director. Finally, I would like to thank Virginia Benmaman and Clove Lynch for agreeing to run for office.

Farewell. I would like to thank the outgoing members: President Ann G. Macfarlane, Secretary Eric N. McMillan, and Directors Allan Adams and Gertrud Graubart Champe. It was a pleasure working with them. The association greatly benefited from their insight, inspiration, and energy. In particular, I would like to thank Ann and Eric for all they did. Their guidance and support for Headquarters operations was greatly appreciated by all the staff. In addition, I truly valued them sharing their knowledge and wisdom with me, which helped me grow both professionally and personally.

Record membership. ATA closed 2001 with a record 8,528 members. This is a 10-percent increase over last year’s record membership. The association has doubled in membership in seven years. Another important statistic is our rate of retention, which is at an all-time high of 85%. This figure reflects that 85% of the ATA members in 2000 renewed for 2001. This figure has grown by 11% since we started tracking it in 1994. This rate of retention is fantastic. I would like to thank all of you for being a member of the American Translators Association and for helping to make the association the thriving organization that it is today.

This is the perfect segue to ask you to renew your membership for 2002. The renewal notices have been mailed. In addition, you may renew online. If you have any questions about your membership, please contact ATA Headquarters at ata@atanet.org or (703) 683-6100.

Conference. The ATA 42nd Annual Conference, which was held October 31-November 3 in Los Angeles, was a great success all things considered. The conference will be covered in-depth in the January issue of the Chronicle. Although at this point, I want to thank the 1,311 attendees for making the extra effort to attend the conference this year. For those that could not attend, I hope you can make it to ATA’s 43rd Annual Conference, November 6-9, 2002, in Atlanta, Georgia.

New ATA publications. ATA has two new publications. Translating and Interpreting in the Federal Government was written and compiled by long-time ATA member Ted Crump. This comprehensive, 180-page book is available to ATA members for $25 and nonmembers for $45. Getting Started: A Newcomer’s Guide to Translation and Interpretation is a compilation of articles from ATA publications. ATA member Sandra Burns Thomson combed the Chronicle, conference Proceedings, and other ATA publications to compile this straightforward guide for newcomers to the translation and interpretation professions. The 78-page guide is available to ATA members for $15 and to nonmembers for $25. Both publications are available from ATA. Please contact us for more information.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.
As President Tom West advised us this summer, the Millennium Biltmore has to be one of the most spectacular venues we’ve ever enjoyed for a conference. It was a pleasure to stroll through its block-long Galleria (featured in the movie *Dave*) and to dine in its Crystal Ballroom (featured in more movies than one can count). I was able to work the movie *Ghostbusters* into my opening remarks, the first time I’ve ever drawn inspiration from the cinema, and the Board meeting was held in the room used for *Thirteen Days*, a movie about the Cuban missile crisis.

Perhaps the most interesting connection with the Biltmore was not cinematic, however, but historical. When my husband Lew walked into the Biltmore Bowl, site of our opening reception, he realized that he had been there before. In 1960, he attended the press conference where Eleanor Roosevelt pled with the delegates to the Democratic Convention to give Adlai Stevenson his third try at the presidency. Famously, the delegates went in a different direction, and John F. Kennedy became the Democratic choice. But to think of my husband and Eleanor Roosevelt in the same ballroom gave me a frisson, a glimpse at the reach of history. Our present day, however exotic it may seem, is inevitably connected with, intertwined with, and organically linked to our past. Similarly, our future will grow from the decisions and the choices we make today.

On the flight home, I encountered a comment by Paul O’Neill which articulated one of the goals I have had during my term as your president. The Treasury Secretary said, “Leadership is really about creating the conditions where people are comfortable with change, and they know that they have an opportunity to make a contribution.” I have tried to welcome change, and to encourage all our members to move in the direction that inspires them, while articulating a vision for our association. I believe that our increase in members to over 8,000 (a new record); our retention rate (higher than at any time since we started tracking); our thriving chapters, affiliates, and divisions; our superb professional development opportunities; the record-breaking number of interpretation sessions in Los Angeles; and the growth of our accreditation program are all good omens for the future.

As translators and interpreters in an uncertain world, we do not have an easy path. American society still does not recognize us or our work as it ought to. Economic conditions in what seems to be a recession are challenging for all, and especially for freelancers who must compete in a market that is developing in ways we cannot foresee. Our corporate and institutional members face their own difficulties. But I am confident that our association, and our members, will be able to move forward. Here are a few—by no means all—of our current endeavors.

In Tom West we have a capable, thoughtful, and dedicated president. Tom has brought our conferences to a new standard of excellence, and will continue that commitment as president of the ATA. Our investment in strengthening our accreditation program will pay benefits for years to come in the increased professionalization of translation, and in our association’s becoming better known as upholding the highest standards for all. Lili Van Vranken and Celia Bohannon are doing a fine job leading this vital committee.

ATA will continue to develop targeted marketing opportunities for the association and for our members. This is a priority of our President-elect Scott Brennan, and promises well for our future.

The New York Financial Translation Conference set a benchmark for professional development opportunities. Marian Greenfield, chair of the Professional Development Committee, will continue to inspire new initiatives in this arena. The conference demonstrated that the mentoring program, started by my dear friend and colleague Courtney Searls-Ridge, is a vehicle of enormous promise for growth and vitality within the ATA. As secretary, Courtney will continue to provide continuity to the Executive Committee and to develop this exciting new program.

Gertrud Champe, though she has left the Board as required after two terms, will continue to lead our Education and Training Committee. The Board’s decision to expand eligibility for student membership will be a significant part of our greater outreach to universities and colleges. Madeleine Velguth will be a superb representative for the academic world on the Board.

Jo Anne Engelbert will continue to bring her organization, wit, and creativity to the job of
granting the best possible Honors and Awards.

Our work in translation and computers and terminology continues to be key for the demands of the evolving marketplace. Alan Melby continues on the Board and as chair of the Translation and Computers Committee, and Sue Ellen Wright carries on her indispensable work as chair of the Terminology Committee.

We continue our outreach to potential active members. Harvie Jordan has stepped down as chair of the Active Membership Review Committee, but Lee Wright will take up the baton and continue to encourage interpreters, those in related professions, and all eligible associate members to apply for active or corresponding membership.

New Board member Rob Croese has taken the position of chair of the Chapters Committee. Building on Kirk Anderson’s generous commitment of time and thought over the last years, Rob will continue to serve as a link to chapters, affiliates, and other regional groups, and assist us to do our best to serve their needs.

A great team, Dorothee Racette and Rudy Heller, will lead the Divisions Committee. I have been impressed with their work from the moment they took office as administrators of the German and Spanish Language Divisions, respectively. I know that they will follow the outstanding path set by Tim Yuan, outgoing chair (who remains on the Board), and Anne Vincent.

Our new treasurer, Jiri Stejskal, is engaged in a fascinating outreach to other international organizations. His study of their certification programs has great potential as a bridge to our colleagues overseas.

We continue to enjoy excellent relations with the Federation Internationale des Traducteurs, thanks to the tireless work of Past President Peter Krawutschke, who serves as our representative to FIT and also as secretary general of that organization. The next FIT Congress will be held on our own...
International Certification Study: Czech Republic

By Jiri Stejskal

Last time we ventured quite far afield, if not linguistically, then certainly geographically, and reviewed the fairly complex Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd. (NAATI) certification system. This time we will look at the Czech Council for Translation and Interpreting (ČERAPT) certification system in the Czech Republic. While the two systems are quite similar, there is one crucial difference: the NAATI system has been officially recognized by the Australian government, whereas the ČERAPT system is, for all practical purposes, still in the realm of wishful thinking.

For once I am treading familiar turf, as Prague is my native city and I am a member of the Union of Translators and Interpreters (Jednota tlumočníků a překladatelů, JTP). JTP, a member of FIT, with offices in the capital cities of the Czech and the Slovak Republics, serves the needs of both Czech and Slovak professional linguists. I am indebted to my distinguished friend and colleague, Kateřina Martonová, the Union’s officer for international relations, for providing me with detailed information on the certification efforts in the Czech Republic.

While JTP does not offer any certification or comparable program, applicants for JTP membership must prove that translation and/or interpreting is a source of livelihood for them, at least on a part-time or freelance basis. JTP was also instrumental in setting up the Czech Council for Translation and Interpretation (Česká rada pro překlad a tlumočení—hence the unwieldy acronym ČERAPT above), which administers certification tests for translators and interpreters. The Council is a body composed of JTP representatives, the Institute of Translation Studies of Charles University in Prague, the Association of Conference Interpreters (ASKOT), and a major translation company based in Prague. It is chaired by Andrej Rády, who is also the chairman of JTP.

The ČERAPT certification is designed for both beginning and accomplished translators and interpreters. The examination tests the candidate for a professional level of translation and/or interpretation skills. The texts used in the translation tests are authentic, and real conditions are simulated for the interpretation tests. Given the specific market conditions in the Czech Republic, candidates must prove their capability in bidirectional translating and/or interpreting, i.e., both from and into their native language. Two types of qualification tests are offered: translation and translation/interpretation.

Qualification for Translators

The first part of the test involves the translation of a general, but difficult, text from a foreign language into Czech and vice versa. For the translation into Czech, the candidate may write a commentary. The length of each text is approximately 350 words. The second part of the test involves specialized translation, again in both directions. The candidate can select one text in the field of social sciences and one in the field of natural and technical sciences. Each part of the test takes 3.5 hours, with a one-hour break. Dictionaries and references provided by the candidate are allowed.

Qualification for Translators/Interpreters

This test also consists of two parts: translation and interpreting. The translation part is identical with the one described above. The interpretation part takes place the next day and includes a short conversation in a foreign language, bidirectional consecutive interpreting, and bidirectional sight interpreting. The consecutive interpreting test is a sequence of two five- to seven-minute sections in both language directions, one section being of a general nature and the other specialized. The specialization of the candidate will be considered for the interpretation test. For the sight interpreting, approximately 30 lines of text are used, again in both language directions. No dictionaries or reference materials may be used during the interpretation test. The test is open to the public and representatives of translation companies or governmental bodies may be present.
The prerequisites for either qualification test include at least one of the following:

- University diploma in the given field of philology;
- Certification of state language examination;
- Other recognized language certification (e.g., TOEFL);
- Proof that the candidate lived and worked in the foreign country for a considerable amount of time;
- University diploma in the given foreign language, in a field other than philology; or
- Proof of long-term use of the given foreign language on a daily basis in a job requiring a high-level language competency.

The evaluation of the qualification assesses the professional competency and performance of the candidate. The basic criteria of the evaluation are factual correctness, semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, and functionally communicative adequacy of the rendition of the message from one language to another, as well as cultural appropriateness. The optional commentary prepared by the candidate shows his or her ability to notice and solve translation problems. The certificate issued to the successful candidate is not a truly official document. Nevertheless, holders of this certificate can use it to prove their skills to third parties, for their personal promotion, and so forth. As ČERAPT is a fairly young entity without independent legal standing and because its certification does not carry an official seal, only a handful of candidates have passed the test to date.

Currently, most professional translators and interpreters in the Czech Republic present the official state language examination as their credentials. The state examination, while it carries an official seal and is generally recognized as a basic prerequisite for many entry-level positions, tests for language proficiency but not for issues specific to translation and/or interpretation. The ČERAPT initiative, on the other hand, is tailored to the needs of professional translators and interpreters, is organized by the most prestigious entities in the field of translating and interpreting, and promises to provide certification of a much higher and uniform standard.

Further information on certification and related procedures in the Czech Republic can be obtained from the JTP main office in Prague at JTP@JTPunion.org and from Zuzana Jettmarová (ČERAPT) at zuzana.jettmarova@ff.cuni.cz. In the next issue we will look at the certification process of the Canadian Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec.

As the editor of this series, I encourage readers to submit any relevant information concerning non-U.S. certification or similar programs, as well as comments on the information published in this series, to my e-mail address at jiri@cetra.com.
From the Past President Continued from p. 9

country, in August 2002 in Vancouver, Canada.

Finally, I know that we have the best possible ground to move forward, in an association of colleagues who value each other, recognize each other's contributions, and collaborate freely to share information, grow together, and celebrate our successes. It has been a pleasure to serve an association such as ours.

Also in closing—let me give a fond farewell to colleagues Allan Adams and Eric McMillan, who have left the Board; a welcome to Robert Sette as a new director; my thanks to Al Bork, who has chaired the Dictionary Review Committee for many years, and a welcome to Boris Silversteyn who now takes up this charge; my special thanks to Karen Brovey for her thoughtful work as chair of the Ethics Committee; my gratitude to Manouche Ragsdale for her public outreach and pro bono work on behalf of ATA as chair of the Public Relations Committee; a farewell to outgoing division administrators, with special thanks to Diane Teichman, who got the Interpreters Division “up and running,” and thanks to those division officers continuing to serve; my thanks to Christian Degueldre, who continues as chair of the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee; to Bruce Downing for representation on the ASTM Language Interpreting Standards Project; to Rosalie Wells for the ASTM Translation project, and Christophe Rethore for representing us on the Joint National Committee for Languages; thanks to all chapter and affiliate officers, and to Tony Roder, who has done so much for regional groups and continues to surprise us with his eloquence; thanks once again to Mooch Bacak and our fine staff; and thanks to all those many involved members whose contributions and names I have not room to list here.

It's been a grand two years, and I look forward to the years to come.

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. (Signed) Walter Bacak, Publisher and Executive Director
Passing an ATA accreditation exam elevates an associate member’s status in two ways. One, of course, is that the member is then an accredited member. And, second, by being accredited, he or she also becomes an active or corresponding member.

The process of administrative review offers other routes to active or corresponding member status. However, associate members who become active or corresponding members through administrative review are not accredited.

Associate members have the right to attend ATA membership meetings and conferences at special membership rates, and to receive its regular publications free of charge (unless extra fees are paid for international postage).

In addition to those rights, active members have the right to vote, hold association office, and serve on the ATA Board of Directors and all association committees.

Corresponding members meet all qualification for active membership except U.S. citizenship or permanent residence. They have all the rights and privileges of active members, except the right to hold association office and serve on the Board of Directors or standing committees.

In a recent informal survey of some new active and corresponding members who followed alternate routes to those membership categories, most said they wanted to become active or corresponding members so that they could vote in ATA elections and referenda.

For associate members who want to upgrade their membership status, there are a number of reasons why they may choose an alternate route to reach that goal.

Some decide to follow this course because accreditation is not available in their language pair(s). There are those who hold accreditation or certification from other recognized organizations. Some have earned an academic degree or certificate in translation or interpretation, while others with substantial experience who are well established do not feel the need to seek accreditation as a marketing tool.

The ATA Board of Directors revised the criteria for the administrative review process in 1999. In the first two years after the new criteria were implemented, of the 130 applications submitted for active or corresponding membership, 129 were approved.

The criteria are consistent with the ATA Bylaws requirement that voting members be “professionally engaged in translating, interpreting, or closely related work.”

The active membership review process is simple. After choosing the appropriate criterion, an interested associate member completes an application form obtained from ATA Headquarters and submits it, along with supporting documentation according to the selected criterion, and the $50 fee to ATA Headquarters. In its 1999 revision of the administrative review criteria and process, the ATA Board delegated the initial review of applications and supporting documentation to ATA Headquarters staff. If an application package does not clearly satisfy the criterion, Headquarters will refer it to the Active Membership Review Committee for evaluation and recommendation.

…most new active and corresponding members who followed alternate routes to those membership categories said they wanted to become active or corresponding members so that they could vote in ATA elections and referenda…

Although the alternate routes to active and corresponding membership do not confer accreditation, they do offer credible options for associate members to look forward to fuller participation in association affairs.

In fact, the ATA Board invites all eligible members to become active and corresponding members and encourages them to take an active role in advancing the work of our profession through volunteer service to the association.

These options have special significance for ATA chapters facing a limited pool of active members from which to recruit candidates for leadership positions. In addition to accreditation, the alternate routes listed below offer a range of opportunities to expand the base of active and corresponding membership, and in turn increase participation in association affairs at both the local and national levels.

Alternate routes to active or corresponding membership include:

Continued on p. 14
The ABCs of Active and Corresponding Membership

1. Translators and interpreters currently accredited or certified by a member association of the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs are required to provide proof of such accreditation or certification.

2. Translators are required to provide proof of a degree or certificate in translation (acceptable programs to be determined by the Training Committee) and one letter of reference from a client or supervisor.

3. Interpreters are required to provide proof of a degree or certificate in interpretation (acceptable programs to be determined by the Training Committee) and one letter of reference from a client or supervisor.

4. Translators or interpreters are required to provide evidence of at least three years of work as a translator or interpreter, which may include either of the following:
   a. Three letters of reference from clients or supervisors; or
   b. Copies of records of business activity such as Schedule C, corporate tax returns, 1099s, invoices, or work orders.

5. Persons professionally engaged in work closely related to translation and/or interpretation are required to provide evidence of at least three years of work in a closely related field, which may include either of the following:
   a. Teaching appointment letters; or
   b. Terminology/lexicography research studies.

The Training Committee is authorized to establish a list of programs or examinations, the successful completion of which is sufficient to achieve active or corresponding membership.

Approved March 19, 1999

Choice Translating & Interpreting, Inc.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: TRANSLATION SERVICES COORDINATOR

Choice Translating & Interpreting, Inc. is hiring a full time Translation Services Coordinator in Charlotte, North Carolina. Choice Translating & Interpreting (CTi) is a translating and interpreting agency founded in 1995 to serve the medical, legal, manufacturing, marketing and education industries, as well as government and social services. CTi provides service in all languages.

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INFORMATION SESSION:
Translation Studies, Thurs., 6-8 p.m., Jan. 3
Court Interpreting, Thurs., 6-8 p.m., Jan. 10
48 Cooper Square, 2nd Floor
For this traveler, the *gigante adormecido*, or “sleeping giant” as some have described Brazil, has not only awakened but is also carefully taking stock of its extraordinary potential. I recently had the opportunity to present a paper entitled “Historiography of Literary Translation: Truths, Approximations, and Speculations” at The 2nd Brazilian International Translation Forum—Translating the New Millennium: Corpora, Cognition, and Culture. Organized under the auspices of ABRAPT (Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Tradução) and FALE (Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais), this conference took place in the bustling city of Belo Horizonte (a city that extols its historical preservation of 18th-century colonial architecture as “some of the finest examples in all of Latin America”) about 400 kilometers northwest of Rio. What a pleasant and inspiring experience!

As per the advisory commission’s original design, corpora, cognition, and culture (all three conceived as integral components of translatory activity in the new millennium) were explored over a period of four days by an international contingent of translators, scholars, professors, and students. With Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English serving as the official languages, participants came from virtually every corner of the globe: from Chile to Canada, Scotland to Slovakia, Finland to Australia, China to Denmark, and Japan to South Africa.

Though the format (workshops, mini-courses, lectures, paper presentations, and roundtables) was more or less what we have come to anticipate at such large gatherings, it was intelligently arranged such that very few conflicts arose within the various subdivisions (Interpretation in the Workplace; Cognitive Approaches to Translation; Historiography; Post-Structural Approaches to Translation; Translation in the Media: TV, Cinema, and the Theater; Corpora Research; Terminology; and last but not least, Literary Translation). Something I particularly appreciated was that in contrast to the “business paradigm” that inevitably takes over when this type of symposium is held in a large hotel or conference center, the entire affair was conducted in the classrooms and lecture halls of a Federal University in an environment conducive to learning. In brief, the surroundings encouraged a healthy and open exchange of ideas. I especially enjoyed hearing the formal presentations of such luminaries as Robert de Beau-grande, Tony Berber, Annie Brisset, Brano Hochel, Guy de Hollanda, João Vicente de Paulo Júnior, Mário Laranjeira, John Milton, Adriana Pagano, Corinne Scheiner, Joy Sisley, Maria Tymoczko, and Else Vieira, to mention only a few. However, I relished even more the opportunity to share things with them “off the cuff” as we walked the corridors together to the next session or *mesa-redonda*. And if by chance any of us lost our way or our Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English were not quite what they should have been, there was an army of bright, multilingual student volunteers ready, willing, and able to put us back on the Yellow Brick Road.

This conference is scheduled to take place every two years (the first was held at the Universidade de São Paulo in 1999), with official city and venues to be determined on a rotating basis. Regardless of where you are in your career—whether just beginning, midway, or a distinguished veteran—I would highly recommend attending this conference when it rolls around again, if for no other reason than to experience the incredible diversity of the contributors and the perspectives they bring to bear...
The Changing Nature of the Profession

The translation profession is changing quickly, and translators who do not keep up with the evolution in the field are going to be left behind. Seven years ago, when I assumed the directorship of the Translation Center (founded in 1981) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I inherited a pool of approximately 200 translators officially affiliated with the Center. None of them work for the Center now. I gave most of them an opportunity—in fact, coming from Europe, at the time I had no other resources—but for one reason or another, they all eliminated themselves from our pool. Some had inadequate linguistic skills, but others were professors or language instructors at the university. Of these, many had other priorities. Translation was only a secondary interest, and they would always negotiate for extended deadlines. Others turned in first drafts, either not proofreading their work or, if they did, only giving it a superficial read-through. Still others produced work that was inconsistent; they would turn in a perfect translation one time, but the next time in something they had obviously done at the last minute.

However, the biggest problem was their lack of computer skills. For professors who are older, this is perhaps understandable, but for young people trying to enter the profession, literacy in the new translation technology is a must.

Translation agencies do not have the time or the cash margin to retype, format, proof, and print the translator’s work. Time is money. See Table 1 for a graph of some of the changes in the translation profession.

...for young people trying to enter the profession, literacy in the new translation technology is a must...

It is important to keep up with the changes in the profession. As the means of production change, so does

Continued on p. 18

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Old</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Bilingual linguistic competence.</td>
<td>Bilingual linguistic competence; awareness of cultural nuances and local variations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of subject</td>
<td>General subject knowledge preferred.</td>
<td>Specialized bicultural subject knowledge required; advanced degree in area preferred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Some academic background; some general translation experience.</td>
<td>Advanced degree in modern languages; training in translation desired; extensive experience in subject matter; awareness of targeted audience; certification if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>Agency or press did copyediting, proofing, and formatting.</td>
<td>Translator delivers fully edited and proofed document to agency or press; spell check and grammar check necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Typed copy (computer or typewriter) required.</td>
<td>Computer word processing mandatory; advanced desktop publishing skills, including Internet skills, necessary; terminology databases increasingly valuable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Hard copy via U.S. mail or personal visit; fax.</td>
<td>Hard copy and disk via personal visit; mail; FedEx; fax; and, most importantly, sending and receiving e-mail attachments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the final product. How we process texts has an impact on what gets said. For example, communication is becoming increasingly visible, with charts, graphics, new and creative fonts, and colors, all of which influence the message. The technology also impacts the nature of the medium. For example, for many years in Spanish, computers could not put accents on capital letters. Now, because the technology has changed, it is possible to do so, and most Spanish style sheets require accents on capitals.

In addition, what in the past might have been communicated via a personal visit or business letter now might be communicated in an e-mail. A translator whose business is cross-cultural communication needs to be versed on the different means of communication that are available in any given culture. If a translator hasn’t already, he or she will soon be asked to translate a Web page, a computer software program, or do a video voice-over. The amount of business correspondence—letters, faxes, brochures, and business cards—the field translates is diminishing. The amount of Web pages, e-mail correspondence, and electronic attachments translation companies translate is on the rise.

Technology Tools

While translators need not become computer nerds, some of the fundamentals needed include:

Multilingual word processing. The nature of word processing is changing as we speak. Translators need to be aware of the various ways to enter accents and diacritical marks, to switch from language to language, and to be able to word process accurately in the most needed languages in the culture into which they are translating. While the optimal solution is still not there, many fonts are still incompatible with each other. Certain basics are important, including basic Word commands—for PC: CONT + ‘E = ê; for Mac users: OPT e = ê; ASCII codes (ALT 130 = ê), the international character map (Start - Programs - Accessories - System Tools - Character Map); and to change the keyboard (Start – Settings - Control Panel - Keyboard - Add). If one system won’t provide the accent or mark desired, try another one. What might work in a Word document might not work in an e-mail message. For a good site to learn more about multilingual word processing, see www.umass.edu/langctr/keyboardevery.html at the Language Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The newest advance in multilingual word processing is offered by Office 2000 (www.microsoft.com/office/), which offers universal fonts to solve many of the international incompatibility issues involving word processing fonts. For example, the font Ariel Unicode MS covers every character in the standard Unicode Version 2.1. It contains all European characters, including Russian, Greek, Turkish, plus fonts for Japanese, Korean, and Traditional and Simplified Chinese. Most language systems, including the Asian language programs, also work in English systems, including earlier versions of Windows. Finally, Office 2000 supports bidirectional languages such as Arabic, Hebrew, and Farsi. It also has a feature called automatic encoding, which means it can detect the code of a particular document. This is especially helpful, for example, if you get a Chinese file or download a Chinese Internet site and you do not know how the page was written. By purchasing a separate disk called Microsoft Office 2000 Proofing Tools, you get spell and grammar checkers in 37 languages—well worth the $79 investment. In sum, while there are still glitches (we have had trouble with vowels in Hebrew, for example), Microsoft has finally entered the international word processing market, including translation, and has come up with a system that allows one program to cover nearly all possible needs. If you or your company are working in a multilingual environment, especially with lesser-known languages, this tool will connect you to the major clients.

Desktop publishing. Desktop publishing is not that hard and is fun. Most of the programs are much the same and fairly easy to learn. Word is good, Microsoft Publisher slightly better, and PageMaker one more notch up. Quark Express is still commonly used, especially on the Mac. The most important features to learn are, first, to avoid the space key. Instead, set tabs or use columns, or better yet, learn how to use the table feature. Tables allow you to arrange text on the page in a creative fashion (for example, you can hide the lines between the table sections if you want, and can choose center, left, or right justification.
within the columns and rows). Tables also translate well when moving to a Web page environment, where columns and tabs no longer work. Underlining is now out, for it is generally reserved for e-mail and Web addresses. Since many companies now post ads, newsletters, rate sheets, and brochures on the Web as well as in hard copy, it is important to write using features that will translate easily across platforms. As the word count in translations from English to Spanish normally expands between 10% and 20%, it is important to know how to keep facing-page features with a longer text, such as knowing your way around margins, fonts size, and spacing.

**Internet codes.** Translators do not need to know everything about html codes, but they do need to know enough to be aware of what not to translate. Until the Web page editors get better, translators will still occasionally have to go into an html document and read the text, deciphering what is part of the formatting language and what is the text to be translated. (To take a look, open any Website, go to the “File” menu, and click on “Edit with Netscape Composer.” When the document comes up, go to the “View” menu and click on “Page Source.”) I use a program called Claris Homepage (no longer available) to author Web pages, but Netscape Composer is fine. New versions of Word allow you to save Word documents as html files, but they often add a lot of garbage commands to a file, and I find many webmasters do not like it much. The Web page editors will get better and easier in the near future. My students seem to prefer Dreamweaver (www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/) by Macromedia or FrontPage (www.microsoft.com/frontpage/) by Microsoft.

You will also need to learn how to download files from the Internet, open them with editors, translate, and post them back to either the client’s site or your own site. I recommend using the same editor the client used, or going into the source html code directly and translating the text from there. Finally, you will also need to know the basic html codes for diacritical marks (&eacute; = é). The advantage of these codes for “special” characters is that they are universal; all html programs recognize them worldwide.

**Communication.** The fastest and cheapest way to communicate with a translation agency or a client is through e-mail, so open an account and learn how to send material as file attachments. Be sure to join a server that can give you a large enough mailbox for large file attachments. While words themselves do not take up much space, graphics and pictures do, and clients will want to send you the whole document so you can see the layout as well as text. I also encourage translators working in lesser-known languages and translation agencies working in multilingual texts to learn how to use Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Acrobat Reader (www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/main.html). If you want to send a file via an e-mail attachment and the client does not have the font or language you are translating into, Adobe can pdf the file and embed the font so that the person on the other end can read the text. Adobe Acrobat Reader is free and can be downloaded from Adobe’s home page, so your client won’t have to spend any money to receive your file.

**Dictionaries.** There are hundreds of computer tools for translators. The most important tools are the dictionaries and online databases, which are getting better every day. Yahoo! has a good reference page on dictionaries (http://dir.yahoo.com/Reference/Dictionaries). Another good source is a company called Language Automation (www.rahul.net/lai/glossaries.html). I work in German and like the German site at the University of Paderborn (www-math.uni-paderborn.de/dictionaries/Dictionaries.html), which also gives links to other dictionaries in other language combinations other than straight English. If you want to help author a dictionary, try helping out the International Dictionary Project (www.june29.com/IDP). This site is updating its lexicons even as I write. More specialized dictionaries are also being generated. For computer buffs, try CiberLéxico Comparativo (www.telefonica.es/fat/lexa.html).

**Machine translation.** We at the Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst do not really like machine translation. Even the best ones are only 75% accurate, which means that there is a mistake every four words. Type in a sentence such as

*Continued on p. 20*
“Mary had a little lamb.” The computer doesn’t know if Mary is eating, owning, giving birth, or having sex. That is why we have people translating who have read children’s stories and know the cultural context. Machine translation is useful for what we call “gisting,” or just trying to understand the basic facts of any document. If you want to know what a car looks like, its dimensions, color, or the size of the engine, you can go to a machine translator and find out some pretty good information. If you want to buy the car and need to sign a contract, then get a human. If you want to try machine translation, go to Altavista (http://babelfish.altavista.com/). For a list of URLs for companies providing machine translations into different languages, see Babel Fish (www.babelfish.com/Languages/English/EnglishMachine.shtml).

Instead of machine translation, I can recommend programs that catalogue all the translations of a particular item in a variety of fields. I like the site EuroDicAutom (http://eurodic.ip.lu/cgi-bin/edicbin/EuroDicWWW.pl), which is the location of the European Union’s database of all documents that have been translated. There you can type in a word in a context of a given field—law, business, finance, etc.—and see how the term has been translated by the EU’s translators. You can also call up a number of examples, so you can see how different translators handled the same term. You may search the database in any combination of the EU’s 11 official languages. The program gives you the translation plus the cultural context, and has become a very valuable resource for translators worldwide.

Discussion groups. Translators need not feel so isolated anymore. It is true that you will spend many hours in front of the terminal, but I encourage everyone to join a discussion group. If you are looking for a word or phrase and cannot find it in a dictionary, you can send out a query to the discussion group and get dozens of answers within a few short hours. For example, how do you say, “Her boyfriend pushed the stroller down the sidewalk” in Spanish? You can also eavesdrop on other such language queries, many of which are fascinating. Try FLEFO (Compuserve’s foreign language education forum—you have to join Compuserve to receive it. Enter FLEFO in the keyword box and you are on your way!) or lantra-l (to subscribe, send the line SUB LANTRA-L (your name) in the body of an e-mail message to listserv@seagate.sunet.se).

Online journals. It is also important and fun to keep up with changing technologies. The most useful one I have found is Multilingual Communications and Computing (www.multilingual.com). John Benjamins has a new journal out called Language International (www.language-international.com). Other journals include the ATA Chronicle, Language Today, Lisa Newsletter, Target, and The Translator. A newsletter called TRANSST has a pretty good summary of upcoming conference activities (http://spinoza.tau.ac.il/~toury/transst/).

Conclusion: Get Networked

While many translators resist the changes in the field, others have welcomed them. In the new global order translation is on the rise, with opportunities in the business, finance, computer, information technology, music, television, film, medical, and legal fields. Many of the texts involve vocabularies that translators can now access easily because of the technologies available in their own fields. Prices are coming down for the computer tools for translators so that freelancers and independent translators can now afford them. Fonts and word processing programs are being written so that many of the world’s languages, hitherto not available in computer form, are now accessible. This process increasingly empowers minority groups, allowing them to enter the world’s communication channels and markets.

Just as Walter Benjamin said regarding “the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction,” I would also argue, in regards to “the work of translation in the age of computer reproduction,” that as the means of production change, so does the nature of the object being reproduced. In many cases, the medium is the message. Translators are increasingly being called upon to advise clients on the cultural norms of a given field in a given country and/or on the media available to better reach the intended market, and on how to adapt documents accordingly.

To conclude, I urge translators to get connected and to build their own network of both people and technology that
can support translators in their profession. Some tips for practicing translators include:

- Build your repertoire of specialized knowledge and terminology. Subscribe to online newsletters and discussion groups in your area of expertise. Develop a network of “experts” to consult regarding terminology: doctors, nurses, technicians, interpreters, and other translators.

- Check out local or university libraries for reference books and resources. Bookmark Internet dictionaries and terminology lists for quick consultation. Compile your own word lists for future reference and build your personal reference library.

- Keep updating your computer skills. Take courses in desktop publishing and multilingual word processing. Find a computer lab at a university or an Internet cafe where you can word process or surf and ask questions of others at nearby stations.

- Find a “partner”: someone who will check your work if you check theirs, someone you can call up at midnight for help with a term, and someone who you can recommend to a translation agency if you are indisposed.

- Develop your network of human resources: cultural groups in both the target and source languages, information resources for computer questions, fellow translators, contacts at translation agencies for queries, linguistics consultants who can help with proofreading and editing, and specialists in your fields of expertise.

Translation, which once was a lonely job, underpaid and undervalued, is increasingly becoming a fast-moving, exciting, and empowering field. Specialists in a variety of fields, including cultural studies, information technology, communication, linguistics, project management, and business administration, are increasing asking for translation services. Translators are also more involved in the final production of texts, rather than leaving the final decisions up to the in-house executives. It is time to get networked and join the fun.

References
A very useful handbook for practicing translators used at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is Geoffrey Samuelsson-Brown’s Practical Guide for Translators, 3rd rev. edition (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998).
Common Words in Technical Language: Hot

By Roberto Crivello (Translated by Jonathan Hine)

(This article originally appeared in Italian in the January 2001 issue of Tradurre, the newsletter of ATA’s Italian Language Division, with the title “Parole comuni nel linguaggio tecnico: hot.”)

Not long ago, this short appeal for help appeared in a translator’s listserv: “...I have trouble with three terms. The context: The hot-shift PTO turns OFF when the System ON/OFF selector is OFF (WT transmissions). Units with a front or rear live-drive PTO or an auxiliary engine have a ‘shut off’ solenoid on the Binlifter pump to prevent oil flow when the System ON/OFF selector is OFF.”

I would like to focus on the term hot-shift PTO. It would not be possible or useful to give it an exact and unequivocal translation, given the insufficient information in the e-mail. Instead, I would like to use this term to step, if only partially, through a mental process for resolving problems in technical translation.

There is at least enough context to know that the subject is a power take-off (PTO). These devices, mounted on the tractor’s driveline, transmit power from the engine to outside loads (attachments or other machines). The PTO does this through removable drive shafts with grooved couplings. The immediate translation of shift in the mechanical field might be innesto o cambio di marcia, but how does one translate the common word hot? One could use the first translation, caldo, as a starting point.

In English, semantic redefinitions of common words (in this case hot) occur often. However, one can never be sure if an analogous redefinition in Italian would be acceptable, since that language offers very different solutions, even in the same scientific field.

For example, take a field familiar to many technical translators: information technology. In some cases, the foreign words are carried whole into Italian (mouse, drive, handle, scanner, etc.), while in others an English term is Italianized (typically with a suffix, as in masterizzatore for CD writer). This last example leaps past the obvious scrittore per CD, whose analog, lettore per CD, is correct for CD reader. In other cases, the Italian language shows remarkable creativity, as when it describes the HTML writer who prepares Web documents as an accattemmelista.

Now, let us return to hot and the first equivalent that comes to mind, caldo. In general, hot is used to define a high-temperature process, for example, hot-stamping, hot-rolling (stampaggio, laminazione a caldo). There are other meanings that may not lead immediately to the idea of high temperature, but that nonetheless are understandably used to mean “working.” For example, the electrical term hot outlet is a presa sotto tensione. An acceptable use of caldo as a calque occurs in the expression hot swappable (sostituibile a caldo), which in electronics means to replace a component without turning off the system (e.g., the battery in a UPS, or uninterruptible power supply, the gruppo di continuità).

Could we use an analogy from that and write innestabile a caldo for our hot-shift PTO? A search of English-language Web sites belonging to manufacturers of industrial machines and devices reveals that hot-shift PTO can have several meanings relating to innesto, depending on the manufacturer or the purchasers (looking at the category headings). Some of these meanings can be quite close. Among the analogous Italian-language sites, however, one finds only cases in which caldo is used to mean high temperature, as described above. When a motor vehicle is operating, one speaks of caldo only when referring to the engine coolant, but not the transmission components such as the gears, clutches, drives, and so forth (the exception being when these components malfunction).

The solution seems to lie in another meaning of hot, namely diretto. We find this in modern terms like hot links (also from information technology). Hot links is often transferred from the English today, but may still be translated as collegamenti diretti based on its meaning. It also harks back to the days before computers, as does hot line (linea diretta). The common
adjective direttto, meaning “without intermediate steps,” becomes part of the precise technical meaning of presa diretta: “condizione del cambio di velocità in cui il moto passa diretamente dall’albero d’entrata a quello delle ruote.”12

This is where we can finally hook up with our starting point—namely, with the take-off of power and the way it can be connected and disconnected from the power of the engine. Most often a power take-off will use a clutch with a manual gear shifter, but other, more sophisticated designs are possible that allow for a smoother, or even an automatic, engagement. At this point, we still need to read the whole document carefully to be sure of an acceptable translation. In fact, there are other possibilities for hot-shift, each depending on context: a innesto diretto, as well as che non richiede frizione, a innesto progressivo, a inserimento automatico, to name a few.

This is a good point at which to reflect on one of the skills required of the technical translator: finding balance between exasperating specialization and draining one’s intellectual energy across several subjects. A translator who chooses to specialize in medicine without some basic understanding of electronics and mechanics risks inadvertently missing those aspects when translating medical equipment manuals (for example, the detection systems for electrical signals or the operating mechanisms of tomography equipment).

Translators who work mainly in information technology and know the glossaries and screens of operating systems in depth, may not know how a modem or a router works, but they should recognize “training” as not being addestramento (to make proficient by instruction and practice). Their experience would warn them that English uses common words in a technical context; something Italian does not do so often. An accurate amount of research should lead them to trasmissione della sequenza di sincronizzazione (the connection process that occurs during the initial handshake).

Since knowing everything is impossible, the technical translator must at least learn the basics in those fields that might likely intersect with the one in which he or she is specializing. This way, the translator can gradually develop the mental connections needed among meanings, expressions, and terms to evaluate the suitability of any analogies uncovered.

Notes
1. To my surprise, this neologism does not appear in many modern Italian dictionaries, including Grande dizionario italiano dell’uso (by Tullio de Mauro), Zingarelli 2000, Dizionario Italiano Sabatini Coletti, and Devoto-Oli 2000, though the word has been around since at least 1995.

2. Devoto-Oli 2000. Il dizionario della lingua italiana. Florence: Le Monnier, p. 1602 (condition of the transmission in which the motion passes directly from the input drive shaft to the output drive shaft for the wheels.)
Is Sports Translation Technical?
An Italian Translator’s Perspective

By Floriana Bivona-Lockner (Edited by Michèle Hansen)

(Note: While this article was originally written in Italian by an Italian, it will be of interest to all those who are currently, or who are thinking of, translating sports terminology.)

“When I talk to a potential customer and mention that one of my fields of specialization is sports, I often hear the surprise in their voice. “I thought you were a ‘technical’ translator!”

…When I talk to a potential customer and mention that one of my fields of specialization is sports, I often hear the surprise in their voice. “I thought you were a ‘technical’ translator!”

Sound familiar? Been there? Are you also a technical translator who does not know a thing about aerodynamics, nuclear physics, or construction science? According to my trustworthy Oxford English Dictionary, “technical,” when referring to a person, means: “Skilled in or practically conversant with some particular art or subject.” (Note how “art” comes before “subject.”) What does it really mean, then, to be a technical translator? I think it means translating about the practical side of a subject. Of ANY subject!

When I talk to a potential customer and mention that one of my fields of specialization is sports, I often hear the surprise in their voice (or in their e-mail!). “I thought you were a ‘technical’ translator!” Well, I am. Many people forget that sports have a technical side, just as scientific subjects have nontechnical sides. A translator can encounter fairly simple texts that contain technical elements, but might also have to face a baseball article containing a technical description that has nothing whatsoever to do with the game of baseball per se. For example, the text on the packaging of a pair of running shoes may extol the quality of the shoes’ construction techniques and materials, but say nothing of the hundred-meter dash in which they will be used. Such a piece is technical—in the construction physics and material science sense, not the sports sense.

Then there are the technical issues that underlie sports. Yes, like all other subjects, sports have many levels. You can kick a soccer ball around without knowing the rules or worrying about them. You can also read the playbook, understand angles and trajectories, study strategies and schemes, and figure out the timing and physics of hitting a header past the goalie.

What qualifications are necessary to translate in this field? As in other specialized fields, direct experience is helpful. My less-than-illustrious and long-gone sports career has covered many disciplines. I have been, among other things, an awful tennis player, a passable middle-distance runner, a foul-prone soccer jock, and a mediocre backstroker. But physical prowess or success is not the key. After all, a very bad heart specialist can make a very good medical translator. What matters is that I was brought, at a young age, into full contact with the terminology and expressions of sports (not to mention the mindset of fans, athletes, and coaches).

Like personal experience, a passion for sports is helpful, but even more important is the will and ability to appreciate both the technical and nontechnical aspects of the topic at hand. When I translate, I tap all the knowledge I have amassed from endless hours spent listening to soccer commentaries, rooting at diving contests, serving as a line judge on the tennis court, and, later on, asking my husband questions about baseball, football, and other sports I did not grow up with (living with someone who loves sports is a great help).

Another skill a translator needs is sensitivity or attention to how language changes (this is something that becomes second nature to most translators and tends to irritate everyone else around them!). If it is true that computer science leads the way as far as neologisms, sports don’t lag far behind: just think of “goose-eggs,” “immaculate reception,” or the “wave.” While watching the TV coverage of the last Olympics from the Sydney Aquatic Center, I heard a commentator referring to Italian champ Massimiliano Rosolino as “an outstanding iemmer.” At first I was shocked, but than I recovered and spelled it out: “individual medley => I.M. => I.M.er” (some of you will find the equivalent neologism I found on the Internet of interest: “mistista”).
Like all technical translators, when I work on sports documents I use a veritable arsenal of reference materials, both on paper and in electronic form. Here is a short list of essential tools.

I believe a good visual dictionary is an absolute must. I prefer the Zanichelli (English-Italian). Its sports section is alphabetized by discipline and contains clear illustrations and exhaustive captions. It is now also published on CD-ROM (although I have heard from reliable sources that the paper version is still the best). The Oxford-Duden is not as good. Sports are organized in groups (winter sports, ball sports, etc.) and the illustrations are not as user-friendly.

To my knowledge, until recently there existed no comprehensive English-Italian sports dictionary. Zanichelli has recently filled this gap with its Dizionario dello sport by Giuseppe Ragazzini. Though not perfect and far from exhaustive, the volume is a valuable tool, particularly for idioms and phrases.

Other books I believe will be useful to those working between English and Italian are Rules of the Game, with its Italian counterpart Enciclopedia illustrata di tutti gli sport, and The Rule Book, with its Italian counterpart Le regole di tutti gli sport. The English originals are by the Diagram Group, St. Martin’s Press. These tomes cover, in great detail, rules, equipment, uniforms, fouls, and penalties for more than 400 sports, with intelligible illustrations, indices, and even an appendix listing the addresses of the Italian, and in some cases international, federations. Of course, most federations today have Websites that will further help with research.

These books, when they are not open on my desk, do not take up shelf space in my office. They “veg” on a shelf underneath the TV set, so I can easily reach them while watching matches and tournaments. I refer to them to better understand rules and plays, and sometimes I annotate them (in pencil, of course!) with terms and expressions I don’t find.

For those who need even more detailed information, many publishers offer sports series, where each volume is dedicated to a single discipline. I own, among others, Corso di snowboard and Il tiro con l’arco, part of a series published by De Vecchi, and Football americano, from the Sport Flash series published by Edizioni Mediterranee. If you decide to invest in a paper volume, be sure to choose a well-illustrated one.

Specialized sports magazines, such as Tennis Match Magazine or Golf, allow sports translators to read and assimilate terminology and style just like trade magazines in other disciplines, and use the “terms du jour” to help us keep up-to-date.

Obviously, in a fast-changing field like sports, the Internet is one of the most important research tools. The following list is just a sample of the glossaries and documents available in electronic form.

www.blugrafica.net/link/sport.htm Italian page of links grouped by sport

www.firstbasesports.com/glossaries/scrgl.htm Soccer, ice hockey, football, and basketball glossaries (English only)

http://crete.argyro.net/lexique/liste.cfm Olympic sports terminology (English and French for the summer games; English, French, and Japanese for the winter games)

http://home.fiscalnet.de/ockier/climbing_dict.html Climber’s terminology (English only)

http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Loge/6183/glos.htm Archery glossary (Italian and English)

http://space.tin.it/sport/loturi/glossario.html Archery terminology (Italian only)

http://staff.nt2.it/michele/ Technical dictionary of car racing (Italian only)
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http://web2.belmont.edu/harpeth/glossary.htm
Bicycle terminology (English only)

www.sheldonbrown.com/glossary.html
Bicycle glossary (English only)

http://www.xs4all.nl/~pvroekel/bikevoca.htm
Bicycle glossary (English only)

http://web.tiscalinet.it/archiwords/mtb/glossario_al.htm
Bicycle glossary (Italian only)

http://preparazionealciclismo.supereva.it/indexit.html
Bicycle glossary (Italian only)

www.eskimo.com/~manuel/diz.htm
Mountain bike dictionary (English-Italian)

http://world.std.com/~jimf/biking/slang.html
Mountain bike slang dictionary (English only)

www.geocities.com/Colosseum/1551/glossary.htm
Bowling glossary (still in preparation at this time)

www.icubed.com/users/allereb/dict.html
Bowling dictionary (English only)

www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Gorge/6297/vocab.html
Canoe glossary (Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, and Catalan)

http://lpcb.net/glossary.html
Glossary of canoe and other oar sports glossary (English only)

http://rowingcanada.org/rowing/glossary/index.html
Rowing dictionary (English only)

www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/2652/cavallidiz1.html
Horseback riding dictionary (Italian only)

www.microtec.net/bouletjc/
Horseback riding dictionary (French, English, German, and Spanish)

www.horseshoes.com/glossary/glossary.htm
Farrier and hoofcare dictionary (English only)

www.gymnica.it/termini.htm
Fitness glossary (Italian only)

www.canalesport.com/fitness/glossario/glos_01.html
Fitness glossary (Italian only)

www.benvenutisport.it/pagine/15_manifestazioni/glossario_della_palestra.htm
Fitness and gym terminology (Italian only)

www.football.com/dictionary/index.shtml
Football glossary (English only)

www.sunrise.it/dnb/grifoni/vocabolario.htm
Football dictionary (Italian explanation of the American terminology)

http://milanosiamonoi.interfree.it/varie/glossario.htm
Ice hockey glossary (Italian only)

http://web.tiscalinet.it/mgironi/
Karate glossary (Italian explanation of the Japanese terminology)

www.123point.net/001topzine/societa/artsoc21.htm
Karate glossary (Italian explanation of the Japanese terminology)

www.planetweb.it/karateweb/glossario/index.html
Karate glossary (Italian explanation of the Japanese terminology)

Kayaking glossary (English only)

www.kendo.it/kendo_glossario.html
Kendo glossary (Italian explanation of the Japanese terminology)
Synchronized swimming glossary (English only)

www.nautica.it/pescaweb/barca/barca.htm
Sport fishing page with very small glossary (Italian only)

http://basketballo.freeweb.supereva.it/glossar.htm?p
Basketball glossary (English-Italian)

www.sistemigalleggianti.com/
Waterpolo, beach waterpolo, and canoepolo equipment (Italian and English site)

www.bcwaterpolo.com/pages/deep/HOW.htm
Waterpolo page—Rules and regulations (English)

www.multivire.net/ass/pattinatori/glossario.html
Skating dictionary (Italian with English translation)

www.torino2006.it/ita/giochi/art_glossario.asp
Ice skating glossary (Italian only)

www.sit.ulaval.ca/pagespersonnelles/phf/FSDict.html#intro
Ice skating glossary dictionary (English-French)

http://space.tin.it/sport/stchiosi/
Online skating glossary (spiegazione in italiano e in inglese dei termini inglei)

www.masterweb.it/gstt/glossario.htm
Table tennis dictionary (Italian only)

www.egpb.org/glossario.html
Boxing glossary (Italian only)

www.ssciscea.com/dictionary/dictionaryA.asp
Rugby dictionary (English only)

http://web.tiscalinet.it/archiwords/sci/glossci_al.htm
Skiing glossary (Italian only)

www.sapskateboards.com/chuck/htms/skglosry.htm
Skateboarding glossary (English only)

http://xtremeskate.freeweb.supereva.it/skate_glossario.htm?p
Skateboarding glossary (Italian explanation of the English terminology)

www.snowboarding-online.com/instruction/99/448.html
Snowboarding dictionary (English only)

http://users.iol.it/acnardi/diving.html
Diving glossary (Italian and English)

www.geocities.com/Pipeline/5303/diziosurf.htm
Surfing dictionary (Italian explanation of English and Hawaiian terminology)

www.cnca.it/eduimp/lavori_mm/passarelli/film.htm
Surfing dictionary (Italian explanation of English and Hawaiian terminology)

http://taekwondo.freeweb.supereva.it/glossario.htm?p
Taekwondo glossary (Korean-Italian [with pronunciation])

www.monrosarafting.it/glossario.html
Rafting (Italian only)

www.pegacity.it/sport/vela/html/glossa.htm
Sailing glossary (Italian only)

http://village.flashnet.it/users/fn39148/Vela/Teoria/glossario.html
Sailing glossary (Italian only)

www.dimi.uniud.it/curriculum/Caschi/Stefano/windsurf/dizionario.html
Windsurf dictionary (Italian only)

The Gazzetta dello Sport Website used to include some English-Italian sports glossaries. Thanks to our colleague Jácopo Mádaro Moro, they are now avail-

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Challenges in Localization

By Alessandra Muzzi (English text edited by Anne Milano Appel)

The software and Website localization market, in spite of the recent economic slow-down, is still active and able to offer interesting opportunities to those translators possessing, or willing to acquire and develop, the required technical knowledge. This article is not intended to offer an exhaustive description of localization in all its phases and aspects. Such a task would require more space and is best tackled by some of the resources listed at the end of this article. Instead, its objective is to explain what is meant by localization and to give an idea of what challenges it presents to localizers, particularly Italian localizers.

What is localization?

When explaining the meaning of localization to newcomers, the aspect of linguistic and cultural adaptation to a local setting is often stressed. As a result, some colleagues conclude that “to localize simply means to translate,” as was stated some time ago in a mailing list for Italian translators (Langit, www.vernondata.it/langit/index.html). Actually, a certain degree of adaptation characterizes almost every field of translation, and cannot therefore be considered unique to software localization. When translating a commercial, legal, or advertising text, for instance, a professional translator is fully aware that a superficial, literal translation often makes little sense, and that concepts, formulations, or slogans must be reworked so as to fit a different social, cultural, and/or judicial setting. In the localization field, such interventions must often go beyond the purely linguistic level and involve technical aspects, but the independent translator is not usually concerned with these. What we are talking about here are issues such as date/time format, currencies, fonts, etc., which are either dealt with in-house or managed automatically by the latest versions of the most common operating systems.

The attempt to define localization merely in terms of “cultural adaptation” is perhaps influenced by the word itself and by some official definitions, like the one provided by LISA (Localisation Industry Standards Association), which states: “Localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold.” Two new ideas are introduced here: “product” and “sales.” The scope of localization is confined to commercial products, where text is part of the product itself and not merely an accessory. Thus, translating a technical document, such as a user manual for a household appliance, cannot be defined as localization. Although a publication such as a newspaper or magazine might conform to LISA’s definition, the term “localization” is currently used mainly to refer to software and Website localization, which has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other kinds of translation. This specialized field presents the translator with a set of technical issues which differ from those arising when translating other types of technical documents, such as automotive or construction texts.

What makes software translation unique is the fact that the texts to be translated do not just describe something external to them, but are an integral part of what is described: they are part of the product’s operation and integral components of it. Translator-localizers do not just have a responsibility to create a translation that is clear and readily understandable by the user-reader. They are also responsible for assuring the correct operation of the localized product...
needed to comply quickly and easily with these requirements. If mistakes are made when translating these texts or using the localization tools, the program might not compile or work properly. Since so many technical aspects have to be taken care of, specific technical skills are required of translators working in the localization field. However, very few translators will have the know-how needed to complete a localization project from start to finish. Experts in the field of programming, DTP, and computer graphics must usually participate in the project as well.

Internationalization: Making the Localizer’s Task Easier

A localization project begins the moment the software product is created. Successful localization requires proper internationalization; that is, designing the software product in such a way as to facilitate and speed up its localization. All the text to be localized must be clearly separated from the software code and made independent from it. This also implies that the code must not deconstruct semantic units within the text. The minimal unit carrying a complete meaning roughly corresponds, in any language, to what we call a “sentence.” These are the units that computer-aided translation/translation memory (CAT/TM) tools try to identify when splitting a text up into “segments.”

At times, though, a software code might operate on text below the sentence level: on single words or even morphemes. Programmers, not being linguists, are often victims of the common illusion that differences between languages are simply a matter of using different words, but that the meaning behind those words, and the way in which they are put together to make up sentences, are basically the same. You may still find small and medium-sized software companies using “creative” programming methods, which can cause considerable trouble for whoever must localize their products. For instance, a programmer might decide to build GUI messages by putting together chunks of text at runtime. You might have messages like these (this is from a real localization project—the %S stands for an unknown variable portion of text replaced at runtime):

1. File copy complete; %S %S records processed. %S.
2. %S %S Phase %S %S
3. The %S %S record has been reverted to revision %S.

In string #1, the first %S might be a number and the second %S an adjective or qualifying noun. If so, translating “Copia file completata; elaborati %S record %S. %S” might yield a reasonably clear message. Unfortunately, the QA revealed that the last %S is replaced at runtime by a whole English sentence, which was not localized because it was hard-coded.

String #2 is absolutely cryptic. You have four %S’s and only one known word. The only thing a translator can do is translate “%S %S Fase %S %S,” knowing almost for sure that this won’t work. The order of replaced text should most probably be changed in Italian, but there is no way to know how, and even if there were, there is no way to distinguish between the various %S’s.

String #3 is more understandable, but there are still problems. The two %S’s before “record” might well be part of a noun chain that would need to be inverted in Italian, but again, there is no way to know for sure, nor to operate the inversion. Actually, the whole sentence might need to be inverted like this: “È stata ripristinata la revisione %S per il record di %S di %S,” but variables would be replaced at runtime in the same order as the original English string, and the whole message would make no sense.

Issues Specific to Italian Localizers

The word order issue is particularly relevant to the Italian language (and indeed to other languages as well), since the order in which information is presented often differs from English. In Italian, we tend to convey more general meaning first and more specific information second. It is quite the opposite in English. See the following example:

Assorted sample users are shipped with the software.

The new information is provided first (assorted sample users), followed by the known context. The Italian translation would look like this:

Il software è fornito con diversi utenti di esempio.

Here, the known context is provided first, followed by the new information.

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This sentence can be correctly translated without any problems, but sometimes incorrect text layout and segmentation, or the presence of placeholders (as in the example previously illustrated), can be a hindrance to a proper rendering in the target language.

Another linguistic issue that is actually common to most European languages is that of text length. Translating from English to Italian carries with it the phenomenon of text expansion, which can be a problem in software interfaces due to the limited space available for strings. Internationalization rules prescribe that adequate extra space be allowed by GUI designers to accommodate for text expansion, but these rules are not always adhered to, and even when they are, the space provided might be insufficient in any case. Localizers must learn the skill of concision—omit articles and prepositions, use short words, omit unnecessary words, and use abbreviations only as a last resort.

Actually, English sentences sometimes present a certain degree of redundancy that can be safely omitted in the Italian translation. Take this example from Microsoft:

Do you want to save the changes you made to “Test document.doc”?
Salvare le modifiche a “Documento di prova.doc”?

Still, in the linguistic field, there is the issue of loanwords. Among FIGS (French, Italian, German, Spanish) languages, this issue has particular relevance for Italian. The French have adopted a policy of translating foreign words, and the Spanish are on much the same wavelength. German adopts many English words in the software field, but since the two languages share the same roots, German managers to integrate English loanwords in its phonetic, lexical, and syntactical structures quite smoothly. The situation is quite different for Italian. There is no set policy for translating foreign words, and these words, being so different phonetically and morphologically from Italian words, may have a serious impact on the very nature of the language. Because of the lack of a central authority on language, comparable to the Académie Française, engineers, technical journalists, writers, and translators have no clear-cut indication about how to translate a new foreign technical term. Often they will conclude that “no translation exists,” and use the foreign term. One Web search technique often used by translators contributes to the adoption of the foreign term: translators will search for the foreign term on Italian Web pages. If they find any occurrences, they will conclude that the foreign term is used in Italian and use it themselves. All this in spite of the fact that a search for an Italian translation of the term might also yield results—if they only knew what to search for.

A fourth minor linguistic issue, which is nonetheless relevant for the Italian language, is that of capitalization. In Italian schools we are taught that only proper names and words at the beginning of a sentence should be capitalized. In the English language, capitalization is more widespread than in Italian: there are the well-known examples of weekdays and months, which are capitalized in English but not in Italian. This rule is usually taught at the very beginning of English courses in Italy, and therefore few translators would ever fall into such a trap. But there are other insidious traps: words in titles, for instance, which are all capitalized in English, but which should not be in Italian. Then there are the words for appliances, software components, names of interface items, and so forth. English usage acts as a magnetic force on the Italian language, and old certainties about capitalization are being eroded. Even reference materials, which are usually considered the localizers’ Bible, such as the Microsoft glossaries, are not always consistent on this issue. In the Italian glossaries, for instance, you will find “accesso remoto,” “Accesso remoto,” and “Accesso Remoto.”

Italian localizers also have to face issues relating to other aspects of their profession, such as the localization market. Unfortunately, Italy seems to be among the European countries with the lowest translation rates, and good Italian translators and localizers find it hard to have their professionalism acknowledged by equitable remuneration. For Italian freelance translators, the situation is worsened by the strong presence of an intermediation layer. For all localizers, one urgent issue that needs clarifying, in my view, is that of CAT discounts, where complete anarchy reigns, mainly favoring large software houses and large localization companies.
These are complex issues which cannot be thoroughly examined here. I will just express my view that, despite the ever-increasing number of Italian localizers, the market and the profession would still benefit from the injection of quality-conscious professionals. For those colleagues who are interested in delving further into the topic of localization, I suggest the following links:

**Transref** ([www.transref.org/](http://www.transref.org/))
Links to the Websites of the main software tools used in the localization field and to Websites offering training courses on localization. By Atril.

**Futura Informatica** ([www.localizzazione.it](http://www.localizzazione.it))
Italian company organizing workshops on localization. Their Website offers scant information. More resources are promised to those attending their courses.

**International Consulting—Localization 101** ([www.intlconsultg.com/localiza.html](http://www.intlconsultg.com/localiza.html))
Detailed overview of a localization project and what it implies. Tailored mainly to localization service clients.

**Localisation Resources Centre** ([http://lrc.csis.ul.ie/](http://lrc.csis.ul.ie/))
Information about the localization industry. Back issues of their magazine can be downloaded in pdf format.

**Localisation Industry Standards Association—LISA** ([www.lisa.org/](http://www.lisa.org/))
The point of reference for the localization industry. Information and resources.

**Facets of Software Localization** ([www.accurapid.com/journal/softloc.htm](http://www.accurapid.com/journal/softloc.htm))
By Per N. Dohler. Article representing a very good introduction to the topic of localization from the freelance translator’s point of view.

**One Translator’s Thoughts on Software Localization** ([www.accurapid.com/journal/17softloc.htm](http://www.accurapid.com/journal/17softloc.htm))
By Dag Forssell. Another enlightening article from the *Translation Journal*.

**Austraat Seminars and Consulting** ([www.austraat.com/](http://www.austraat.com/))
From this Website you can download a free tutorial and purchase a manual on localization.

**Silicon Valley Localization Forum** ([www.tgpconsulting.com/](http://www.tgpconsulting.com/))
A wealth of information and resources on localization. Training events and directories of companies and translators.

Support site for one of the best books on localization available on paper. The site offers updates, tutorials, and links.

**Lingualizer—Links** ([www.lingualizer.net/tools.html](http://www.lingualizer.net/tools.html))
Links to translation and localization tools.

**MultiLingual Computing, Inc.** ([www.multilingual.com/](http://www.multilingual.com/))
Freely accessible localization e-zine.

**Language Localization for Enterprise Web Applications** ([www.asptoday.com/articles/20000330.htm](http://www.asptoday.com/articles/20000330.htm))
An article about Website localization.

A rich collection of documents closely examining various facets of localization.

Site where you can download pdf documents dealing with text internationalization and globalization.

**Language International** ([www.language-international.com](http://www.language-international.com))
Magazine on translation, with a special focus on localization and new technologies. Some articles in back issues are available online.
Influences of English in Technical Translation into Italian

By Roberto Crivello

(This article originally appeared in Italian in the June 2001 issue of Tradurre, the newsletter of ATA’s Italian Language Division, with the title “Influssi dell’inglese nella traduzione tecnica.” The notes have been partially translated. For the complete list of notes, please refer to the original article.)

One of the pitfalls that technical translators must take care to avoid is the gradual absorption of the lexicon and syntagma of the original language. Through overuse, semantic and syntactic loan translations and loanwords become fixed, “ready-to-use” forms. This leads to an impoverishment of terminological and stylistic choices that tend to standardize and, in the end, erode the quality of the translation. This problem affects translators regardless of the country where they are living, and can be remedied only through the careful use of language. Let us look at a few examples.

In translations of references, often the English form refer to is reproduced with the loan translation fare riferimento a (i.e., refer to Chapter 7, translated as fare riferimento al capitolo 7 rather than vedi capitolo 7 or, depending on the case, vedere o si veda il capitolo 7). Thus, translators tend to use fare riferimento a even when the context calls for consultare il manuale, vedere il disegno allegato, vedi figura, leggere la sezione, and so forth. An analogous lack of flexibility occurs when one translates refer to with the verb consultare, perhaps writing consultare la sezione when the section consists of barely 10 lines of text, thus creating an unintended ironic effect that will not escape observant readers.

When translating technical documents, one often encounters references to lists. In English, we speak of the numbered list (lista numerata) and the unnumbered list (lista non numerata). The latter term, which is often a bulleted list, is also rendered as lista puntata. Because marks preceding the items in the list could be bullets, dashes, boxes, etc., the extension of the meaning of puntare from “to mark with dots” to “to mark with symbols” is noteworthy with respect to conciseness. However, the problem arises the moment the term lista puntata becomes a fixed form to be used in all cases, as if it were the only acceptable translation for bulleted list. While it is correct to write lista puntata in a manual on designing Web pages in which various methods for highlighting the elements of a list are explained, the term would be redundant in a handbook for a product in which lista is a simple reference. For example, in translating the sentence For instructions, refer to the bulleted list on page 8, it would be quicker to write Seguire le istruzioni dalla lista a pagina 8 (if on that page there is only one list and, therefore, no possibility for confusion). Within the appropriate context, one could also write Seguire la procedura a pagina 8. To summarize, in general it is correct to follow the English literally when the term and its context serve a didactic or illustrative purpose, whereas one could increase speed by using an alternative or a shorter term when the word serves only as a reference.

On and Off are two very simple words that illustrate nicely the problems that can result from English words that have multiple meanings and whose brevity make them attractive, even in cases where clear, appropriate Italian terms already exist. On and Off mean, in the most general sense, “operating” and “out of operation.” Their brevity and seemingly singular meaning make them ideal for use on keys, buttons, very short text fields, and wherever it is necessary to use the least amount of space. On and Off also allow one to communicate to a broader audience (often composed of nonexpert users of a product) information such as turn the switch on/off through the translation portare l’interruttore in posizione on/off. Conversely, the phrase portare l’interruttore in posizione “chiuso”/“aperto” (“turn the switch to closed/open position”), theoretically more formal, is quite obviously only for those who have specific technical competence. Before moving on, we should note that it could be unnecessary to use these two English terms. In fact, often times turn the switch on/off, when speaking of a piece of equipment, means simply accendere/spgnerre l’apparecchio. This information is more useful when there are no labels on the buttons, except only the uni-
versal symbols l and O, or when there is only one button with, for example, the label PWR. (Note that it would be a blunder to write accendere or spegnere l’interruttore, since the latter is an electromechanical device. Instead, it is correct to write—in the area of telecommunications, for example—accendere or spegnere lo switch, since here we are referring to an electronic switch for the transmission of data packets.).

Along the same lines as the cases illustrated above, On and Off—or the corresponding terms so common in information technology translations, attivare and disattivare, whose true meanings are actually mettere in funzione inizialmente (to place on an active status) and rendere inutilizzabile (to render inoperative)—can become fixed as two seemingly multifunctional technical terms that, when careful attention is not paid to the appropriate register, are used even in cases in which different translations exist. For example, avviare or arrestare (engines, pumps, machines); inserire or disinserire (circuits); aprire or chiudere (valves); portare in saturazione or in interdizione (transistors of a logic circuit); and innestare or disinnestare (mechanical systems for transmitting motion, such as clutches or gears). It is interesting to observe that in the automotive field, besides these last two very technical and monosemic words, Italian has, like English, two short common words for upshifting and downshifting—namely salire di marcia and scalare di marcia.

The automatic use of certain English words, or of corresponding loan translations or loanwords, often results in acquiescence with respect to the original text, especially because of faulty or incomplete analyses. In marketing texts, one often comes across the expression seamless integration (of products or services). This expression is part of a series of clichés, like state-of-the-art, on the leading edge, and user-friendly—terms that have lost all meaning because of widespread and careless use by people in marketing. Among the various translations of seamless integration that I have encountered, I mention integrazione senza soluzione di continuità and perfetta integrazione (not surprisingly, one also finds integrazione seamless). It takes very little thought to realize that the English expression—and, therefore, the Italian equivalents modeled after it—suffers from a problem of redundancy. Both the English integration and the Italian integrazione already imply the concept of “harmonious fusion between several parts of a system” or “completion through the joining of appropriate complementary elements.” Instead, in some cases it could be useful or necessary to specify that integration can be, for example, more or less rapid or more or less difficult. But every integration is seamless; otherwise, it is not integration, but rather an imperfect blend of the components originally separated. Translators often think, however, that because seamless appears in the English expression, the adjective should, at all costs, be translated as “perfetto,” “uniforme,” “ininterrotto,” or as other words found in bilingual dictionaries under the entry “seamless”—translations that are theoretically correct but out of context, and that eventually become commonplace. Therefore, the fixation of the English form and its passive reproduction in translation lead to an analogous fixation of corresponding Italian forms. This could be avoided through alternative expressions that have the merit of originality or, at the very least, the lack of banality.

Let us now consider the following introductory paragraph from a users’ guide to software for a digital audio processor: Welcome to the ABC System Processor software guide. The goal of this document is to help you gain an understanding of how the ABC functions as you learn to use the software interface. The hardware stands alone as both a front-end and back-end system processor that can be externally controlled by a simple end-user interface, and the software is the tool that configures the device’s internal signal routing and audio processing.

We will focus on two terms: front-end processor and back-end processor. It is not difficult to find various definitions in English on the Web, although without specific reference to audio equipment. In English, one frequently resorts to semantic redefinitions of words, terms, and expressions from everyday language, which in Italian become loan translations and turn into exotic technical terms that generally remain incomprehensible to the majority of readers. Hence, as one would expect, in Italian the terms processore front-end and processore back-end are widespread in information technology, but even in Italian we can find differing definitions for these two terms. Front-end literally means “on the input side,” “on the side closest to the

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user of the application,” and, using a technical register, “providing an interface” or “communicating through external devices.” *Back-end*, on the other hand, literally means “on the output side,” “on the side farthest from the user of the application,” or even “reserved for specific or secondary tasks that do not need to be shown to the user.” A *back-end processor*, for example, is typically used to perform database operations. By adopting the above loanwords, would you be helping readers—probably audio equipment experts who are not very experienced with data processing equipment—to understand the description of this particular piece of equipment, or would you be leaving them to grope in the dark?

In light of the above considerations, we can find many translations that avoid the use of the fixed terms *processore front-end* and *processore back-end*, and describe the equipment with clarity and terminological accuracy. I will propose one possibility: *La presente guida al software del processore audio digitale ABC spiega l’uso dell’interfaccia utente e le funzioni dell’apparecchio. L’hardware è un’unità autonoma, preposta sia all’elaborazione e memorizzazione interne dei dati sia al trattamento dei segnali e dati di interfaccia con gli apparecchi esterni; può essere controllata esternamente mediante la semplice interfaccia utente. Il software è lo strumento per la configurazione dell’elaborazione e dell’instradamento dei segnali audio all’interno del processore.*

Among the various factors that contribute to the use of loan translations and loanwords from English—appropriate or not—in technical language, the brevity of many English words stands out. Specialists, technicians, and translators, as well as journalists who deal with technical and scientific fields, often do not recall enough Italian equivalents or do not have them handy. Compelling deadlines and inadequate technical expertise can lead one to use fixed terms or forms, and a lack of familiarity with linguistic mechanisms can keep one from constructing neologisms that, in the long run, could effectively render the English words. Even translators who are opposed to the snobby usage of English are often forced to accept the most common foreignisms.

According to one of the principles of *glottotecnica*—the study of linguistic matters from the point of view of the harmony of linguistic structures and their functionality, with the possibility of technical suggestions of a normative nature—foreignisms whose structure is totally incompatible with that of Italian words are translated or substituted with neologisms. But in order to apply this logical criteria—very often disregarded today—certain conditions must exist, as Bruno Migliorini illustrates: “Because most foreignisms have spread through the special languages of technicians, the substitutes have caught on every time they have made their way into general usage by way of experts.” Migliorini cites, among others, the example of *primato*, which is prevailing over *record* thanks to the manner in which the National Aviation Administration had used it (a quick search on the Web shows that *record* has once again surpassed *primato* in frequency of usage).

Let us look at another, more contemporary, example: *black-out*. This term has existed in Italian since at least 1983 in the sense of “a period of failure of all electrical power.” ENEL, the Italian utility company, writes in its public statements “interruzioni dell’erogazione di energia elettrica” (“interruptions in the delivery of electric energy”). Perhaps because of the cumbersome nature of this expression—in addition to the usual snobby reasons—journalists prefer the English word. *Black-out* has the obvious advantage of brevity, even if it lacks clarity for those who do not know English well. Arrigo Castellani has suggested an excellent substitute in his essay on the invasion of Anglo-American terms: *abbuiare*, a deverbative with zero-suffix of *abbiare*, “oscurare, mettere al buio” (“to obscure,” “to put in the dark”). The Italian word has the same advantage of brevity offered by *black-out* and adds further clarity and phonetic facility. But only if ENEL, with its technical authority, had consistently used *abbuiare* would this term have had a good chance at replacing *black-out* at some point. In the above-mentioned essay, Migliorini writes, “Every substitution, whether well-suited or authoritatively upheld, needs a certain incubation period.”

At this time in the evolution of Italian in which we witness the “progressive affirmation and acceptance of a ‘middle level’ in the use of language,” one also hopes that in the technical language with which translators are faced with today, both the indiscriminate use of foreignisms that are often incomprehensible to the majority of readers, and the pompous style that is the enemy of clarity, will be abandoned. In the realm of professional writing, a
1996 initiative provides communicative techniques written for the various types of professional texts: the Servizio d’Italiano Scritto. In addition, the Accademia della Crusca, one of the foremost Italian linguistic authorities, is establishing an important linguistic consulting service, the Centro di Consulenza sulla Lingua Italiana Contemporanea (Centro CLIC). The goal of the Centro CLIC will be: “[…] to promote research and reflection on evolutionary tendencies of contemporary Italian, observed not only in the lexicon (where attention must be given to the problems of foreign and technical words), but also in syntax, morphology, pronunciation, and spelling. The fundamental principle that should guide the activity of this center can certainly not be a rigid purism, but rather a principle of developing the functionality of the language, which means to keep alive its productive mechanisms and capacity to assimilate innovations. On a practical level, to guide the public, the center will circulate many explanations of evolutionary phenomena in the current usage of Italian in order to make speakers more knowledgeable, increase their mastery of the language, and distance them from passive behaviors and from the taste for pure display of originality. In particular, the center will take care of relationships with schools, as well as with the principal public institutions (central and peripheral), the mass media, and the main national companies.”

If a fruitful collaboration develops between the Accademia della Crusca and state and regional institutions, the mass media, the companies, the professional associations, and the organizations active in the field of translation, it will create the conditions to trigger a virtuous circle from which, as far as the field of technical translation is concerned, all will benefit: both those who write, no longer prisoners of linguistic fashions, and those who read, no longer forced to quiz themselves on cryptic terms or expressions.

Acknowledgements
Thank you to Anna Taraboletti-Segre for her precious suggestions during the revision of this article.

Notes
1. For a treatment of foreignisms or related matters within a technical-scientific context, refer to:
   • Bruni, Francesco. L’italiano—Elementi di storia della lingua e della cultura, UTET, 1984. (See Chapter III, 4, L’influsso dell’inglese.)
   • Cortelazzo, Michele A. Italiano d’oggi, Esedra. (See Chapter 1, La lingua italiana di fine millennio.)
   • Dardano, Maurizio, L’influsso dell’inglese sull’italiano d’oggi, Terminologie et Traduction, 1.91, 145/162. (This essay treats phonetic adaptation, morphologic adaptation, linguistic loanwords, terminology, loan translations, and semantic loanwords.)
   • Rando, Gaetano. Dizionario degli anglicismi nell’italiano postunitario, Leo S. Olschki, 1987 (presentation by Luca Serianni).
   • Mengaldo, Pier Vincenzo. Il Novecento, Il Mulino, 1994. (See Section III, Lingue speciali.)
   • Devoto, Giacomo. Il linguaggio d’Italia, BUR Saggi, 1999. (See Chapter L.)
   • Migliorini, Bruno. La lingua italiana nel Novecento, Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1990. (See Section I. 4, Purismo e neopurismo.)
Two years ago at ATA’s 40th Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, I discussed the need to reflect on what should be taught—and how—in translator training programs. Remarks were based on my personal experience as a student, translator, and teacher. Now, I would like to discuss another aspect that is very important for translator training: writing. After all, Peter Newmark (Ref. 1) once wrote: “All translation problems finally resolve themselves into problems of how to write well in the target language.” Deliste (Ref. 2) also argues that there are times when learning to translate is the same as learning how to write well, since these two activities cannot be dissociated. In other words, I cannot be a good translator if I do not have the ability to express clearly, efficiently, and coherently the concepts, ideas, or views of the source text.

This sounds very obvious, but teachers in translation training programs often take it for granted that students know how to write well, especially in their native language, when in reality this is not so. In fact, in most cases, students acquire their native language spontaneously, unsystematically, and without a conscious effort, while they usually learn their foreign language in a formal and methodical way. Thus, students are usually more aware of the grammatical rules and syntax of the foreign language than of their native language. I see this all the time with my students (although we are not training them to be translators, but English teachers). I teach comparative English-Spanish grammar, and invariably my students know more about English grammar (and even vocabulary) than Spanish grammar.

Teaching is more efficient if it is done gradually, systematically, and with the proper methodology and techniques. Based on this argument, I would like to suggest a number of possible ways to teach writing in the students’ native and foreign language in order to help them take full advantage of the expressive means of their own language, as well as to improve their writing skills in the foreign language. I am proposing that teachers of native and foreign language courses work in conjunction. This is the ideal scenario, since subject areas in the native and foreign language can be presented in a parallel fashion, which I consider much more efficient.

To help achieve efficiency in the classroom, there are a number of writing techniques that can be used and many good books containing helpful ideas that can be adapted for our classrooms (Refs. 3, 4, and 5). Effective language instruction involves many areas, including: vocabulary development; text organization; writing conventions (for example, punctuation, the use of capital letters, acronyms, symbols, abbreviations, typographic marks); learning the appropriate registers and styles to use according to the purpose and intention of the text; grammatical rules to avoid mistakes, especially interference (such as defective syntactic structures, the abuse or misuse of the passive voice, inappropriate collocations, ambiguity, the insufficient or incorrect use of deictics, and unnecessary redundancy); the ability to say the same thing in different ways (paraphrase); the ability to synthesize; as well as coherence and cohesion. These topics and more can be covered in language courses using the appropriate techniques and methods.

Writing Courses—A Proposal

As I mentioned above, it is important to incorporate as many facets of a language as possible in order for students to gain a thorough knowledge of how its structural elements work together to create meaning. Whenever possible, I propose that teachers of both the native and foreign language plan their units to coincide with each other, so that the knowledge gained from one course can be put to use or reinforced in another. This will ensure continuity and allow students to build upon their knowledge base. To make learning easier, I recommend going from the easiest to the most difficult material (including a gradation of content and a systematization of the language structures to be mastered). Learning the rules of two languages simultaneously will also allow students to see the similarities and differences that exist within the syntax of each language.

Doing the “Write” Stuff: The Translator’s First Duty

By María-Luisa Arias-Moreno
For example, Spanish allows for long, complicated, and complex sentences (provided the punctuation and connectors are the right ones), whereas it is preferable to have shorter sentences in English. Such knowledge will be especially useful when students are asked to translate between the two languages.

**Introducing Text Genres**

One of the most effective methods of showing the important link between proper structure and meaning is to introduce students to as many different kinds of writing styles as possible. If we want our students to know how to differentiate one style of writing from another, we have to use a variety of text genres to ensure that they learn to recognize, among other things, a text’s purpose (to inform, give advice, instruct, notify, and so on); style and register (which depends on the style of the author, the typical discourse characteristics that make up various genres, the target audience, etc.); and function (expressive, descriptive, vocative, phatic, metalingual, or aesthetic).

Learning to recognize the characteristics of a specific text genre is an essential step in learning how to write well. In the process, students will learn how important organization is in achieving the writer’s goal. Teaching text development is also a useful tool for successful translation.

In order to do this we need to make students aware of the diverse patterns of organization and style that differentiates one genre from another, so that they can recognize and reproduce these patterns when translating. To illustrate how students can improve their knowledge of the mechanics of a language, such as vocabulary, punctuation, and syntax, as they learn about different types of writing styles, let me discuss a possible way to teach students about the characteristics of, for example, descriptive texts.1

In this exercise, the teacher chooses a descriptive passage of similar content from several different texts, taking care that each passage reflects the typical discourse to be found within a particular genre (for example, a place description found in a tourism brochure, novel, or scientific article).2 Students should then be asked to discuss the unique characteristics of each passage, such as how various descriptions were written and how the particular writing style emphasizes what the author was trying to accomplish, as well as what genre each description belongs to. Having students classify a text under one genre is useful for pedagogical purposes, although we know this is very artificial since a single text usually has characteristics of several genres.

To further illustrate how writing style will affect how a person interprets what is written, the teacher can ask the students to create a written description of a place that is familiar to them. (For example, I like to ask them to describe their bedrooms.) If necessary, the teacher must provide all the vocabulary students will need. Once students have finished writing, they should give their descriptions to a classmate, who will then be asked to draw a picture of the place based on what they read. Most of the time, students will come to realize that their descriptions were not clear or accurate enough, making it impossible for the classmate drawing the picture to really know where certain things are located, their dimensions, form, and so forth. From this, students will learn that they must follow a certain organizational pattern when writing a description. They will also learn to take into account several elements of information that can be divided in three areas:

1) The general situation of the place that is being described (Where is it? Is it associated with other places?);

2) Its qualities (dimensions, form, and characteristics);

3) The different elements (i.e., location) that make up a place.

Through reading each others’ written descriptions, students will have a better understanding of how a text in a specific genre is constructed to achieve its purpose. With this new perspective, students can then go back to the original passages they were given to analyze and attempt to pinpoint all the elements that make each passage unique to a particular genre. For instance, how was the text in the tourism brochure organized and what language was chosen to make the destination sound attractive? What literary devices did the author of the novel use to arouse certain feelings or impressions in the reader? How was the material in the scientific article organized, and how did the use of concise

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vocabulary help achieve its objective? After answering these questions, students can then rework their own descriptions using the organizational techniques they observed in other texts.4

This exercise can be applied each time students learn the elements of a different genre. Learning text development along with basic language fundamentals (such as grammar) will allow students to gain a better understanding of how the two work side-by-side to achieve a text’s purpose. So as not to overwhelm students with grammatical rules, the teacher can introduce one topic per class session (for instance, the use of one punctuation mark or deictics). After each lesson, students can go back to the descriptions they wrote at the beginning of the class and rewrite them using what they have learned. Thus, they will be practicing what they have learned repeatedly until they master the topics covered. It will be the teacher’s responsibility to creatively design the exercises in a way that is challenging as well as productive.

The following text categories are useful in teaching various areas of language, such as grammar.

Narrative texts. A narrative text establishes a sequential order for the occurrence of events in a specific timeframe. This type of text is a very good model, allowing students to see the different parts of a text (structure and organization), the diverse stages and elements of a narration, and how the different verb tenses work in each language. Following a teacher’s instructions, students can analyze different types of narrative texts, identify the narrator (usually the first or third person), the stages (preliminary incident, problem, events, resolution), and elements (such as time, space, characters, and so on).5 Again, all this can be combined with the use of connectors, punctuation, capital letters, or whatever grammatical elements students have been introduced to in class.

Expository texts. An expository text (which consists of the logical presentation of information related to a theme) avoids explanation and gives only facts. Expository texts are more difficult to write and understand, since they involve following a certain structure and stating different logical relationships (such as cause, consequence, finality, purpose, etc.) in their development. Students should be asked to analyze several texts, from a tourism brochure to scientific abstracts. Analyzing this type of text will make students aware of these cause and effect relationships and, later on, will help them to distinguish them in a source text when they translate.6 Once students understand the techniques used in this type of writing, they can practice writing their own expository texts. They should also be asked to orient their writing toward different audiences to get the feel for designing with the target reader in mind. The teacher can also provide students with a list of data and ask them to organize them into a paragraph in a logical pattern.

Procedural texts. Procedural texts are used to prescribe and give instructions. The discourse of this type of text consists of a sequentially related series of steps or actions that must be completed to reach a goal. The agent is not usually specified and, ideally, the instructions must be as clear as possible to avoid possible mistakes or misunderstandings. Here we can include manuals, but also scientific articles and even contracts. However, due to the particular nature of legal texts, I would recommend that teachers treat them in a separate course unit on legal writing.

Argumentative texts. I always leave argumentative texts for the end of the course, because I consider them the most complex of all. Argument requires one to have a full command of the language, since you want to provide grounds to support your point of view or hypothesis, which will cause your hearers or readers to take a position either of acceptance or rejection. Therefore, you want to sound convincing and use all the arguments you can think of to persuade others (Ref. 6).7 Again, have students analyze a series of texts with argumentation on different topics and ask them to identify the different argumentative stages of a text. Then have them try to write full articles where they defend an opinion, either supporting or opposing the argument. To leave this type of text for the end of the course is extremely helpful. First, because almost any text of a certain length will be a mixture of genres (a narrative text may have a description of the characters or places, an argu-
mentative text will need to first explain the facts, and so on). Second, the students will be able to apply all that they have learned in the course to deal with this text type.

Conclusion

If one follows this proposal, students will not only improve their writing skills and vocabulary in both languages, they will develop the abilities necessary to recognize and use the techniques they have learned when translating. Most importantly, they will develop the cognitive abilities involved in the identification of text types (for example, comprehension of general concepts, the evaluation of relations between and among concepts, and the ability to anticipate the subsequent development of a text) which is so essential for a translator (Ref. 7). Learning how various writing strategies can be applied in the creation of effective and efficient communication is a vital skill which will ensure that students become true professionals.

Notes

1. In the bibliography I just mention a few resources that can be useful, but there are many more.

2. For lack of space, I have only explained some of the activities used to present this genre. In my recent conference presentation, however, a series of activities and exercises for the different genres was presented.

3. I begin with the description of places, then objects, and finally people.

4. Self-correction here is also important. To make sure students pay attention to the corrections they receive on their revised papers, I use a number of symbols to correct the students’ first draft. Thus, instead of correcting the mistake myself, they have to find out the right way to do it and correct the mistake themselves. Then they give me their second draft, so that I only go over the mistakes they made the first time to see if they corrected them. If they do not correct them properly, I correct them and explain why it is wrong. Peer correction is also useful.

5. I usually give them the instructions to create a fairytale, giving them different characters and step-by-step suggestions of the way the fairytale can be developed.

6. This seems very easy; however, every year I see my students striving to separate one from the other. For example, they frequently mistake finality for consequence, or cause for purpose.

7. All this must be taught while taking into account that persuasive strategies may differ between languages, and even within the same language.

References


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Assessing the Spanish Translations of Marcel Proust’s First Volume

By Herbert E. Craig

Spain was one of the first countries to demonstrate an interest in translating the seven-volume novel by the French author Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. The Spanish poet Pedro Salinas, who had taught his native language at the Sorbonne in Paris during World War I, was the first to begin translating its initial volume, *Du côté de chez Swann*. Thus, shortly after Proust received the Prix Goncourt in December 1919 for his second volume, *A l’ombre de jeunes filles en fleurs*, the Spanish publisher Calpe was able to present Salinas’ version of Proust’s first volume to Gaston Gallimard for his approval. References to these negotiations appear in the correspondence between Proust and his principal French publisher (February 1921, Ref. 1, p. 326). The novelist actually saw and commented on the printing of the Spanish text (November 1921, Ref. 2). Discussions concerning the translation of the second volume began in February 1922 (Ref. 1, p. 481).

Salinas’ version of Proust’s first two volumes, *Por el camino de Swann* (1920) and *A la sombra de las muchachas en flor* (1922), were well received in Spain. Although the one critic who reviewed both volumes, C. Rivas Chérief, did not like Proust’s style, he found the translation by Salinas to be excellent (Ref. 3). These two volumes, along with the third, which the poet began but left to be completed by José María Quiroga Pla, have been reprinted numerous times in Spain, as well as in Argentina and in several other Spanish American countries. For nearly 60 years Salinas’ work was considered unsurpassable, and even though the last four volumes of *En busca del tiempo perdido* have three distinct versions, no one dared to retranslate what Salinas had done before.

This began to change in 1981 when Julio Gómez de la Serna (a brother of the creator of “las greguerías”) published *Hacia el lado de la quinta de Swann* and *A la sombra de las muchachas en flor*. Indubitably this new Aguilar version had certain flaws which did not allow it to compete well, but its appearance evidently led one scholar in Spain to examine Salinas’ translation with greater scrutiny. Luis Maristany concluded that, because of their early dates, *Por el camino de Swann* and *A la sombra de las muchachas en flor* contained mistakes due to printing errors found in the original French edition. Maristany also said that some errors resulted because Salinas did not know the ultimate development of Proust’s major themes and key terms, and because, at times, the Spanish poet followed his own sense of art instead of Proust’s (Ref. 4).

In an attempt to rectify some of these mistakes, Elena Carbayo revised Salinas’ translation of the second part of Proust’s first volume and published it in 1988 as *Un amor de Swann* (Catedra). Later, the Spanish author Carlos Pujol published another translation of the same part in 1992 (Planeta). Although neither of these has been incorporated into the subsequent editions of *En busca del tiempo perdido*, three new translators further challenged Salinas at the turn of the 21st century. In 1999, Carlos Manzano of Spain published his version of the first volume, which he renamed *Por la parte de Swann* (Editorial Lumen). The following year another Spaniard, Mauro Armiño, made available the first two volumes of his translation, *Por la parte de Swann* and *A la sombra de las muchachas en flor* (Valdemar). Similarly, in 2000, another version of the first volume came out in Argentina. In this case, the translator was the novelist and lady friend of Jorge Luis Borges, Estela Canto, and she chose *Del lado de Swann* (Losada) as her title.

Given that there now exists in Spanish five translations of *Du côté de chez Swann*, two other versions of the second part of this volume, *Un amor de Swann*, and three translations of *A l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (as well as three of the last four volumes), it seems imperative that an objective assessment of at least some of these versions be made. Here I will concentrate upon the first volume, even though I discussed most of the others at the ATA conference in Los Angeles.

I must concede that this is not the first time that I have approached this subject. In an article of 1995, “Proust in
Spanish: The Old and New Translations of *Du côté de chez Swann* (Ref. 5), I compared the versions by Salinas, Gómez de la Serna, and Carbajo. However, at that time I did not have access to the one by Pujol, and those by Manzano, Armínio, and Canto had not yet appeared. Furthermore, even though I tried to examine objectively several passages which illustrated Proust’s diverse modes of dialogue, psychological analysis, and poetic description, I followed my own sense of what is a good translation rather than the ideas on assessment of any theoretician.

Indeed, the whole question of translation criticism is a difficult one. In the past, translations were, for the most part, judged in a very subjective manner. Frequently, some critics would, without knowing the original text or even understanding the language of the author, try to review translations on their own literary merits. For this reason, such persons tended to discuss the quality of the work as it appeared to them through the translation, and evaluated the actual work of the translator only in terms of its perceived fluency. The very important matter of equivalency was totally ignored.

Attempting to rectify this situation, a German scholar of translation, Katharina Reiss, wrote an excellent study years ago, which has now become available in English: *Translation Criticism—The Potentials and Limitations: Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment* (2000, Ref. 6). Here, Reiss defined three basic types of texts: the ones that are content-focused, form-focused, and appeal-focused. She explained that each type had a different language function (representation, expression, and persuasion) and language dimension (logic, esthetics, and dialogue). She systematically examined the linguistic components (semantic, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic elements) and extra-linguistic determinants (the immediate situation, the subject matter, the time, place, audience, and speaker factors, plus affective implications) for each text type. Although all of her remarks are very interesting, I found her comments on form-focused texts to be the most helpful because Proust’s novel and most other literary works are of this type. Perhaps in the future other theoreticians of translation criticism can further refine the principles of Katharina Reiss, but these have allowed me to assess more objectively and completely the Spanish translations of Proust’s vast novel.

Indubitably, some differences between the versions can be analyzed without the aid of a theoretician like Reiss. Proust’s very first sentence, “Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure” (Ref. 7, p. 3) has been rendered to Spanish in the following ways: “Mucho tiempo he estado acostándome temprano” (Salinas, Ref. 8, p. 11), “Mucho tiempo me he acostado temprano” (Gómez de la Serna, Ref. 9, p. 7), “Me he acostado temprano, hace mucho” (Armínio, Ref. 10, p. 7), “Durante mucho tiempo, me acosté temprano” (Manzano, Ref. 11, p. 9), and “Durante mucho tiempo me acosté temprano” (Canto, Ref. 12, p. 11). Given that Proust was describing a former habit that was no longer practiced (going to bed early), the versions by Manzano and Canto are clearly superior because the Spanish *preterit* refers to a completed past action, while (unlike the French *passé composé*, which has come to be a substitute in conversation for the *passé simple*) the Spanish present perfect (*pretérito perfecto*) implies that the action began in the past and may be continuing in the present.

On the other hand, the comments by Reiss on over-explicitness and the attempts of a translator to ameliorate the original are very pertinent. Citing Güttlinger, she wrote, “the translator must be able to resist the temptation to clarify or improve the original” (Ref. 6, p. 65). It is in this regard that Salinas most often strayed from Proust’s text. In the description of the magic lantern, for example, we find that, unlike the other translators, the Spanish poet frequently tried to clarify the text. For him “le point fixe et douloureux…” (Ref. 7, p. 9) became “el punto céntrico fijo y doloroso…” (Ref. 8, p. 19 [my emphasis]). The impersonal phrase “on avait bien inventé…” was made more explicit: “A mi familia se le había ocurrido…” (my emphasis). Although the context of the original (and the other versions) made sufficiently clear the statement “Maintenant je ne la reconnais plus…” Salinas felt the need to add a supplemental phrase: “A la luz de la linterna no reconozco mi alcoba…” (my emphasis). Obviously, each translator had to take into account the differences between French and Spanish, and they also tried to eliminate any possible confusion. Perhaps it is for this reason that Manzano rendered the first phrase cited above as “el centro fijo y doloroso”
Assessing the Spanish Translations of Marcel Proust’s First Volume Continued

(Ref. 11, p. 15)—“centro” is perhaps better in Spanish than “punto”—and for the second, Canto wrote “A alguien se le había ocurrido...” (Ref. 12, p. 17 [my emphasis]). But none of them made the number of additions or clarifications that Salinas did.

Almost paradoxically, either because of choice or carelessness, Salinas sometimes failed to translate certain words, phrases, or even sentences. This tendency is especially evident in the passage where Tante Léonie and Françoise are discussing asparagus and other things that the old woman notices outside her window. Here, Proust carefully depicted in a comic manner their words and gestures. At Françoise’s suggestion that the thick stems of asparagus might have come from the priest’s garden, we find the aunt’s response: “Ah! je vous crois bien, ma pauvre Françoise, répondait ma tante en haussant les épaules, chez M. le Curé!” (Ref. 7, p. 54). Salinas reduced this to: “No, Francisca, no pueden ser de casa del señor cura” (Ref. 8, p. 73). He offered no equivalent for the ironic expression of belief “je vous crois bien,” for the typical way in which Tante Léonie addressed Françoise, “ma pauvre...” nor for the gesture “en haussant les épaules.” I concede that Armínio also left out this movement but vaguely suggested the other elements when he wrote, “—Pero ¡qué me dice de casa del señor cura, mi pobre Françoise!” (Ref. 10, p. 53). Curiously, not only were Gómez de la Serna and Canto quite literal, but they nearly coincided in their translation: “—Ah, ya lo creo, mi pobre Francisca (Françoise)! contestaba mi tía alzándose (encogiéndose) de hombros; ¡De casa del señor cura!” (Ref. 9, p. 68; Ref. 12, p. 65). Manzano was less literal, but made certain that he gave an equivalent of each element (as Reiss and most scholars of translation criticism would expect): “¡Ay, qué cosas tiene esta Françoise!” respondía mi tía, al tiempo que se encogía de hombros. “¡De la casa del señor cura!” (Ref. 11, p. 64).

Because of the subtlety of Proust’s thought and the intricacy of his style, he often wrote lengthy sentences which are very difficult to translate. As Reiss suggests, the style of the original form-focused text should be maintained, as well as its various linguistic elements, all of which a scholar of translation criticism has to consider: “The critic must examine the translation with regard to each of these linguistic elements: the semantic elements for equivalence, the lexical elements for adequacy, the grammatical elements for correctness, and the stylistic elements for correspondence” (Ref. 6, p. 66). Similar attention must be paid to extra-linguistic elements.

For the most part, like the other Spanish translators, Salinas has followed these principles. However, in one case at the end of a long sentence close to the beginning of Part II, the Spanish poet not only simplified the syntax and meaning, but even implied something which, according to social custom and personal habit, was highly unlikely. Proust, after suggesting that Mme Verdun had been able to convince her naïve female guests that the Princesse de Sagan and the Duchesse de Guermantes needed to bribe people to have guests at their dinners, ended his sentence by saying, “si on leur avait offert de les faire inviter chez ces deux grandes dames, l’ancienne concierge et la cocotte eussent dédaignemment refusé” (Ref. 7, p. 186 [emphasis mine]). This is obviously very different from what Salinas wrote: “si aquellas dos grandes señorías hubieran invitado a la ex portera y a la demimondaine, habrían recibido una desdichosa negativa” (Ref. 8, p. 228). The extra-linguistic dimension of “who would have chosen to invite whom” was not fully taken into account.

In the version by Elena Carbajo, where she tried to eliminate Salinas’ flaws, we find that the improbable direct invitation by the two great ladies has disappeared, but the social protocol implied in the original is still overly simplified. Carbajo merely says, “si se les hubiera ofrecido una invitación para ir a casa de estas dos grandes señorías...” (Ref. 13, p. 107). In this case, Canto’s version is essentially identical, while both Manzano and Armínio resemble each other at least in the following phrase: “si se les hubiese (si les hubiesen) ofrecido la posibilidad de ser invitadas a las casas de esas dos grandes damas...” (Ref. 11, p. 206; Ref. 10, p. 172). Only Gómez de la Serna and the other translator of Part II, Carlos Pujol, actually sought a direct equivalent of the French construction “les faire inviter.” The former was very literal: “si les hubieran ofrecido hacer que las invitasen...” (Ref. 9, p. 222), but the second is more fluent: “si alguien les hubiese ofrecido conseguir que las invitasen...” (Ref. 14, p. 4).

Of course, I do not wish to give the impression that Proust’s very first translator did a poor job. The examples I have cited
were intended to demonstrate that his version was not as flaw-
less as some critics have pretended. On the other hand, Salinas
avoided the errors in Spanish syntax and style which Gómez de
la Serna sometimes made because of his more literal approach
to translation. Following Proust and French word order
closely, he occasionally separated a form of the auxiliary verb
“haber” from its past participle, which is generally considered
incorrect in modern Spanish. Furthermore, after translating
the text phrase by phrase, it appears that in a few instances Gómez
de la Serna did not review his work carefully enough to elimi-
nate the unsightly repetition of words. Such was the case when
he translated the following juxtaposed remarks by Françoise
and the narrator concerning their departure from the kitchen
patio: “‘il faut que je me sauve chez Mme Octave,’ je me
décidais à rentrer et montais directement lire chez moi” (Ref.
7, p. 79). Despite the fact that the French text does not actually
use the word “maison,” Gómez de la Serna repeated “casa”:
“‘tengo que correr a casa de su tía Leoncia,’ me decidía volver
a casa y subía directamente a leer a mi alcoba” (Ref. 9, p. 97
[emphasis mine]). All of the other translators avoided this
needless repetition. Even though they variously translated
“rentrar” as “entrar” or “volver a casa,” each one chose not to
use “casa” to render “chez Mme Octave” (which in reality is
not precise because she always stayed in the same rooms).
Both Salinas and Armiño spoke of her “cuarto” (Ref. 8, p. 102;
Ref. 10, 74). Manzano wrote, “tengo que ir a ver a la Sra.
Octave…” (Ref. 11, p. 90), and Canto said, “yo tengo que ocu-
parme de Madame Octave…” (Ref. 12, p. 90).

In spite of the fact that some Spaniards have summarily dis-
missed the new translations of Du côté de chez Swann, I find all
three to be quite good. I would even dare to say that Manzano,
Armiño, and Canto reflect the professionalism of the translators
of today, who have been trained in their field and did not simply
learn their skill while becoming poets or writers. Indeed, the
Argentine translator Canto does not fit into this pattern as well
as the two Spaniards. However, like the others, she knew that it
was necessary to focus upon translation techniques because few
persons could compete with Salinas as a writer.

At this point, it is impossible to determine if the translations
of any of these three can prevail against, or even reach the level
of acceptance of, the well-known version by Salinas. Perhaps
in Argentina or in Spanish America Del lado de Swann can
make some inroads, but I have not yet discovered any evidence
of this in the Argentine press. In contrast, the two new penin-
sular versions have received some attention in Spain. Robert
Saladrigas reviewed both in Revista de Libros (March 2001)
and was quite favorable towards them. As for differences
between the two, he noted that even though Mauro Armiño had
emphasized the difficulty of Proust’s style during the presenta-
tion of his translation in Madrid, he did
not attempt to reduce it in Spanish. On
the other hand, Carlos Manzano regu-
larly used dashes to avoid subordinate
clauses so that he could adapt the
French author’s style to Spanish syntax
(Ref. 15). I would also add that Man-
zano modified Proust’s word order
more regularly than Armiño. Other-
wise, both new translators follow the
principles of quality translation out-
lined by Katharina Reiss. At times,
Armiño’s version seems more literal
than Manzano’s, but it is not exces-
sively so.

As I suggested in my presentation in
Los Angeles, a more important
factor for determining which recent
translation has the greatest possibility
of supplanting the version by Salinas
and his successors may be the actual
completion of a Spanish translation of
A la recherche du temps perdu, in a
single style by a sole translator. The
prestige of the Spanish poet remains
strong in spite of the weaknesses of his
translation, but the variable manner
and skill of each of his successors—
José María Quiroga Pla and Consuelo
Berges (Fernando Gutiérrez or
Marcelo Menașché)—make his text
vulnerable. Mauro Armiño, who actu-
ally spoke of such a uniform version in
his prologue to A la busca del tiempo
perdido I, has now published two of
the seven volumes and has promised to
finish the others. Also in Los Angeles,
I compared his version of A la sombra
de las muchachas en flor with those by
Salinas and Gómez de la Serna and
discovered that it was often better.
Thus, it appears that Armiño has the
greatest chance of becoming the prin-
cipal Spanish translator of Proust.
However, such an assessment, like this
on-going translation process itself, is
far from being definitive.

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References

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7. http://ovisun199.csovi.fi.cnr.it/crusca/. (The site of the Academy is under construction. The new site will be available soon at a URL to be determined. The new address will be posted at the old site.)
8. From the minutes of the Centro CLIC’s foundational meeting, held in Florence on Thursday, January 18, 2001—cited courtesy of the Accademia della Crusca.
“From one day to another, from one page to the other, writing changes languages”
—Hélène Cixous, in Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing

Hélène Cixous defies categorization as both a writer and an individual. Born in French-controlled Algeria to parents who were German Jews by heritage but French by nationality, Cixous studied at the Sorbonne, becoming the youngest person in French history to earn the doctorate d’état in literature. Prior to earning that degree, Cixous was appointed as a professor at the Université de Nanterre, where she played a pivotal role in the student demonstrations and French movement for educational reform in the late 1960s. Following the award of her doctorate and the publication of her first novel, Dedans—which won the Prix Médicis—in 1969, Cixous was appointed head of a committee to create a new and experimental university: thus, the Université de Paris, VIII was born. Cixous appointed notable scholars of the time, including Michel Foucault and Tzvetan Todorov, to the faculty and created the first doctoral program in women’s studies in France. She herself was conferred a chair in English—a position she has maintained ever since.

While these accomplishments may seem like a life’s work, they all took place at the beginning of Cixous’s academic career. Over the next three decades, Cixous would write over 30 works of fiction, drama, and criticism while remaining consistently involved in teaching at the Université de Paris, VIII and as a visiting professor elsewhere. Though fluent in English and German as well as French, nearly all of her literary output has been in French, although several of her lectures in the U.S. were given, and subsequently published, in English.

In many ways, Cixous’s writing is as difficult as her accomplishments are impressive. Her application of the conventions of French turns the language upon its head, personifying the nonpersonal, making material the nontangible, and playing on metaphors hidden within other metaphors. Cixous’s doctoral dissertation concerned James Joyce and can be seen as prognostic of the trajectory both her fiction and nonfiction took: a weaving flow of ideas replete with sensory detail and emotive overtones reminiscent of Joyce’s own meandering prose. Cixous delved deep into the gender hierarchy of the Romance languages and, from a synthesis of engendered language and her beliefs on the differences between masculinity and femininity, produced the concept of écriture féminine, or women’s writing. It would be for this philosophy that Cixous would become best known to English-speaking audiences, primarily through La Jeune Née (The Newly Born Woman, co-authored with Catherine Clément).

Though an influential contribution to feminist theory, écriture féminine would come to be poorly understood and Cixous’s broad oeuvre would, unfortunately, be read and judged all too frequently as feminist writing alone, without consideration of its other literary and sociopolitical significance. Given the complexity of Cixous as a writer and the intensely personal and poetic approach she brings to wide-ranging issues and themes, it is no wonder that her writing has poised an enormous—albeit rewarding—challenge to those who wish to translate it from French to English and other languages. Fortunately, at a pragmatic level, Cixous has been proactively involved in most major translations of her novels, plays, and articles, working with her translators to produce versions that reflect her vision and command of French in the recipient language.

This article examines the translation of Hélène Cixous’s writing by relating her own explanations of her epistemology and the commentary of her translators to the substance of the writing itself. A primary theme of the Cixousian world is that one writes the body, and that the very act of writing is itself a natural, essential function. For Cixous, this was indeed the case. The novel Jours de l’an (First Days of the Year) is in fact a celebration of writing established as fiction, yet a fiction that is both critical and communicative of its literary and personal precedents. (In comparison, Cixous’s critical essays and lectures tend to impart a poetic tone rarely found in academic writing.)
regard to critical theory and philosophy, Cixous is closely linked (both in terms of beliefs and in personal collaborations) to the works of Jacques Derrida, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva. Other writers, both historical and contemporary, play a crucial role in Cixous’s *écriture*, notably Joyce, Franz Kafka, Paul Celan, Marina Tsvetaeva, Jean Genet, and, most importantly, the Brazilian novelist and journalist Clarice Lispector. Cixous has learned these writers’ stylistic approaches and attitudes towards gender and its place in writing. For Cixous, style itself is a reflection of broader attitudes and personal philosophies.

It is useful to note, however, that while her views on gender and feminism are categorically close to those of Irigaray and Kristeva, Cixous propagates these views as much in literary fiction as in critical discourse. Irigaray has primarily written as a critical theorist while Kristeva, both a psychoanalyst and linguist by training, is more concerned with connections between emotions, psyche, and language. Neither Kristeva nor Irigaray has produced the type of continuous output of fictional writing as Cixous, although Kristeva has authored a novel.

**Cixous’s *écriture***

Central to Cixous’s discursive approach are the concepts of *the other/otherness (altérité)* and *removal* common to French deconstructivist theory, although her usage of these constructs is usually quite different from that of Derrida and other leading proponents of deconstructivism. Cixous draws as much from her own past, her upbringing and familial history, for sources of inspiration and reflection as she does from exterior sources. Thus, the concept of *the other* takes on an intimate definition: it is what she is not and what she knows not.

Cixous traces her experiences with removal back to her childhood as a foreigner in Algeria, moreover, as a Jew amongst French expatriates, and as someone who left that alien existence to become an alien again in France, her previously unknown homeland. In her essay “Mon Algériance,” Cixous explains the profound effect her expatriate situation in Algeria had on her psychoemotional outlook on the world, noting that even her surname was not recognizably French, nor German, nor Jewish, and was perhaps even native—the name of a Berber tribe, she had been told by Algerian friends. An intrinsic conceptualization of *otherness* was alive in Cixous from an early age—a concept that was made all the more poignant by the untimely death of her father. Likewise, language became a locus of *otherness* for Cixous, as she was both externally and internally defined by the predominant languages of Algeria (the languages of the native and of the colonial *other*). With each language she knew of, there was a corresponding set of ethnosocial constructs. It is essential to realize that Cixous was immersed in literary pedagogy at several levels as a doctoral student studying modern English literature while simultaneously teaching French students as a full professor in French. The duality of languages she knew as a child was thereby repeated in her education, and would continue to be repeated in her later scholarship.

The linguistic perplexity and multiplicity Cixous found at several times in her life and on several different levels had a lasting impact on her writing, as did the breadth of literary endeavors she attempted. It should be noted that Cixous wrote her first novel at the same time she was writing her doctoral dissertation. For Cixous, language became a most fluid property, capable of reflecting the intricate amazement of every experience in life. However, Cixous has always seen language as a reflective medium, acknowledging that whatever writing or speech may tell, its telling is filtered through human interpretation. Unlike Joyce, whose later writing often emphasized the interpretation of experience and utilized language to highlight the construction of psychological interpretation, Cixous placed more emphasis on how language and external experience (i.e., experiencing the *other*) both provide a filtering of ourselves. The Joycean character rarely seems to cognize that he or she is producing a discourse—even in the case of Molly Bloom’s musings in “Penelope” (the final chapter in *Ulysses*), the discussion is an internal circle. By contrast, the Cixousian character is acutely aware of its production of a text of some sort. “Writing,” as a term, may often be substituted for “speech” in the Cixousian universe. Thoughts are even considered in terms of their linguistic composition, as can be seen in a passage from *Jours de l’an*, where Cixous states the frustration found in the differences between her feelings and the words meant to represent them:
no, my love is not this love. This very much is not a very much. I look up ‘scale’ and do not find my scale, the one that grows according to my spring, for each spring a new branch.

*(Jours de l’an, p. 251)*

In both the English translation above and the French source, the dualities of meaning extant in many words is apparent with the ambiguity of some words and phrases (can one “very much” be greater than or less than another “very much”?). This contrasts with the multiple ways other words (such as “spring” and “branch”) can be interpreted. The “this love” referred to is a dictionary definition of love and, by extension, a societal definition; neither definition apparently properly qualifies the narrator’s love. Aside from the writer’s frustration over the ability of language to represent emotive ideas and to personify beliefs, the above passage underscores that language is proprietary even in its most uncomplicated and innocent of incarnations. Language becomes a property of the speaker/writer once it is applied to the task of conveying an individual’s ideas and intentions. Thus, language is never truly neutral, and the particular language and linguistic strata one employs—whether French or English, *belles-lettres* style or slang—says a great deal about both the speaker and his/her intentions.

The prominence of meaning Cixous places on the body is essential to understanding her methodology of writing. *Le corps*—the body—is the term she repeatedly uses to denote both the physical body, the more generalized body (either as the person in question or as a larger, mythical body), and the text itself (which is, of course, a *corps* of sorts, too). Since a primary goal in Cixous’s work is to write of the body and, more specifically, to empower women to write of the feminine body from outside of male-dominated conventions, the ambiguous *le corps* can often be considered as both a *corps* and a *corps*: a body and an assembled whole. Usually, any mention of *le corps* made in Cixous’s prose is translated to English as “the body,” though the resultant translation does not carry the same metaphorical weight as the French source. Beyond the body as a noun, Cixous employs numerous pronouns to denote it in all of its varied stations in her writing.

While Cixous has always toyed with gender-based meanings in her writing, the stylisms of Clarice Lispector in regard to usage of gendered verb tenses without corresponding nouns (thus, a verb without a subject) have influenced Cixous’s construction of isolated, engendered verbs that function independently of nouns. As Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, the translator of several of Cixous’s novels, explains in her preface to the English translation of *Jours de l’an*, Portuguese allows for such syntax naturally and, while Lispector appears to manipulate this linguistic convention to her narrative advantage, her syntax is not discordant with the standard usage of Portuguese. Cixous’s adoption of the device from Lispector, however, introduces a foreign syntax into French. Furthermore, Cixous has invented her own nouns and verbs—neologisms to fill in the gaps in her *écriture* unmet by the canonical French lexicon. Among the most meaningful of these is her verb *transer*, which means to cross or to move across boundaries. This verb itself contravenes: its function as a textural device is as much a noun at times as it is a verb. Part of the beauty of an invented word is that it comes with no reputation of its role in writing, and can perhaps be accepted more openly for what it says instead of what it does. In using such invented words, Cixous calls her readers to question how we view language and how we assign meaning to the words we use to label our world. On a very visceral level—if we remember that the text is also *le corps*—Cixous is reminding us of the danger in indiscriminately applying simple labels to complex situations, including gender.

Another example of this technique may be found in Cixous’s creation of the word “estine” out of “Palestine”—a term employed in her book *Neutre*—by pairing the word “pâle/pale” with “estine” to both formulate and separate the proper noun. Cixous dissects the word while creating an adjective for it out of its own contents: there is no such word as “estine” in French and without the preceding “pâle/pale,” the latter “estine” is meaningless. Despite this, the truncated word works in the passage where it appears:

*de quelle pâle estine?*

(from which pale estine?)

*(Neutre, p. 20)*

*Continued on p. 48*
This application demands a reconsideration of the word Palestine; a reconsideration that is as much socio-historical as it is linguistic. If we as readers recognize that “pâle estine” is actually “Palestine,” we have to question whether this is a tautological relationship between two words or a homographical error or pun involving a single word. Cognitively at least, we may read “estine” as a proxy for “Palestine” and accept its suddenly pale complexion without directly realizing the homoformal relationship that allows this tautology to exist in the first place. The fact that, to the non-French reader, the neologism “estine” sounds plausibly French may heighten the power of the phrase in translation, since we can presume (as with all translations) that something may be missing in the recipient language that was present and active in the source.

Neutre provides another exceptional example of both how Cixousian prose is constructed and how the individual words of one of her sentences can function both as representative icons in their own right and as the composition of a capacious discourse. In this example, a reference to Edgar Allan Poe as well as structural impressions of Joyce are apparent:

[... l’issue décevante comme de la quête du Scarabée d’Or lâche du haut de la 7e branche est d’un Liri-
odendron Tulipiferum à travers l’œil gauche d’une tête de mort fixée à la branche, rayons du soleil couchant, suivant les indications cryptogrammatiques données par un morceau de parchemin couvert de signes tracés par le fameux Kidd à l’aide d’une solution de régule de cobalt dissous dans l’esprit de nitre encore chaud, laquelle s’efface en refroidissant—(Neutre, p. 21)

[...] the disappointing conclusion as in the quest of the Gold-Bug released from the top of the seventh east branch of a Liri-
odendron Tulipiferum through the left eye of a skull fixed to the branch, in the rays of the setting sun, following the cryptogrammatical indications given on [or by] a piece of parchment covered in signs penned by the renowned [or acclaimed] Kidd with the help of a regulus of cobalt solution dissolved in spirit of nitre while warm, which fades on cooling—

Taken out of context, this paragraph makes little sense except via the sheer beauty of its writing, yet when read within the scope of Neutre, it still declares its fresh, resilient sensibility and—like the remainder of that text—escapes any ready discernment of a plot or direction. To an extent, the literary allusion to Poe relies on his story of the Gold Bug, but also works on the level of simply being a literary reference wrought with an air of mystery which just happens to portend an entry of elegance. The patterns in language that Cixous has employed are mellifluent, but at the same instant discordant: “rayons du soleil couchant” is easily exquisite in this usage, but what of “les indications cryptogrammatiques”? The latter requests that the translator appreciate it for its own localized merits and not search for less unwieldy words to take its place. While Neutre is more poetic in terms of structure than much of Cixous’s writing, it serves as a perfect example of how her applications of words require their own close readings, sometimes devoid of a desire for the entire text to be immediately congruent. Sometimes, it is enough to allow the text to be suddenly beautiful.

c’est transer—Cixous in Translation

Hélène Cixous writes in a manner that renders novel meanings into standing linguistic conventions, but how exclusive is her approach to the French language, and how best can this approach—as well as the words that make it manifest—be translated into another language? Cixous’s work has been translated by numerous literary and academic translators, although several scholars have repeatedly involved themselves in producing her translations, most notably the aforementioned MacGillivray, Susan Sellers, Betsy Wing, and Eric Prenowitz. All four translators have taken different approaches to producing their book-length translations, and it is in the complete translated books rather than shorter excerpts or essays that such differences are expectedly most apparent. MacGillivray, the translator of Cixous’s novels Jours de l’an and Manna aux Mandelaux aux Mandelas as well as several works of criticism and drama, attempts to remain faithful to Cixous’s syntactical structure while in one way or another explaining the confusing or difficult passages and neologisms. Sellers takes a
more “hands off” approach, rarely explaining anything beyond the literal translation. Despite this method, Sellers—who edited *The Hélène Cixous Reader*—remains very observant of Cixous’s unique prose, and is attentive to deciphering them via her introductions and prefaces. Here, she is more concerned with Cixousian language as an independent construct than with the French text being compared to the English translation. In her introduction to the *Hélène Cixous Reader*, Sellers acknowledges that translators other than herself have taken up Cixous via very disparate mechanisms. She does not expound at length on the fact that some of Cixous’s literary devices may not be commonplace in French literature, but are nonetheless plausible due to the linguistic constructs of the language.

Betsy Wing, who translated Cixous’s novel *Le livre de Promethea* (as well as *La Jeune Née*), appears most focused on producing a readable, albeit veracious, rendition of Cixousian prose—a daunting task given the complexity of this novel. *Le livre de Promethea* is something of a turning point in Cixous’s fiction. It is not so concerned with personal expression (as was the case with her previous fiction), but with how perception (of ourselves and others) is expressed in writing. In many ways, *Promethea* serves as a precedent to the themes of writing explored in *Jours de l’an* and *Manna aux Mandelstams aux Mandelas*. Cixous openly acknowledges the presence of the author as separate from that of the narrator of the book; that of Promethea (as a character and as a mythological icon), and that of the book itself. Thus, her use of pronouns and verb tenses are central to the formation of identity in this novel. Pronouns are employed in their most literal of applications: to serve as surrogates for consummate subjects.

The process of surrogacy is reiterated at every level of the narrative in *Promethea* as is the process of *sectioning*, of indicating *selfness* and *otherness*. Because Cixous achieves these literary objectives primarily through structural means (i.e., use of syntax, grammar, and morphology), her text resists even modest attempts at reconfiguration for translatory purposes. Betsy Wing stays very close to the layout and flow of Cixous’s French in her English translation, only deviating from the original structure when not doing so would render the translation especially cumbersome. The English translation of *Le livre de Promethea* (*The Book of Promethea*) stands as something of a communiqué derived from a pre-extant communiqué. Much of the book revolves around the author’s struggle to form a relationship with Promethea that translates into writing. The translation of the author’s words (which, the book would argue are not only the author’s own but those borrowed from Promethea) into another language also adds an additional degree of separation.

The concept of a translation modifying an original text is nothing new nor unexpected, but the possibility for the translation to play an epistemological as well as structural role in fiction is somewhat odd. With Cixous, despite the challenges inherent to translating her work, it seems that the translator’s prominence in establishing narrative parameters is welcome. After all, Cixous is a writer of drama as well as fiction and any playwright must acknowledge that a performance of her play is an interpretation—a variant of the textual original. Translingual translation serves a similar performative function, albeit via different mechanisms and for a different purpose.

In her 1990 Wellek Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine, (published as *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*), Cixous contemplated the difficulties and opportunities present in both English and French as languages and in translation between these two languages. She notes instances in the writings of Jean Genet and other French authors where English translation proves highly problematic. She also addresses the works of Clarice Lispector at length—writing foreign to both French and English, and thus only represented by Cixous here as an English translation. Cixous is very aware of the proprietary nature of languages, yet notes their ability to cross-pollinate each other. Here, her verb *transer* seems quite appropriate. It appears requisite to note the power of language to assist in discursive operations—to aid in the crossing of boundaries and the acknowledgment that such boundaries serve as opportunities as well as obstacles.

“Writing has returned,” begins the English translation of Cixous’s masterful *Jours de l’an*. Writing, it seems, had taken an absence from the author, the narrator, and perhaps even from the reader. With this line opening the book,

*Continued on p. 50*
the news of the return of writing comes simultaneously to the beginning of a new book, and thus truly heralds the return of the written word. The first few pages of Jours de l’an perform a function common to much of Cixous’s writing in that the reader is forced to think critically before he or she is even sure what he or she is thinking about. These pages invite deep consideration before the reader can even discern who the narrator is and where the plot may lead. The essence of writing is assured to be enough: writing is the predominant force within this novel and it constantly proclaims its presence in Cixous’s other books as well.

No one who has ever read any of Cixous’s fiction would doubt that writing for writing’s sake is valid to her purpose as an author, but few might realize that she explores the history of rhetoric, as well as literature, at every turn of the page. Cixous deals in the sublime in such a way that we are often not even aware of such as her locus. Cixous will often introduce a literary or historical reference and for the remainder of the book utilize it as a leitmotif. In Jours de l’an, her points of historical reference are often writers as writers and at the same time, writers as surrogates for the works they have written or even for the constructs associated with these works. Unlike writers such as Umberto Eco, who rely heavily on semiotic symbolism in their work, Cixous never entertains the language of semiotics so directly, but applies many of the concepts thereof nonetheless. Thus, the meaning of what a word represents and the meaning of the word as a discursive entity in its own right coexist in Cixous’s writing as one, but still as a plurality.

In his introduction to Cixous’s Wellek Library Lectures, Jacques Derrida hailed Cixous as the “greatest writer in what I will call my language, the French language”—a most laudable compliment given its source, but this brings us to consider how unique her writing is to French. In some ways, Cixous seems to seek the expatriate experience to be metamorphosed into a personal yet definitive example of a given nation’s literary life.

In Cixous’s relationship of artistic reference to Clarice Lispector, it is important to remember that Lispector is now considered a leading 20th-century Brazilian writer, although Lispector was actually born in the Ukraine and immigrated to Brazil as a young child. Thus, like Cixous, Lispector experienced being both a foreigner and native in the land she came to claim as her own. The psychological and epistemological value of this situation should not be underestimated. While Lispector appears to have manifested her sense of likeness/difference via narrative in her literature, Cixous seems more interested in various constructs of language and how these can influence plot. Part of the difference is certainly a personal one, but the professional backgrounds of Cixous and Lispector deserve comparison. Cixous was trained as an academic and has functioned as one while Lispector was by profession a journalist. Perhaps this helps explain why even Cixous’s stories that she claims to be greatly influenced by Lispector’s work are lacking of almost any of the tactile detail Lispector relies on so often. The role of language is pivotal in these differences. Lispector employs a no-nonsense, journalistic Brazilian Portuguese that conveys experience via sequential details and emotion via the interactions of characters. Lispector makes the pathos of her characters visible in the most literal sense and emotion via the trajectories of their lives. Cixous provides the same emotive effects, but through a close and constant extrapolation—via cultivated, plaintive, French—of the thoughts and feelings of her characters. The presences of these languages in the writing of both women feels natural and fluid yet somewhat self-conscious.

With the exception of Cixous’s plays, dialogue in the conventional sense is scarce in her writing. The reflective self is more often expressed than the interactive self, and words forming that self’s narrative usually appear to be both those of the fictional narrator and those of the author. The reader is often left with an impression that Cixous demands that we trust her narrator, but that we conversely do not expect the narrator to trust himself or herself very much. The concept of uncertainty as truth and certainty as a falsehood (i.e., that what is known may be less reliable than admitting that not much is known) is recurrent in her narrative, and is plaintively expressed through dialogue. Translating such dialogue is perhaps one of the greatest challenges in translating Cixous’s words out of French.

For example, in her play L’Histoire terrible mais inachevée de Norodom Shianouk, roi du Cambodge, much of
the dialogue revolves around the duplicity of truth as seen by various characters. It is only via their conversations that such truths and untruths are realized as they actually occur. Lacking as broad a base for narrative self-exposition—with the exception of monologues—in drama as she has available in prose fiction, Cixous allows her characters to narrate more for each other than simply for themselves and of themselves. The problem in translating this work is finding the best words to mimic how, in French, Cixous has constructed conversations and arguments between characters. Norodom Shianouk, roi du Cambodge has been translated into Danish and in that translation the discursive differences between French and Danish are readily apparent. In the Danish version, Den Frygtelige men Ufuldendte Historie om Norodom Sihanouk Konge af Cambodia, the words of interaction appear to be taken a bit too literally and are less empathic than the French original, leaving some passages of this otherwise faithful translation to appear at odds with the gracefulfulness and sense of humanity commonplace in Cixous’s writing. Of course, part of the impetus for translating a play is not only to have it read in the recipient language, but to have it performed in that language. Thus, the aforementioned role of performative interpretation effects a role in the realization of the work, as well as the part of translation.

The concept of dialogue replacing actions via semiotic representation is latent in Cixous’s drama. It is especially visible in L’Indiade, ou l’Inde de leurs rêves, where a conversation between Gandhi and the Muslim League’s leader, Jinnah, utilizes variants of Cixous’s own voice to realize the differences between the two men as leaders and as men, as well as the differences they argue over in regard to a separated or united India. Little physical action takes place during most of the dialogue between Gandhi and Jinnah, yet proactive traits of each man are introduced through their metaphors and the reasoning they imply through—we are led to assume—their so carefully chosen words. In this play, as with Norodom Shianouk, roi du Cambodge, Cixous makes little effort to provide a realistic portrait of the historical characters as one would find in a documentary or biographical work of fiction. Instead, she realistically portrays the political and emotional status of their cultures at the time periods represented. Despite Cixous’s acumen as a scholar, conveying the type of language in terms of specific words and syntax used by even as notable a figure as Gandhi is not central to the discourse of the play. Gandhi is instead presented here as a simulacrum of himself, a creation half of the actual man and half of the popular connotative model of Gandhi as a martyr as well as a leader. The translator, then, is left with the task of discerning where the dialogue is meant to inform the reader/viewer of the plot and where it is to inform him or her of the emotive disposition at that precise moment of the character speaking in the wake of the greater narrative.

Conclusions

Hélène Cixous is no stranger to translation, having had over 10 of her novel-length works of fiction plus several plays and numerous articles, lectures, and books of criticism translated into English and other languages, including Swedish, Dutch, Italian, and Slovak. In addition, Cixous herself has been consistently involved in translilingual literary scholarship in some manner, whether via her studies of Joyce and other English authors or through her critical writings on the translation of writers into French and other languages. In addition, Cixous also has translated works of fiction and drama, most notably her translation and adaptation of Aeschylus’s Les Euménides for a performance (and publication) by the Théâtre du Soleil. That the translation of her works is integral to the dissemination of her writing seems not only obvious, but indispensable to her purpose and approach as a writer deeply concerned with humanitarian topics. The concept of the book being not a finite carrier of the written word as much as it is a transient locus of the word is reiterated throughout much of Cixous’s fiction. This was made definitive in her opening Wellek Library Lecture, where she asked “how can we finish a book?” The short answer appears to be that we cannot. The book remains a passage we transverse, but not one we totally walk out of at a certain point. Translation is a necessary segment of that passage for both the reader and the book. Translation is a matter of access, as is language itself on a broader level.

In a sense, translating Cixous’s writing is a matter of translating
With(in) Translation: An Epistemology of the écriture of Hélène Cixous Continued

Hélène Cixous herself—moving her locus of thought from one sphere of language into another, to see what she can say in that venue. Beyond the application of the premises explored in this article to Cixous’s work, there should be a ready application of these constructs to other writers that defy conventions in their use of language, their daring, and their ingenuity. One would hope that Cixous’s scholarship on writers such as Jean Genet and Clarice Lispector can be brought to bear on the work of other writers whose prose prove enchantingly difficult, such as Marcel Proust and Arthur Rimbaud. Furthermore, the stance Cixous has taken in writing, and that her translators have reaffirmed in their renditions of her work, is that writing is both a necessity and an obligation for those who practice it. We need a spaciousness furnished through écriture—and an intimacy forged through the same—to better realize both ourselves and others in the world.

Note:
The exact works mentioned in this article are listed below. If a translation as well as the French original is mentioned, the translation is provided its own entry. Some of Cixous’s works have not been translated into English (or other languages) and hence do not have corresponding translations listed here. For quotations in the text, the page numbers cited refers to the French original, not the translation. For the reader interested in learning more about Cixous’s life and theories in a single volume, Susan Seller’s The Hélène Cixous Reader and Cixous’s Photos de Racine (translated as Hélène Cixous, Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing) both offer a good starting point to understanding the vast Cixousian world.

References


Is Sports Translation Technical? An Italian Translator’s Perspective Continued from p. 27

...reasons: 1) it’s a growing field, and 2) it flexes your mental muscles. Translators risk losing their flexibility by always using the same terminology and phraseology and always researching the same subjects. Your brain needs exercising, and sports translation is one way to keep up the cross-training.

Table 1

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<td>The Rule Book</td>
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Accreditation Forum

A Call for Graders by Terry Hanlen, Deputy Executive Director and Accreditation Program Manager

The 2000-01 exam year was a very challenging one. 1,095 exams were taken and almost 60% of them were either into or out of Spanish. Unfortunately, the English into Spanish workgroup was also hit hard by illness and personal crises that kept several of our most prolific graders from participating for months at a time. This caused grading to fall behind in spite of the heroic efforts of their colleagues, and reminded us of how vital each grader is to the process. It also reminded us of the importance of increasing and replenishing our grading pool.

Our program now has over 100 graders working in 24 language combinations. Some languages have only a few exams per year and may only have two or three available graders. Other combinations, including the two Spanish workgroups, have seven members each, but that is not nearly enough for their volume.

For this reason, we are again reaching out for more accredited members who wish to take on an additional responsibility in ATA. All graders need to be excellent translators, but not all excellent translators make good graders. Graders need to understand and agree with the basic philosophy of the program and work well with their colleagues, but they also need to possess a unique flexibility. They must be able to apply the basic and language-specific grading guidelines and be able to adapt them to unanticipated translation challenges. Grading consistency is a plus, but rigidity is a negative. If you possess these qualities and want to serve ATA and the translation community in a new way, read on.

All of our graders, except in new language combinations, are ATA members accredited in their grading language combination. Grader candidates should have passed the accreditation exam with superior performance, and must demonstrate the ability to evaluate exams according to accreditation program standards and grading guidelines. Individual workgroups make efforts to enlist graders with background and experience in each of our passage categories and, where needed, with expertise in the various regional specialities in a given language. Every effort is made to be inclusive.

Graders are expected to participate in grader training sessions at the annual ATA conference and to have ready access to e-mail for communication with the program manager, the language chair, and other graders. Graders are also expected to participate in the annual selection of exam passages, prepare sample translations of these, and collaborate with other graders in the workgroup to identify acceptable renditions, evaluate anticipated errors, and establish consistent grading practices.

Each exam is graded independently by two graders (and, in some cases, by a third). A new process begins with the current exam year: graders are expected to communicate, negotiate, and defend their initial grading when the first two graders disagree about whether or not a candidate passes two passages. The number of exams and practice tests a grader may evaluate varies by language combination, depending on the number of candidates and the number of graders in the workgroup. Some graders may see only one exam in a year, others a hundred or more.

When needed, potential new graders are contacted by the accreditation program manager. Interested candidates are asked to grade an exam from our archives according to grader guidelines and instructions. All grader candidates also sign a confidentiality agreement and submit a current résumé. After reviewing the graded exam, the language chair decides whether to invite the candidate to join the grading pool. On the recommendation of the language chair, graders are appointed by the Accreditation Committee chair. During their tenure as graders, they must perform all of the appropriate grading duties under guidance from, and review by, the language chair. They may resign or be retired at any time.

We are looking for a few good translators to join our grading workgroups, and I would invite you to submit your résumé and a letter of intent to me if you wish to become a grader for ATA. This invitation is open to anyone who is currently accredited by ATA. The job requires a commitment of time and dedication to your chosen profession. We pay a stipend, but it does not begin to match your salary as a translator. For more information or to apply, please contact me at terry@atanet.org or fax or mail your résumé and a letter of intent to: ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA, 22314 or 703-683-6122.

Call for Papers

Canadian Association for Translation Studies 15th Annual Conference

May 25-27, 2002 (Exact dates to be confirmed) • Toronto, Canada

Conference Theme: Translation and (Im)migration

Information: Dr. Anne Malena, Modern Language and Cultural Studies, 200 Arts Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E6 Canada. Tel: (780) 492-1187; Fax: (780) 492-9106; E-mail: amalena@ualberta.ca; Website: www.uottawa.ca/associations/act-cats/index.htm.
**Dictionary of Foods and Cookery**

**Author:** M. Eta Trabing  
**Publisher:** Eta Trabing  
**Publication date:** 2001  
**ISBNs:** 08-843-15606 (Book)  
0-88431-561-4 (CD-ROM)  
**Price:** $60 (Book)  
$40 (CD-ROM)  
**Available from:** ibd Ltd. or from Eta Trabing  
**Reviewed by:** Lilian Novas Van Vranken

**Specialty or field:** Foods (fruits, vegetables, herbs, fish, seafood, meats, etc.), international cooking, and nutrition terminology

**Language(s):** English into Spanish dictionary with Spanish to English reference section with Latin binomials

**No. of pages and/or entries:** 290 pages, plus 77 pages (Spanish to English reference section); 367 pages

**Type and quality of binding:** Soft cover, spiral binding

**Quality of paper and print:** Regular white paper with legible print

**Typeface and legibility:** Garamond; entries are in bold and subentries are indented in bold.

**Overall evaluation:** Excellent

It is a very thorough compilation of a large variety of fruits, vegetables, beef cuts, fish, pork, poultry, side dishes, international cuisine, pastas, cooking aids, spices, beverages (wines, hard liquor, beer, cocktails), food industry acronyms, and cooking techniques, among other exciting subjects.

Eta Trabing worked as an interpreter for the beef industry for several years, and the entries on beef, veal, lamb, and pork cuts are the result of her tireless efforts to gather terms from native speakers and industry specialists during her trips. A large part of her investigation was conducted when Internet resources were not readily available, so she spent countless hours double-checking and researching entries.

I was very fortunate to have Ms. Trabing’s first draft of the Dictionary of Foods and Cookery, so when I got the new printed edition in the mail, I quickly looked up the terms that had been missing in the first draft and was very glad to see they had been incorporated (e.g., “baked beans” and “black-eyed peas”).

After the translation for each entry, there is a listing of the different varieties. For example, “green bean/string bean/snap bean: n. judia verde, habichuela verde, alubia tierna, frijol verde, (Mex.) eote, (Arg.) chausca; es la vaina comestible verde; algunas variedades son: Kentucky Wonder, Blue Lake, Derby, Empress, Romano, Italian Roma \| vease también winged bean y wax bean.”

Even though not all the entries have country-specific references, most have their Latin binomials in parentheses. This is especially useful because many species do not have an equivalent in Spanish, and it is another source to cite when there is no “official” translation. For example, “gafftopsail catfish/sea catfish: bagre marino (bagre marinus or Felichthys felis).”

In some cases, entries are cross-referenced. For example, “lima bean,” is also listed under “beans.” I like this feature since dictionaries never seem to agree on how to list terms.

I did not see any filler words since there are so many entries specific to the food industry in this work. I only stumbled upon “nightclub,” but, after all, it is related to food and drink.

The appendices include very useful information such as conversion tables, weight and measures, oven temperatures, contents of cans in the U.S., and cooking temperatures.

It also contains a Spanish into English section, which is not a comparable dictionary, as Ms. Trabing explains, but a quick reference to the main entry in the English portion.

Even if you do not translate menus and recipe books full-time, food-related terms seem to crop up quite often in my daily work. Translators are very curious people by nature, and this dictionary fuels my desire to know interesting terms such as konjak, chirashi sushi, bladderwrack, pai chiu, garbure, greenling, and pipérade.

If you ever wanted to know everything about squash and potatoes, or if you ever woke up in the middle of the night wondering about the different types of grapes or wines from around the world, you will be satisfied with this dictionary. In most cases, the listing of food and drink varieties takes up a whole page! The Dictionary of Foods and Cookery is an exhaustive and trustworthy volume that is worth the not-so-pricey investment.

But the perfect conclusion to my enthusiastic search through this dictionary came when I found a term that once made my life miserable while translating a restaurant procedure manual: rarebit. When I found it in the Dictionary of Foods and Cookery, my joy was indescribable!

To cite Ms. Trabing’s own words in the foreword: “The dictionary writer is not the ultimate authority nor a prophet, but only a recorder of words and of present usage, thus a dictionary should be used only as a guide and not as an authoritative statement of inflexible fact. […] More than anything, the author hopes this work is useful to all who read and use it and to those who just browse through it—enjoy!”

I’m certainly having a good time with it, and I enjoy it daily. Well done!
Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmoor Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail address: JDecker@uplink.net. Please make your submissions by the 25th of each month to be included in the next issue. Generous assistance from proof-reader Per Dohler acknowledged.

If you go to the Winter Olympics coming very soon to Salt Lake City, or have anything to do with them, then you ought to know the linguistic oddity that is connected with Mormonism: the Deseret Alphabet. If the Translation Inquirer were to show you a page of text written in this 38-letter phonetic alphabet, invented for English by a group of men under the promotional leadership of Brigham Young, you might imagine it to be one of the languages from the ex-Soviet Trans-Caucasus. However, it is standard 19th-century English, with frequent diphthong-emphasizing spellings. Never a modern example of the language heritage...

[Abbreviations used with this column: E-English; F-French; G-German; I-Italian; L-Latin; R-Russian; Sp-Spanish; Sw-Swedish.]

New Queries

(E-F 11-01/1) A ProZ correspondent wanted French for the concepts paging out, which relates to swapping or paging out memory, and its opposite, paging in.

(E-Sp 11-01/2) Pushing on a string, as queried by a transatlantic correspondent, obviously has the meaning of applying force to something that then responds in an out-of-control, unpredictable manner, thus rendering the whole action useless. There must be a good colloquial Spanish equivalent, as in the sentence This view holds that lower interest rates will not stimulate increased consumer demand, and that the Federal Reserve is essentially “pushing on a string.”

(G-E 11-01/3) Meg Pedrick finds it easy to translate “Schwarz-Weiß-Anlage,” as found in a listing of “notwendige Baustelleinrichtungen ... für die Durchführung von Sanierungsmaßnahmen,” but has no idea of what it means. Among the other facilities are “Umzüge, Containerabstellflächen, Bereitstellungsflächen für sonstigen alt- und lastverdächtigen Bodenaushub, Reifenwäsche ...” One other sentence quoted as context by Meg provides another hint about “Schwarz-Weiß-Anlage,” perhaps: “Die Bereitstellung sonstiger Materialien erfolgt auf der Containerabstellfläche und im übrigen eingezäunten Bereich der benötigten Flächen zur Sanierungsmaßnahme (Schwarzbereich).”

(G-I 11-03/4) Described appropriately by the ProZ correspondent as a “ frase contemptuosa,” this sentence is from the law and patents field. Good English, as an intermediate step to what the Italian ultimately wanted, would also be useful: “Aufrechnungs- und Zurückbehaltungsrechte stehen XXX nur insoweit zu, als seine Gegenansprüche rechtskräftig festgestellt, unbestritten oder von YYY anerkannt sind.” Good luck!

(G-E 11-01/5) In a query relating to Austrian and German workers’ housing companies, “sozialverträglich” might mean compatible with social welfare, or maybe alternatively modelled on a social contract. Which is right, or is a third rendering possible?

(L-E 11-01/6) In Latin we also find problems regarding abbreviations. In this case the troublesome letters are “mu.” as in “Ioannes Blauet. ex culp. et exc. 1675.” A bit of background: the individual referred to is Juan Blavet, who did the art work and engraving for tablature editions of pieces written for guitar by the Spanish baroque guitarist Gaspar Sanz. The ProZ respondent who posed this query thinks that “mu.” could easily be “musicus” or “monument.” The art work done by Blavet is a full page drawing, not an illumination.

(R-E 11-03/7) A ProZ correspondent was at a loss with the following in the field of nursing text: In a query investigating possible...

(Sp-E 11-01/8) A schedule of instructions to bidders in a call for tenders was found by a transatlantic correspondent to have this sentence, with the troublesome part of it in bold print: “Un Oferente puede ser una persona natural, una entidad privada (firma), una entidad gubernamental, sujeto a lo dispuesto en la Sub-Clausula 4.6 de las IAO, o cualquier combinación de ellas que tengan la intención formal de establecer un acuerdo o sujeto a cualquier acuerdo existente, en forma de asociación en participación, consorcio o asociación.” What are we to make of the “asociación en participación?”

Replies to Old Queries

(E-F 9-01/5) (collaborate): Mary Briaud says that in some contexts, “collaborator” fits the bill as no other word does, and seems to be used in those situations without any overtones of World War II. Most of France’s active population is much younger than age 56, so the word has been renewed and revived. This said, it is not the most modern or conversational of words. She proposes a phrase she has often heard that is more upbeat: “travailleur en synergie” (working together as one).

(E-G 7-01/2) (floaters): In its meaning of substitute employee, floaters is indeed best translated in the field of nursing by “Springer,” says Julia DeWid, but it is not confined just to that profession. It can be used in the retail industry or any other industry that has departments that require general knowledge on a subject that can be transferred from one department to the next.
(E-G 9-01/3) (celebrity chef): Indeed, states Julia DeWid, nothing other than “Starkoch” is an appropriate equivalent for this.

(E-Sp 8-01/5) (Let’s move on): Mercedes Kirchberg suggests “Pasemos a otra cosa” for this, or, to be very informal: “A otra cosa, mariposa!”

(E-Sp 8-01/7) (SUV): Graciela Sokulski gets to the head of the matter by wondering what Americans mean by sport utility vehicle. If that could be solved, then perhaps “véhículo utilitario deportivo,” which she finds very literal, could be replaced by something clearer. “Camioneta” in numerous Latin American countries covers a wide variety of vehicles other than standard passenger cars, such as station wagons, pickups, and minibuses, so the advertisement by Ford Motor Company is not misleading, she believes.

(E-Sp 9-01/5) (college, university): Susana Greiss notes that in her native Uruguay, “preparatorio” is more or less equivalent to junior college. Moving up the ladder, she suggests “Universidad de nivel preparatorio” (for a two-year college) and “establecimiento de estudios superiores de 4 años” (for a four-year college). South America has the “Universidad,” and then the “Facultad,” where one does specialized studies, including law and medicine. Susana is quite perceptive in pointing out how, at this presumable apex of the educational ladder in America, English speakers then revert back to school: law school, medical school, and so forth.

(F-E 9-01/6) (“entreprise citoyenne”): Steven Sachs says the correct translation of this is corporate citizen. He has usually heard it rendered as “une bonne entreprise citoyenne,” a good corporate citizen.

(G-E 6-01/3) (“Tischkultur”): Julia DeWid disagrees with Sybille about this having to do with tablesetting as art or The Cultured Table. Not an art term at all, it instead relates to the culture in a country as regards to food culture and food preparation. Synonymous with Esskultur, it is best rendered into English as gastronomic culture.

(G-E 6-01/4) (“priesidial-magistral”): As found in Duden by Julia DeWid, along with a context check on the Internet, these appear not to relate to Switzerland. Therefore, she suggests that “präsidial” pertains to the president or chairmanship; “magistral” is a word from the medical field, indicating a medicine that is prepared according to a prescription.

(G-E 9-01/7) (“Leistungsschutzberichtige”): This, says Julia DeWid, is a word pertaining to the protection one has for his creation in regards to artistic and economic investment. It goes hand in hand with “Urheberrecht” (copyright), which indicates and protects the intellectual property of a creator. She suggests person fully entitled to protection performance or entitlement to protection of performance right.

(G-I 8-01/9) (“EO”): Taking the query perhaps partway to its destination, Sigrid Junkermann found that an Altavista search revealed it might possibly be “Entgeltsordnung.”

(G-Sw 8-01/11) (“...Scheinselbstständigkeit mit einhergehendem Unterlassen der Beschränkungen der Arbeitszeit...”): According to Sigrid Junkermann, many companies in Germany hire people who are genuine employees as “Scheinselbstständige,” pseudo-independent contractors, in order to save on costs related to regular employment and to circumvent (“unterlaufen”) restrictions on work hours. Apparently millions of people work in this way.

Per Dohler believes that cause and effect have been reversed in the sentence in Swedish suggested last time by Dan Lufkin. Per proposes “att lösa problemet med skensjälvständighet och dess biverkan, nämligen att arbetstidslagens bestämmelserna kringgås” best preserves the original German. For the entire phrase in question, see the ATA Chronicle for August, page 62.

(Sp-E 8-01/12) (“distracto de la donación”): According to Sharlee Merner Bradley, West’s Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business defines the first word as mutual rescission of a contract. Therefore, “el distracto de la donación” could be mutual rescission of a donation.

This column will reach you when the holiday season is just beginning. I thank all who contributed, and wish them all a jolly season. Please continue to help to make this column a helpful one in 2002!

---

**TWO LINES**

*2001 Issue: Crossings*

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Unintentionally Funny

How does a translator deal with a text whose sensibility is so different from the contemporary one that a straightforward translation can sound like an intentional parody? The answer is the same as the one to the riddle, “How do porcupines make love?”

The problem arises again and again in the genre in which Ronnie Apter and I specialize: opera librettos, particularly those written in the early and mid-19th century when Romanticism held sway. Surprisingly, although many earlier librettos also present this problem, a few earlier ones, including some set by Mozart, do not.

The problem is especially acute for the libretto of the first Romantic opera to achieve a lasting place in the repertory, Carl Maria von Weber’s Der Freischütz (first performed 1821) with a libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind. This opera includes the following elements which are risible and/or peculiar to the modern sensibility: a matter-of-fact acceptance of guns and hunting exceeding that of most contemporary pro-gun groups; the shooting of an eagle, which, when it falls at the characters’ feet, never looks like anything but a rubber chicken to a contemporary audience; female characters so passive that, except for the variety provided by the sound of their voices, they might as well be eliminated from the story; characters who take themselves absolutely seriously, with no ironic detachment whatsoever; and spooky special effects which almost invariably look hokey to an audience used to Hollywood spectacles.

For example, in the climactic scene of Act II, when the two principal male characters are casting magic bullets, “There is the sound of barking and neighing in the air. Misty forms of hunters, both on foot and on horseback, with stags and hounds, fly through the air. An invisible male chorus sings.” And among the words it sings are “jo ho, wau wau,” which we left as “yo ho, wow wow,” hoping that in context it would not get a horse-laugh (it didn’t).

More difficult are the words of the hero Max. In his first big aria (the music of which is unfortunately reminiscent of “Tiptoe Through the Tulips”), he sings:

Durch die Wälder, durch die Auen
zog ich leichten Sinns dahin!
Alles, was ich konnt’ erschauen,
war des sichern Rohrs Gewinn.

A literal translation is:

Through the forests, through the meadows
I trod light-heartedly!
Everything I could see
was a prize for my reliable gun.

That “everything,” unfortunately, allows a translation very reminiscent of Tom Lehrer’s “You just stand there looking cute, and when something moves, you shoot!” One way to avoid such a translation is to translate using archaic (or pseudo-archaic)iction, letting the audience know that the sensibility is not contemporary. Here is the Edwardian translation by Natalia MacFarren and Theodore Baker:

Through the forests, through the meadows,
joy was wont with me to stray:
every bird that roamed in azure
was my rifle’s easy prey.

Unfortunately, such a translation, especially when sung, is likely to be almost incomprehensible to a contemporary audience. Here is our version:

I was carefree as I hunted
through the forest in search of game.
Not a creature I sighted
could escape my rifle’s aim.

Our version, while not intentionally Lehreresque, could in fact be heard that way, and therefore must rely to a large extent on the performers and stage director to convey that Max’s words are not a parody.

Submit items for future columns via e-mail to hermanapter@earthlink.net or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 5748 W Brooks Rd, Shepherd MI 48883-9202. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mis-translations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.

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