



THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR



ENDANGERED SPECIES? HOW ABOUT ENDANGERED LANGUAGES?

By Slavica Zecevic

When a bald eagle was in a group of the endangered species, we used all of our power not to let that precious bird disappear. When the world's languages die, we just let it happen without giving it our real attention.

We know that Europe's colonial conquests dramatically changed the map of linguistic diversity, eliminating at least 15 per cent of all languages spoken at the time. These languages were sacrificed in order to establish an "official language". It was a deliberate move of national governments to eradicate minority languages.

Today, we do not need a conquest to kill a language. Man and Mother Nature easily take care of that. When a man decided to build dams on the Kwai River in Thailand, he flooded villages of Ugong-speaking people, forcing them to migrate into Thai-speaking areas. There are only 100 Ugong-speakers left nowadays. We still remember the earthquake

in India in 2001 and the tsunami that hit Asia in December of last year. 30,000 Kutchi speaking individuals lost their lives in the earthquake. Kutchi is a dying ancestral Indian language. Additionally, the tsunami has had a devastating impact on many other language communities.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) data show that half of the 6,900 existing languages spoken in the world are at risk of extinction within the next 50 to 100 years.

Are we aware that we ourselves also contribute to this? We as parents think that it is an advantage for our children to switch to another language depriving them of their mother tongue. And, what's worse, the so-called intellectuals, the young, and translators who are too lazy to do some research, overuse foreign words, making them a part of everyday speech, changing the structure of own language to make it more like

the one they are feeding on. So, everything is "cool" to them and they are unaware that this little word change has planted a poison that will slowly undermine the foundation of their language and , finally, slowly kill it. ■

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A NOTE ON OUR MEETINGS

By Elisabeth Ranhe, Program Director

This is a note of thanks to the speakers who kindly agreed to devote their time to the New York Circle of Translators in this second half of the year.

At our September meeting, our members benefited greatly from the presentation of Jon Ritzdorf, Localization Engineering Architect and Professor at NYU and Rutgers University, who provided fundamental information and advice on software applications and web-based technologies for professional translators.

Our more recent speaker, Jordan Fox, who is ATA-certified and has been a

court interpreter for over five years, passed on a lot of his knowledge and experience to the attendees at our October meeting, covering all relevant issues such as consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, note-taking techniques, conduct, training resources, testing and certification information.

We are all most appreciative of our speakers' collaboration, which constitutes the means through which the Circle pursues professional development and improvement to translators and interpreters. ■

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

THE ART AND CRAFT OF TRANSLATION

By Rosene Zaros

After spending an evening with a group of translators and interpreters, I am convinced that it would be difficult to find a group of people who are more dedicated to their profession. This dedication made me begin to think about the qualities inherent in a good translator or interpreter for, while there are similarities, there are differences.

Both, certainly, are very open to "the other." Their thorough knowledge of both the source and target languages and cultures makes even the idea of "the other" an idea that is in constant flux and revision. This is particularly true for interpreters in certain fields such as court interpreting. There is no time to search for "le mot juste." They must quickly convey the message accurately and in the appropriate register. Good interpreters must be able to focus on the moment. There is no time and there is no reason to read between the lines. It is the role of the interpreter to convey the words of each party as exactly as possible.

Translators, on the other hand, frequently struggle to find the exact word to convey the source language meaning as they perceive it. If they do not know the meaning, they will do the necessary research. This insatiable curiosity is a requisite for a successful translator. Good translators can work

alone for hours without becoming lonely or bored. Good interpreters thrive on personal contact.

Yet, both are involved in the same process: giving "voice" to "the other". One might ask what would motivate someone to make a career of translation or interpretation. At one time, it may have been for financial reasons.

It was a way for immigrants with even a meager knowledge of the language of their new country to make a living. That is no longer the case. Gone are the days when someone who knew two languages could get a job and "learn on the job." With globalization and the advent of technology, today's translators and interpreters have emerged as highly trained linguists specializing in a variety of fields. Many colleges and universities now have translation programs where students can learn the craft of translation. The art of translation is a bit more ephemeral. It requires an almost incredible sense of judgment as to appropriateness and register in the target language. It is not easy for translators who are almost always in a limbo space between languages to recognize that they have retained the syntax of the source language or have used an expression that may seem a little odd to the target language reader.

Perhaps the most important thing for a

translator is to be able to write well in the target language for translation is even more demanding, in some ways, than writing. When I write, I choose the words that I feel best express what I want to say. I may search for a word that expresses the exact nuance of what I want to say. I may even grieve a little bit that I cannot take a word from Spanish or French, because the French or Spanish word has the exact nuance that I want to convey. I am still working with my own ideas. When I translate, I am obligated to work with the original author's ideas. It is my goal to give voice in the target language to those ideas. It is a big responsibility.

In this issue, various contributors will share their ideas about both the art and craft and, last but not least, about the business of translation. We must not get so involved in the art and craft of our profession that we forget that it is also a business.

As I said in my first column, I want this column to be a platform for dialogue with readers. In the last issue, we printed several articles dealing with challenges faced by translators and interpreters. On the next page is a response from the ATA about an article in last month's issue of the *Gotham Translator*. ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR



Dear colleagues:

In response to the articles published in the October 2005 issue of *The Gotham Translator*, Judith Kenigson Kristy has prepared the following remarks, which are a faithful reflection of the views of both NAJIT and ATA. We appreciate the opportunity to provide a detailed explanation of the rationale behind our stance.

Marian S. Greenfield
President, American Translators
Association

In the wake of the conviction of Mohammed Yousry for defrauding the U.S. Government and concealing material support to terrorist activity, a number of letters have been written supporting Mr. Yousry. Now two articles with a similar theme have appeared in the October issue of your newsletter: "Occupational Hazards" by Marguerite Shore, and "Perils of Translation in Post 9/11 America: The Case of Mohammed Yousry" by Alison Dundy. These letters and articles decry Mr. Yousry's conviction as "wrongful" (Dundy), and take the ATA and NAJIT to task for maintaining a neutral stance on guilt or innocence, while underlining the need for education and vigilance in upholding the strict standards for ethics and protocols demanded of interpreters in the legal domain.

In the light of anticipated appeals, our associations have preferred not to publish statements containing concrete examples of some of the ethics issues in question. However, the rhetoric has reached a level where the *Gotham* articles have characterized our response as "cowardly and evasive" (Shore, quoting Hess), and representing mere "legalistic bombast about protocols and neutrality" (Dundy). We

beg to differ. While respecting the right of every individual to have and express his or her opinion, we would be doing the interpreting community a disservice if we did not continue to stress that the frequently mentioned "risks of doing one's job well" (Shore) are greatly reduced, if not completely eliminated, by strict adherence to proper interpreting standards of performance.

In the specific case of Mr. Yousry, it is regrettable that instruction about these important standards does not seem to have been provided, or if it was, it was not sufficiently absorbed and/or reinforced to allow Mr. Yousry to withstand pressures to perform tasks and take positions that are patently contrary to the most basic canons observed by legal interpreters.

The defense strategy used by Mr. Yousry's legal representatives emphasized that he was "just doing his job" and the majority of articles in support of Mr. Yousry underline this idea—that Mr. Yousry was merely "carrying out his duties as an interpreter, following the instructions of Stewart, the lawyer" (Shore), suggesting that if he can be convicted for that, then interpreters and translators in the legal domain are in danger when interpreting for attorneys or their agents who may be carrying out suspect or even illegal activities themselves. But is this really the case? More to the point—was Mr. Yousry really just doing his job, performing as a "court-appointed interpreter," or was he doing something else—taking on a role that allowed a jury to view his actions as independent and self-initiated? Is the "translator" defense really any more than a red herring?

In the reports of both Shore and Dundy, there are many references to the proper

role of the interpreter. Shore reports on the presentation of Ellen Sowchek, stating that an interpreter is "required to speak in the same grammatical person as the individual for whom he/she is interpreting," and must "convey not only the speaker's meaning but also the style and register of speech, and to do so in a neutral fashion, without adding or subtracting from the original message." This is quite correct and in accordance with the canon of ethics that requires accuracy and prohibits changing, adding to, or omitting the words of the speaker. Nevertheless, if one reads the actual transcripts used as evidence in the case, that is, the transcripts of the videotaped jail visits in which Mohammed Yousry acted as interpreter between client Sheik Rahman and attorney Lynne Stewart, there are so few instances of accurate interpreting and so many continuous examples of paraphrasing, information added, information omitted, and personal commentary offered, that it is hard to see how this performance can be classed as "interpreting."

Likewise, Dundy states: "It is the job of the translator to facilitate communication. A translator's own views and voice are essentially invisible and silent." Yet the jail interview transcripts are literally filled with Mr. Yousry's opinions, clever strategies and personal comments. Is this the work of a "neutral" party, an "impartial" interpreter? If Mr. Yousry had limited himself to interpreting what the two parties said (acting exclusively as *their voices* instead of introducing his own voice, his own ideas) in strategy

planning and personal exchanges with the Sheik and Stewart, would a jury have been able to consider him as part of a conspiracy or would they have seen a mere language conduit, detached and uninvolved in the process?

Shore speaks of the "impossibility of neutrality in charged situations," yet every day, in hundreds of courts, depositions, attorney visits, proffers, and so on, interpreters are performing impartially, maintaining neutrality and keeping their ideas and opinions to themselves. This is one of the hallmarks of a professional interpreter in the legal domain. Those who do not maintain neutrality are, indeed, subjecting themselves to risks ranging from burn-out to prosecution, but true professionals generally have sufficient trust in their own abilities, as well

as in the fact that *they do not really know, nor do they need to know, who is guilty and who is innocent*. Neutrality, for court interpreters, is precisely that: it means not taking sides at all, under any circumstances; not helping, not harming, not participating—in short, not doing anything that can be construed as an activity that does not constitute completely impartial interpreting or translating.

There are so many examples of ethical errors to be seen in the 275 pages of the jail visit transcriptions, and so many defects in the entire role and performance of Mr. Yousry as an "interpreter" in this case, that it would be impossible to outline all of them here. Suffice it to say that if people continue to follow the red herring of the "just doing his job as a

translator" defense, and if they neglect to read the jail interview transcriptions, they will never correctly understand the basis for the ATA/NAJIT joint statement, and will not know what it means to say that "we do not take a stand on guilt or innocence." Mr. Yousry may be guilty or innocent of the criminal charges brought against him. We do not know and probably will never know what his intentions may have been in this respect. His lack of professionalism, however, quite surely had a serious impact on increasing the dangers to which he exposed himself. As members of the interpreting and translating community, that is what ought to concern us most.

Judith Kenigson Kristy
 Director, National Association of
 Judiciary Interpreters and Translators ■

THE JOB OF THE JUDICIARY INTERPRETER

Ms. Dundy states that "Mohammed Yousry was convicted for doing nothing other than his job." In our view, a judiciary interpreter is not doing his job when he does the following:

- 1) fails to speak in the same voice, register or manner of the speaker.** This occurs throughout all 275 pages of the May 19 and 20, 2000, videotaped jail interview transcriptions. Starting on 19, v. 1, p. 6, l. 11* — Yousry: "She is saying, Sir, that her favorite person is Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman." This type of inaccurate, indirect speech continues throughout.
- 2) summarizes, adds to, and omits parts of the speakers' communications.** This occurs throughout all of the transcriptions; in fact it is difficult to find many examples of actual, accurate interpreting in the entire corpus. Examples: 19, v. 1, pp. 12 - 15, 21 - 25, also 20, v. 1, pp. 1-3.
- 3) carries on lengthy personal conversations with the client in a foreign**

language, in spite of the fact that the attorney is not speaking of, or may not even have knowledge of, the matters they are discussing. This occurs throughout; see 19, v. 1, pp. 16 - 18 — "I'm telling about Tuesday now"; 19, v. 2, pp. 2 - 8 — at the end of these seven pages Stewart says: "Yousry, stop and translate now," since she has no idea what they are talking about; 20, v. 2, pp. 30-31.

4) offers political advice or suggests strategies. 19, v. 1, pp. 24-25 — Yousry suggests that even if Farrakhan does not succeed in visiting the Sheikh, it will be good publicity for him if the newspapers say that he has not been allowed to visit the Sheikh. This is one of many suggestions made.

5) receives or has possession of faxes, letters and telephone calls on behalf of the client. 19, v. 1, p. 7; 19, v. 1, p. 38; 20, v. 2, p. 25, l. 22.

6) deceives the authorities about his true intent in speaking to the attor-

ney. 19, v. 1, pp. 49 - 51 (starting on p. 49, l. 18); 19, v. 2, p. 29, ll. 4, 13, 15; p. 30, l. 9; 20, v. 2, p. 3 ("I am looking at you, [Lynn] so they get to think I am translating..."); 20, v. 1, p. 17, l. 5 to p. 18, l. 11; 20, v. 1, p. 24, l. 19, and so on...

7) is responsible for ancillary activities connected with the case, such as making calls, buying newspapers to read to the client, bringing him candy, handling money... 20, v. 1, p. 3, ll. 22-26, and pp. 19-20; 20, v. 3, p. 2, l. 1-10. There are also frequent mentions of "we" ("we received a letter..."), indicating that he is considered part of the defense team, rather than just an interpreter.

*The references are taken from the transcripts of jail visits made on May 19 and 20, 2000, available at www.lynnestewart.org/transcripts.html. The date of the visit is indicated by 19 or 20, the specific videotape is indicated by v. 1, v. 2 or v. 3, pages are indicated by p. 1 and lines are indicated by l. 1 etc. For example, 19, v. 1, p. 1, l. 1, indicates: Jail visit May 19, 2000, videotape transcription 1, page 1, line 1.



HOW TO GET INTO THE TRANSLATION BUSINESS, A WORKSHOP

Reviewed by Rosene Zaros

We are all at various places on the journey to establishing ourselves as translators. Some of our readers have been working in the business for years while others are students struggling to break into it. The same diversity was apparent at the Workshop, which was held on Saturday, October 22, 2005. The backgrounds of the people attending the workshop were very diverse, ranging from thinking they might be interested to having completed the NYU's (or another school's) Certificate Program.

The panel was made up of two freelance translators, José Ramon Asteinza and Gloria Barragán, and three people representing agencies: Natasha Bonilla from Eriksen Translations, Inc., Farzanah Gangjee from Language Works and Ed Zad from LionBridge.

Although there were differences in perspective, there were certain things that they all stressed:

- Networking. Begin by staying in touch with classmates. One day you will be colleagues. Translators help other translators. Extend your network to other professions, translation agencies and project managers.
- Join professional associations: ATA and local groups. Check for local chapters in your area. This is an excellent way to meet other translators and project managers.

- Education. In the past it was possible to break into the profession and learn on the job. That is no longer the case. There are certain things that you are expected to know.
- Translate into your native language.
- Have specific industry/subject matter experience; i.e., legal, financial, automotive, medical, etc.
- Deliver projects on time.
- Read and follow instructions
- Have a working knowledge of CAT tools. Many clients expect you to have this knowledge.
- Be flexible with format, changes, rates — the more experience you have the more you will be able to charge.
- Be proactive — ask questions, point out inconsistencies when you see them. If you can save the client money, you will be more valuable.
- Have a mentor — the ATA has an excellent mentoring program.
- The translation business is booming. There is plenty of work, but allow yourself enough time to break into it.

TIPS ON MAKING AN IMPRESSION

- Have an impeccable résumé.
 - Visible name and contact information.
 - Working language pairs.
 - Expertise — don't try to be a jack-of-all-trades. Limit yourself to those fields that you know very well.
 - Put the important information at the top.

- Offer to take a sample test.
- Make a connection with someone on the inside.
- Visit Agencies.
- Do an internship.

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR DAY

(these are tips that are useful to students, too)

- Keep work space separate from living space.
- Maintain regular working hours and stick to them.
- Set clear boundaries. Do not allow yourself to be interrupted.
- Check e-mail frequently. ■

SOME USEFUL LINKS FOR TRANSLATORS

ATA

www.atanet.org

NYCT

www.nyctranslators.org

NAJIT

www.najit.org

ProZ

www.proz.com

Translator's Café

www.TranslatorsCafe.com

SDL/Trados

www.translationzone.com

www.Aquarius.net



COURT INTERPRETING

By Jordan Fox

A court interpreter's function in the court room is to provide the non-English speaking

or limited English-proficient witness the ability to hear everything that is occurring in the courtroom as it is occurring. It is the interpreter's job to interpret absolutely everything that is spoken in the courtroom. This includes stutterings, stammerings, indelicate acts, and curses. And these utterances must also be rendered in the appropriate register i.e.: formal, casual, street, or legal. To provide this service, the interpreter works in three modes: consecutive, simultaneous, and sight interpretation.

Consecutive interpretation is used when the witness is on the stand and, in general, when any other party to the proceeding is interacting with the person in need of the interpreter. This mode may or may not involve note-taking, depending on the preferences and capabilities of the interpreter. Quite often, the witness speaks for such a long time, that the interpreter must take some notes in order to retain the whole message. One method of note taking is the Rozan method, which was developed and used until the Nuremberg trials, the first time that simultaneous interpretation was used.

The Rozan method entails seven principles of note taking: transposition of the idea instead of the word, abbreviation rules, linking of ideas, negation, emphasis, vertical arrangement, and indentation. The first principle, transposition, refers to notes which should not

read word for word but reflect the idea of the utterance, expressed symbolically. The second, abbreviations, entails a specific way in which words should be abbreviated: writing the first few letters and then writing the last few in smaller letters to save time, such as "qua^m" for "qualification." This way, the word is not confused with other ones which initially resemble this word, such as "quality," or "qualifier." A tense such as the past or future could be abbreviated as "-ed" or "w" (for "will") respectively. Smaller words can be substituted for larger, more formal ones; "in closing, I'm grateful for . . ." could be written as "end, thanks".

"Linking of ideas" refers to the relationship between thoughts in an utterance. Rozan ascribes certain symbols to indicate the various relationships. When note-taking, one may use the term "WHY" to indicate an explanatory relationship between two thoughts which, in the original utterance may have been "due to," "because," as a result of," or any other term that signals that one thought explains the other. Other symbols, their meaning, and examples thereof are:

THO: (contrastive) in spite of, even though

BUT: (restrictive) except, besides

IF: (speculative) supposing, assuming, let's imagine

AS TO: (referential) regarding, relating to, dealing with, speaking of, as for

SO: (conclusive) thus, consequently, summing up, in closing

Quite often, the witness speaks for such a long time, that the interpreter must take some notes in order to retain the whole message.

Other note-taking strategies used in the Rozan method involve expressions of negation and emphasis. The former may be indicated simply by putting a line through the word modified by the negative i.e.: "I ~~re^{ce}ed~~" means "I didn't receive" The latter may

be indicated by underlining the word to which the modifier refers, such as "poor," to mean "very poor." Additional emphasis may be added with a second line to signify "extremely poor."

Rozan stresses the use of vertical arrangement of notes in order to express links which may be otherwise expressed by words, thereby avoiding the annotation of linking words. One idea can be superimposed on another to signify "regarding," "dealing with," "about," etc. He also emphasizes the use of indentation to avoid repeating the same phrase or idea. For example, "The report was issued on January 7, 2003. This document set forth . . ." could be rendered as follows:

Reprt out 1/7/03
 _____ set 4th

This way, one avoids having to repeat the same idea.

Interpreters are cautioned about the over-use of symbols. If too many are used,

notes become indecipherable. Many interpreters have their own list of symbols for words or phrases which appear often in their particular environment. Rozan groups symbols into three basic groups: expression, motion, and relationship. Some of the symbols he uses for the first category are:

: to convey expressions of opinion such as think, believe, views, considers,

" to convey expressions of communication such as speak, talk, declare, state, respond, affirm, etc.,

O (with dot in middle) to convey debate, discussion, argument, conflict, etc.

OK to convey approval, agreement, acceptance, judgment in favor of, etc., and

OK to convey refusal, rejection, judgment against, disapproval, etc.

As for motion, Rozan would use the symbol → to indicate give to, submit to, provide, turn over, delivered, etc. The ↑ and ↓ may also be used to mean, respectively, increase, augment, rise, raise, quicken and decrease, diminish, lower, decline, and slow. Finally, the symbol [] may be used to indicate a situation i.e.: "in this situation," "under these circumstances," "in which he finds himself," and "to put the issue in perspective." All of these symbols may obviously be used with one's own.

The simultaneous mode of interpreting is generally used to interpret dialogue to a party who is not involved in the interaction, such as exchanges between judges and attorneys, judges and another witness, the attorney and another witness, etc. There is almost no time to write something down and if there is, it is usually limited to recurring information, dates, and other numbers. Quite often, if

the interpreter misses something, he or she must keep interpreting, unless the omitted utterance is of importance. In this case, the interpreter must ask the speaker to repeat what he or she said. The interpreter's delivery of the information must be level, smooth, unhurried and clear.

The third mode of interpretation is sight. This is when the interpreter is asked to interpret a written document either on or off the record. This can be in both directions. An interpreter is typically asked to interpret foreign documents into English when they are regarding the witness and from his or her country. These include, marriage, birth, and death certificates, powers of attorney, divorce decrees, and abstracts of certificates. The interpreter may also be asked by the court to interpret rulings, decisions and judgments for proceedings held previously but where the judged reserved his or her decision to be able to write it at a later time. Other documents that may be interpreted into the witness' language are motions made by the other side, transcripts of depositions, and interrogatories or written questions that the other side has compelled the witness to answer. On occasion, the interpreter may be asked to translate a document so that it may be entered into evidence, or a respondent's written answer to a petitioner's claim in civil court.

If you are interested in working as a court interpreter, you may already have the tools at hand to practice. Television shows involving courtroom dramas or law enforcement such as "Law and Order" are perfect to practice interpreting as well as the channel "Court TV." All one needs is a recorder to record oneself and a VCR to record the show.

Additional information may be found at the following websites:

www.sdneyinterpreters.org/index.php?page=fact_sheet.html: For information on working in Federal Courts in Manhattan

www.judiciary.state.nj.us/interpreters/index.htm: information on court interpreting in New Jersey

http://www.ncsconline.org/d_research/courtinterp.html: National Center on State Courts court interpreting information

<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/interpreters/examover.pdf>: Overview of New Jersey written exam.

www.abanet.org/abastore: American Bar Association website for purchase of legal texts

http://www.ncsconline.org/wc/publications/Res_CtInte_EnglishLegalGlossaryPub.pdf: Consortium Glossary of Commonly Used Court & Justice System Terminology

www.najit.org: National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators

[www.cps.ca.gov/test_registration/FCIC E-Spanish/files/spwtest.pdf](http://www.cps.ca.gov/test_registration/FCIC_E-Spanish/files/spwtest.pdf): Sample certification test in Spanish for Federal Courts.

<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/interpreters/dict.pdf>: Essential dictionaries for court interpreting in various languages.

If you are interested in learning about working conditions and compensation in the tri-state area, and did not attend my presentation in October, I would be happy to email you the information I distributed at the meeting. You may reach me at jordanfox@earthlink.net. ■

EDITING: TRANSLATION'S VITAL ACT TWO

By Betty Welker

Translators spend a great deal of time perfecting their translation skills, keeping these skills up-to-date and paying attention to the business aspects of the profession. Much of our effort is devoted to terminology issues. But there is one vital area of the translation process that gets little attention. I am speaking of the editing process, that is, the process by which a translation is assessed and decisions are made about what the final translation product will look

like. What happens to that translation once it is submitted to the translation company? What is the role of the editor? What constitutes Act Two? One of the e-groups I subscribe to had a long and interesting discussion recently when someone asked: who is ultimately responsible for a translation: the editor or the translator? Opinions were divided.

Although we can all agree that translations need editing and that good editing improves a translation, there seems to be no single definition of the editor's role. For example, with regard to terminology changes, when an editor makes changes and the translator is not asked to approve those changes, it seems clear that the editor has been given responsibility for the edited product. On the other hand, if the translator is provided with an opportunity to accept or reject these changes, then the translator has the final responsi-

bility. No one is going to be certain unless this is clarified upon acceptance of the assignment.

My research into this topic raises many more questions. Do most translation companies assume that editors know

Although we can all agree that translations need editing and that good editing improves a translation, there seems to be no single definition of the editor's role.

what the edit should entail without those parameters being clearly spelled out? Has the editor been retained because she has equivalent or more expertise in the subject area than the translator? If there are terminology issues, is

the editor to consult with the translator or make the changes on her own. Should these changes be cleared with the translator? What if this requires extensive research? Are we to operate on the basis of assumptions? It seems easier to define what the responsibilities of the translator are than those of the editor. If the Project Manager has failed to provide guidelines for the edit, the editor should ask for clarification on the scope of the edit.

Surely there are elements that are common to every editing job. No one would disagree that an editor should review the translation for grammar, punctuation, and style, consistency of terminology, omissions and errors. But there are times when even these basic elements give rise to questions. For example, if the translation company does not provide a style sheet, what style guidelines should the



editor follow? Should it be the translator's, the source text or does the translation company follow a specific one such as the Chicago Style Manual or the New York Times Style Guide. And more basically, should the editor even be checking style, or will that be left to the proofreading or quality control process of the company.

I would argue for more transparency and information. Every translation company should have a written policy including guidelines regarding what is expected of the editor, and these guidelines should be provided to the editor upon acceptance of the assignment. Unfortunately, I have rarely seen this done. Perhaps it is time for editors to take a proactive stance and ask for more information. It would also be helpful to know what happens to the translation after it has been submitted by the editor. For example, is there a quality control process and what does it consist of? It's clear we need a further dialog on these and other issues. ■

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS: ONLINE TRANSLATOR COMMUNITIES AND OTHER PAPER-LESS AIDS

By Karl D. Gluck



The most frustrating problem a translator comes up against has to be a word that cannot be found. You look in your favorite dictionary. It is not there. You look in a more comprehensive dictionary. It is not there either. Then you have that sinking feeling in your stomach: "where do I go next?" You start to wish that the native speaker of your source language whom you worked with ten years ago (and of whom you asked hundreds of questions) was still around. Of course, having people to talk to in addition to looking through dictionaries or websites is a good thing. I'm sure many of us, like me, have personally contacted other members of the Circle when we have questions and other members have contacted us also.

Well, aside from your co-workers, friends or members of the Circle, there are other people to answer questions for you.

<http://www.proz.com> is a website that calls itself "The Translation Workplace." In addition to having a "Web Term Search" option, which brings up your search term in several online dictionaries, one can also ask a KudoZ question to get answers from others who use the site.

The "Web Term Search" option under the KudoZ menu searches for the term you put in several different on-line dictionaries, which are different for each language. For one of my source languages, Russian, there is a link to a translator's website <http://www.multitrans.ru/> (unfortunately only for Russian paired with other languages, and the site is only in Russian). If there is no entry for the word you are looking up, it will direct you to "ask the forum." This, like Proz's KudoZ, enables you to ask for an explanation from others who use the site. I put a question in Friday night and by Saturday morning, had six responses and my problem was solved! In looking through dictionaries for other languages in the "Web Term Search" like French, Spanish and German, I did not see anything like multitrans' Forum on the websites for those languages.

Proz also has a glossary where members can enter terms and their translations. This information then becomes available to all site users. When you enter a term in the Web Search Term section, listings from these glossaries will come up as well. These glossaries can be browsed in the "KudoZ Open Glossary" section. But since this section is divided into numerous glossaries of different subjects that only contain a few entries each, accessing the glossary this way is only good for browsing terms to learn new vocabulary. If you want to search for a specific term, it is best to use the Web Term Search and the Proz glossary entries that include your term are shown under that.

Proz, like so many websites, allows you to register for free to access some other features that the unregistered user cannot. If you register, for example, and enter some terms into a glossary you have created, you will be awarded "BrowniZ." These are points that you can use on the site, mainly to search for information about translation companies and site members' experience with them.

Of course, there are paid memberships at different rates with different benefits—certain translation jobs are only available to those with paid memberships, for example.

It is easy to ask a question of other proz.com members if you aren't getting what you want from the "Web Term Search" feature. However, there are lim-

Proz.com also has a glossary where members can enter terms and their translations. This information then becomes available to all site users.

its—if you are not registered with the site, you can ask one question over a 24 hour period. If you are registered, but not a "platinum" (paying) member, you can ask five. If you are a "platinum" member, you can ask 15 a day. There is a lot of activity around questions asked and answers come pretty

quickly. Answerers can also specify a degree of certainty in their answers and other site users can agree or disagree with the answer. In this way, the asker can be more assured that the answer is cor-

rect. Marian Greenfield, a Circle member and prominent translator, says, "Proz is a good place to meet other translators online and to benefit from access to translators all over the world when you have queries, as long as you carefully evaluate the responses you receive, as they are likely to vary greatly in reliability." Reliability is a key word here, and it is good that Proz allows other translators/site users to grade answers as far as accuracy is concerned.

One of the first things any translator should learn is that bilingual dictionaries sometimes can be wrong or not have an entry for the word that is sought. I think anyone who has even a little bit of experience trying to find a word in an online bilingual dictionary realizes that finding an answer this way is rather frustrating. As I was doing a recent interpreting assignment, the word "claims adjuster" came up. When interpreting, I used circumlocution, but of course went to find a good equivalent later. First I went a dictionary I usually find to be reliable, the Rambler dictionary (www.rambler.ru/dict), which came up with nothing, as did another dictionary I sometimes use, [freedict.com](http://www.freedict.com). [Worldlingo](http://www.worldlingo.com), the website that my Microsoft Word "translation" function connects to, came up with a piece of

One of the first things any translator should learn is that bilingual dictionaries sometimes can be wrong.

machinery. Finally, I tried **Multitran**, which gave me "adzhaster pretenziy" and "dispasher." Not wanting to use a russified American word that might have a colloquial feel (Russian now has many of these words, such as "menezher" and "prodyuser"), but also wary of "dispasher"

a term that seems like it might be a Russified French word from the days of Dostoyevsky, I put "dispasher" into my Russian google.com. The fourth entry, from the [glossary.bank24.ru](http://www.glossary.bank24.ru)

was a definition that translates "specialist in evaluating damages caused in common accidents"—there's my claims adjuster! Just to see which is more popular, I googled both "adzhaster pretenziy" (16 hits) and "dispasher" (1,930 hits). Looks like "dispasher" is best.

As far as websites for other languages go, [lexicool.com](http://www.lexicool.com), a "directory of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries" has links to 36 general Russian-English dictionaries and many others to specialized dictionaries. As far as translating "claims adjuster," one of the links, [Lingvo](http://Lingvo.com) online, gave me two more words, one of them simply meaning "evaluator" and the other being "tax adjuster." It also has links for many other languages, such 66 French-English general dictionary links, including *Le Grande Dictionnaire Terminologique*, (http://www.granddictionnaire.com/btml/fra/r_motclef/index800_1.asp), a French-Canadian website with a purported 29,083,049 entries (according to [lexicool.com](http://www.lexicool.com)).

Some other websites are:

www.wordreference.com

For Spanish, Italian, French and English.

Also has a forum where users can ask questions of other users.

<http://www.lai.com/companion.html> "The Translator's Companion"—has many glossaries for many languages, as well as job listings, information on translation tools and other resources.

<http://crossroads.net/honyaku/dictionaries.php>

A mega-site for Japanese. Also has a mailing list where users can ask questions of other users.

<http://www.interfold.com/translator/medsites.htm>

A large compendium of medical sites for a variety of languages.

This is, of course, just the tip of the internet iceberg. Many translations on a lot of these resources are not reliable, but if one does some research in order to find out more about the words ("googling" terms is a good way to go), one might something suitable.

As translators, we all know how difficult it is to keep fully abreast of the two or more cultures and all the subject matter we deal with. Of course, it is necessary to have a lot of resources—on the internet or in book form. And perhaps the best tool for research, after all, is another

And perhaps the best tool for research, after all, is another human.

human. Using forums to get information from others is an excellent idea and I hope to find more of them. Language Services Associates, a translation agency, has

an on-line course for interpreters and it speaks a lot about "collegiality"—the need for translators and interpreters to belong to organizations and cultivate relationships with others, especially since we so often have little contact with colleagues on the job. So the next time you have something that you don't understand, don't forget that former co-worker and native speaker of the language you are working with and, of course, other Circle members. ■

THE BUSINESS OF TRANSLATION...

By Krysl Hall, CPA

GETTING STARTED



Getting started in business requires first selecting a name for your business. Once you have a name you need to register that name with the county clerk. Registration will check for duplicate business names in your county. Once you have your business registered you need to get a federal identification number from The Internal Revenue Service. It is your choice as to whether you want to be a sole proprietor or a corporation. Either choice will require the same method for keeping a set of books.

Next select an accountant. You want to select an accountant who is knowledgeable with your business. She or he does not have to be a CPA. You want to make sure your accountant knows the difference between a debit and a credit, knows about payroll, and can balance your checkbook.

Next select an attorney. There may be some contracts that are complicated and would need an attorney's review before agreeing to the contract. You may want to have an attorney on retainer. This is optional.

You need to create a set of accounts for recording your disbursements and deposits. You can do this by either keeping a journal or using one of the accounting software packages.

If your business is small, keeping a journal is fine. Your disbursements should be kept according to type. For example you should keep all of your office supply purchases in one account and your expenses for telephone in another. Receipts need to be kept for any purchases over \$75. Examples of some

expenses you may use would be advertising, outplacement services, subscriptions, and equipment purchases. Translation fees can be kept in one account.

Your business is generally kept on a calendar year. If you are incorporated you may use a fiscal year however, it may be a conflict when filing your personal taxes. In addition, if you change from a fiscal year to a calendar year for a corporation is costly. Choose your period carefully when setting up your new business.

The payroll is an especially tricky item. If you have a payroll it is mandatory Social Security and Medicare be withheld. You cannot have a payroll for yourself if you are a sole proprietor. You are not an employee of the business. You must make estimated quarterly tax payments. The payroll taxes must be reported and paid once a quarter (if your total taxes due are less than \$2,500 per quarter). At year end W2s are prepared and reported to The Social Security Administration. Your accountant can prepare these forms for you. If you hire an outside consultant and pay the consultant more than \$600 per year you must prepare a 1099 for the consultant. If the consultant is incorporated a 1099 is not necessary.

You must make estimated quarterly taxes on your annual net profit. The net profit is calculated on fees received less the expenses paid. The tricky part is determining the net profit at the beginning of the year. Federal, state, social security, and Medicare are figured into the equa-

tion for calculating estimated taxes. The combined amount of federal taxes is about 25.3%. You must pay taxes on a minimum of \$400 net profit. You have to multiply your total net profit by 25.3% and divide the total tax amount by 4. This is equal to the quarterly estimated taxes for the year. The state taxes also must be paid. 5% for New York, 3% for New Jersey. For New York, you must include taxes for New York City. Please keep in mind that as your net profit increases or decreases you should adjust your estimated quarterly taxes before the end of the calendar year.

If you are working out of your home you may be able to deduct your home office. In order to do this you must make specific the area considered your office. If the office is in a home you can depreciate the portion of the home used for office.

Meals and entertainment are expenses you can deduct but are limited to 50% of the total amount. You must be able to prove a necessary business expense to take the meals and entertainment deduction. Keep good records in case The IRS does an informal audit.

Pension plans. You may want to consider paying into a retirement plan. For a small business you can use a SEP, SIMPLE or a KEOGH. Each plan has its own requirements.

You should check with your accountant or banker for the best plan for you.

An important part of keeping good financial records is balancing your check book. The banking industry assesses many fees on business checking

accounts. Please review your contract with your bank carefully. If your business is incorporated you can ask your bank to give you monthly statements that read from the first to the last day of the same month. Many banking institutions send bank statements out mid month making it difficult for a novice to balance her or his check book. Review your bank statement monthly for additional fees and transactions you may have missed during the month. Many banking institutions will not correct and error that is more than 60 days old.

A FEW GREAT WEB SITES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

www.state.nj.us/Business.shtml

www.irs.gov

www.state.ny.us/

A brief comment about credit and bank loans. The banking industry has changed the rules regarding repayment of credit card and loan balances. Review your contract with the credit card carefully. Review the grace period the credit card payment can remain outstanding before any interest is calculated. If you are opening a new

account with the new advances, beware of the different interest rates. The low interest rates normally apply to the rolled over balances only and not to any new purchases on the credit card. It is stated

in the fine print which can be easily missed.

The business of translation can be challenging especially in the beginning. It takes perseverance to have a successful business. Many small new businesses do not make it after 1 year. Sole proprietors get frustrated with everything and give up. It takes a certain kind of person to have a sole proprietorship or a corporation. If you have made a decision to be a self-employed translator, be prepared to work hard and often.

Best wishes and success. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Krys Hall lives in Montclair, NJ. She can be reached at: krys@mindspring.com.



ONE TRANSLATOR'S CREED

By Lee Wright

When key ideas come to provide a constant guiding force for me during the thirty years of my career as a professional translator and, for about half of that time, as a teacher of translation at the graduate level. For this reason, I would like to pass them on as a useful set of guidelines for any translator. Number eleven is a little more complicated, but it's worth including here: a) Nobody can know everything; b) You need to know when you don't know something; and c) You need to know how to find out what you don't know.

1. I know that translation is an intellectual process, not a mechanical, non-thinking activity.
2. Not all source texts are 100% perfect, so I must always be watchful for anomalies and make the necessary adjustments in my translations.
3. No two languages express the same

ideas or concepts in exactly the same way. This includes document formats and punctuation usage. Therefore, I need to study how the two languages differ.

4. As a professional translator, I must be constantly aware of the different stylistic alternatives available in the target language, so I should never assume that the first option is the only one, the best one or even the most correct one.
5. In contrast to stylistic alternatives, there are many things in any language which are obligatory and not optional. I must therefore recognize the difference when translating.
6. As is the case with second-language acquisition, I realize that linguistic interference can often be a serious impediment to achieving a natural-sounding and accurate target-language

rendering.

7. I know that ideas and concepts are more important than words because words are just the *surface* manifestation of thought.
8. Translation involves my ears as much as (if not more than) my eyes.
9. Most source texts (or clients) never provide all of the information needed for producing a totally accurate translation. This means that I must go beyond the source text and acquire the broadest possible understanding of the contextual framework and subject matter involved.
10. My first and most critical step in any translation project is to analyze and fully comprehend the source text from every conceivable angle (e.g., linguistic, semantic, subject matter, register, etc.). ■

ELECTION OF OFFICERS STATEMENTS OF CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT MARGARET ALTIERI



I am pleased to have been nominated to serve as President-Elect of the New York Circle of Translators. I joined the NYCT in 2002, as I was completing a French to English Translation Certificate at NYU. I volunteered to work with the Board to upgrade the NYCT website, all the while starting to build my business as a freelance

translator. I was appointed President-Elect in April 2005 after the resignation of the current officeholder, and have thus been immersed in Circle activities and duties since that time. As we enter 2006, and as the NYCT continues to expand in one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions of the United States, I believe that the NYCT will best serve its members by supporting the goals of the ATA to enhance our professional credentials in the eyes of the world; by offering continuing education workshops and programs in conjunction with local educational institutions in support of that goal; and by providing a forum for local members to exchange ideas, to hear about new trends in the field, and to network with their peers. I would be honored to serve a President. Thank you.

CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY GLORIA BARRAGÁN



I welcome the opportunity to submit my name as candidate for the post of Secretary. The New York Circle of Translators is a valuable resource for information, continuing education, training, and networking for translators and interpreters in the Tri-State Area and across the USA. During the years

that I have been in the profession I have profited from the opportunity of reading its publication *The Gotham Translator*, attending the monthly meetings (when time permitted it), listening to the presenters and learning from their messages and experiences. Now, I would welcome the opportunity to contribute (in a very small way) to the Circle and its members

CANDIDATE FOR TREASURER THOMAS J. SHERLOCK

I would like to submit my name for consideration for the post of Treasurer. After an eight year detour through information technology as a software developer, I have returned to translation and the New York Circle of Translators. Prior to my career in IT, I worked

as an in-house transnational bank translator and as a free-lance translator before that. I hold an M.A. in Liberal Studies for Translation (French to English, Spanish to English) from the CUNY Graduate School. Over the years I have come to appreciate community activism. I have tutored English at the Rutherford Free Public Library and currently serve as Trustee for the Chaordic Commons and am a member of the Lincoln School PTA Website Committee in Rutherford, NJ. I hope to bring this sense of community service to the New York Circle of Translators in the role of Treasurer.

CANDIDATE FOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR LANA RACHKOVSKAYA



I feel truly honored to be nominated as a Program Director for the New York Circle of Translators. I see this opportunity as a chance to contribute to the industry I love and care about. I decided to become a translator at a very earlier age. When I was 12 years old, I was inspired by my teacher who

was a professional translator and interpreter. When I asked her what her profession was called, she answered: "I'm a translator". I immediately said: "Then that's what I want to be." Eventually, my dream came true: I obtained a professional education and training in translation and interpreting, gained experience and became a professional translator. My dream was fulfilled even further when I moved to the United States. I wanted to get involved in the translation industry from a different angle: project management in translations. Another dream came true as I began working for major translation companies in the U.S. and became fascinated with this profession. In the meantime, I continued doing what I have always loved - translations. No matter what I do, I know I will never leave this industry. From a childhood dream it has turned into a career I love. My next dream is to be able to reach out to my fellow translators and provide the help and assistance they need in today's challenging language industry environment — we face new translation technologies, new requirements and growing competition, and therefore we have to learn to collaborate. From the perspective of both a company owner and a translator, I would encourage the participation of all speakers who feel that they can bring something truly useful to the table - something that all of us could apply to our work. My goal is to make the process interesting, productive and refreshing, whether it be a meeting, workshop, seminar or a friendly dinner. It is with your interests at heart that I believe I can be a viable candidate for Program Director, with unwavering dedication to each and every member of the New York Circle of Translators.

BALLOT FOR ELECTION OF NYCT OFFICERS

Cast your votes for President, Secretary, Treasurer and Program Director as follows:

- Margaret Altieri for President in 2006
- Gloria Barragan for Secretary, 2006-2008
- Thomas J. Sherlock for Treasurer, 2006-2008
- Lana Rachkovskaya for Program Director, 2006-2008

Ballots must be postmarked no later than December 25, 2005.

Mail your ballots to:
 Slavica Zecevic
 President of the NYCT
 207 Jefferson Street
 Hoboken, NJ 07030

CIRCLE NEWS

THE NYCT BOARD ESTABLISHES THE CHARLES M. STERN AUTONOMOUS AWARD



In 1997, Mr. Charles M. Stern left ten (10%) percent of his estate to the New York Circle to estab-

lish a discretionary grant to the one worthiest, needy male and to the one worthiest, needy female members of the Circle. The NYCT Board finally decided to respect his wish and establish the Charles M. Stern Autonomous Award as he wanted us to do. We are still working on details, but we hope that the first award will be given at our holiday party.



and Marian Greenfield whose time and effort made this event possible. Their dedication and skills made the event a success. Consequently, the New York Circle was able to make a generous donation and will be able to donate all of the workshop proceeds to Debbie Folaron. We also would like to give our special thanks to Accurapid Translation Services Inc., Mr. and Mrs. Bokor, for sending in a check with no inten-

tion of attending the workshop.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DECEMBER 3RD

One-day seminar on Language in Translation/Interpretation. Distinguished guests are: Wayles Browne, Assoc. Prof. of Linguistics, Cornell University; James Nolan, Deputy Director, Interpretation, Meetings & Publishing Division, United Nations Headquarters; and George Fletcher, Ed.D., certified translator, President, Globe Language Services, Inc.

DECEMBER 11TH

Our traditional holiday party at the La Petite Auberge.

OCTOBER BENEFIT WORKSHOP



On October 29th at NYU we had a workshop for Debbie Folaron, our colleague who lost everything in the fire. We would like to extend our deep thanks to the workshop presenters Lana Rachkovskaya

and Marian Greenfield whose time and effort made this event possible.



**THE
GOTHAM
TRANSLATOR**



The New York Circle of Translators (NYCT) is a New York State not-for-profit corporation grouping independent translators and interpreters as well as companies and organizations. It is a chapter of the American Translators Association (ATA) which is, in turn, an affiliate of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).

NYCT members work in a variety of languages and specialties. Our members are committed to the exchange of ideas and mutual support. One of our goals is to educate the general public about the professional nature of interpreting and translating.

NYCT members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free monthly meetings featuring speakers on all aspects of the translation profession
- Networking opportunities at monthly dinners and annual holiday party
- Professional development workshops and seminars
- Subscription to our newsletter, The Gotham Translator
- Listings in the NYCT Online Membership Directory and the annual NYCT printed Membership Directory
- Referrals (if you indicate that you accept them, existing members may direct work requests to you or clients may contact you directly)

Visit us at www.nyctranslators.org and join online!



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