

TRANSLORIAL

JOURNAL OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

Translation & Ethnography

Ethnocentric or Non-ethnocentric?

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YOUR TURN!

Translorial is always looking for contributions. We publish our members’ stories, ideas and thoughts. Submitting an article also helps maintain your ATA certification and grants you a free “plug” in the Contributors section. Send your ideas to editor@ncta.org. ✓

contributors

MEHDI ASADZADEH, PHD, co-author of our lead article, is a researcher at Hyderabad Central University, India, and lecturer at Islamic Azad University, Maragheh Branch, Iran. He is conducting research in Translation Studies and has years of teaching and translation experience in different institutes Mehdi, drawing on his academic speciality, once more broadens our understanding of the translator’s role.

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Unabridged bios at <http://tinyurl.com/76upmdh>

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letter from the president

STEPPING UP

BY PAULA DIELI

It's always heartening when someone approaches the NCTA leadership and offers to help out. Corey Roy is just such a person. Corey has just been nominated to the NCTA board to fill the vacant role of webmaster. Corey is a recent Bay Area transplant who moved here from Houston and before that was living in New Orleans until Katrina. He freelances from home as a Spanish- and Italian-into-English translator and recently successfully completed the Localization Project Management Certification Program. Corey hasn't been freelancing for that long but already has a full schedule. He still has found time to add NCTA webmaster and board member to his responsibilities, and for that we are extremely grateful. He has already made some great suggestions for modifications to the website and is full of new ideas.

At this writing, we will have just held our September General Meeting. And the ATA Annual Conference is just around the corner. Attending events such as these, some close to home and some requiring a bit more of an investment, is a great way to network. For new members, it's about

learning and perhaps finding a mentor. For those of you who have been in the business for a while, we count on you to attend these events and help us informally mentor new members. We usually have about 10 attendees at the new member orientation held at our GMs and we often have new members at our monthly Happy Hour, which happens to be the first NCTA event I attended. I felt like the new kid in school, and Raffaella Buschiazio was so welcoming. In our conversation, she discovered I was attending the upcoming ATA Conference in New Orleans and made sure the NCTA folks attending knew I was there. I went to the French Language Division dinner; Yves Avérous and Bob Killingsworth invited me to sit with them, and we had a wonderful evening. I'm sure they don't remember that, but the point is that I still do. So if you haven't attended anything in a while, why not make the effort? Maybe you'll make a new member's day!

Our *Translorial* editor Mary Wessling has once again produced an issue full of interesting content, and it's always exciting to see articles by first-time contributors. ✓

member benefits

The NCTA is working hard to promote the association and its members.

Membership for MIIS grads	The NCTA has offered a free six-month membership to all 2011 graduates of the Translation/Interpretation/Localization Program at the MIIS and the Medical Health Care Interpreting Program at CCSF.
NCTA LinkedIn group	LinkedIn is an effective site for networking and increasing your professional contacts. Join the group to display the NCTA logo on your LinkedIn profile and instantly connect to other NCTA members.
Facebook page	For sharing news and announcements of NCTA events and activities, including with non-members who are Facebook users. Spread the word!
Members Yahoo Group list	Don't forget to join the over 300 members on the NCTA listserv to quickly receive answers to your questions, exchange information, or post jobs.
NCTA logo	Enhance your professional image by displaying the NCTA logo on your website, business card, and email signature. Contact administrator@ncta.org to request use of the logo.

BOARD REPORTS

At the May Board Meeting

- » Reviewed NCTA membership numbers
- » Discussed speakers and topics for May, September and December GMs, reported on SF Peninsula Happy Hours
- » Talked about plans for the June picnic
- » Discussed upcoming and potential Continuing Education workshops
- » Update on the next issue of *Translorial*, Website and Facebook
- » Discussed possibilities of filling Webmaster position
- » Update on letter to corporate members, student memberships

At the June Board Meeting

- » Reviewed NCTA financials and the Membership Directory
- » Discussed SF Happy Hours, the June picnic, speakers, topics and sponsors for the upcoming GMs
- » Discussed Continuing Education workshops
- » Talked about marketing ideas for NCTA, the press release and new marketing materials
- » Discussed *Translorial* publication date changes
- » Update on new volunteer Webmaster Corey Roy
- » Update on newsflash items

No meeting held in July

At the August Board Meeting

- » Discussed revision of the *Practical Guide*.
- » Update on the membership directory, list of translator and interpreter training programs, membership report
- » Discussed the July SF Happy Hour, June picnic, and September 28 biannual Happy Hour
- » Discussed speakers, sponsors and raffle gifts for September and December GMs
- » Talked about past and upcoming Continuing Education workshops, possibilities for webinars and seminars
- » Discussed possibilities for marketing NCTA via the website
- » Discussed Chambers of Commerce and decided to join 3 local BBBs for one year
- » Update on *Translorial* personnel and release dates

TRANSLATION BROAD & DEEP

The Editor's Note. BY MARY N. WESSLING

In her President's Letter, Paula Dieli talks about the importance of having our members willing to "step up" and share their time and experience with us. For *Translorial*, this means sharing via the printed word. Each issue explores a salient aspect of what it means to be a translator, and how a synergy between NCTA and

other professional organizations makes us better at what we do. Even though these articles arrive on my computer screen from authors whose background, skills, interests, and even geographical location are diverse, there often seems to be an underlying thread connecting them.

Mehdi Asadzadeh, the author of our fea-

ture article, previously broadened our view of the the field of translation in his piece on *Tourantranslation*—the way that translation interacts with the tourism industry. In *Translation and Ethnography*, he now challenges us to think more deeply about the theoretical bases of translation.

We also learn about the opportunities to connect with other translators at the Translation Summit and at NCTA activities. Finally, to lighten up your day, read about Sara Greenwald's trip into the crazy world of Internet translation sites. ✓

WELCOME

The following members joined NCTA between March 1 and August 31, 2012:

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UNI-CODES

Find the key to the two letter codes designating members working languages at <http://tinyurl.com/26umq4g>. ✓

BRING THE SOUND OF HOME TO...

Voice Acting hopefuls take the plunge during an organized day trip to Medialocate. Do they have what it takes? BY ANA ISABEL BELTRAN AND NOEMI GONZALEZ



TIVAs at the May event at Medialocate represented three languages: Arabic, French & Spanish.

Voiceover artists, those disembodied voices we hear in audio books, commercials, and public announcements can conjure laughter, relief, mystery, awe, respect and sadness. In audio books, voiceover artists may make imaginations soar. In commercials, they may sway a consumer's perception of a bank's trustworthiness, an insurance company's reliability or an automobile's safety. What about movies? Consider this: legions of bilingual *Shrek* fans swear that the Latin American Spanish version of this movie franchise, dubbed in Mexico, is infinitely funnier in Spanish. Specifically, Latin American fans argue that Eugenio Derbez's Burro is hands-down funnier than Eddie Murphy's Donkey. Really? The thing is, funny is in the ear of the beholder. And, for Latin American audiences watching *Shrek* both at home and abroad, Derbez's appeal lies in that he delivers more than jokes having strong cultural references Spanish-speaking moviegoers can identify with. He also sounds like many of them. As important as delivering a message that hits the right cultural notes is whether the voice delivering it sounds like home.

Considering the diversity that typifies the US population, American companies continually search for ways to deliver their message to target markets: a need exists for people who can deliver that message in just the right voice. With the goal of join-

ing the growing number of US voiceover artists who are creating magic for audiences of diverse backgrounds, a group of hopeful and intrepid TIVAs (Translators/Interpreters/Voice Actors) visited the Medialocate studios in Pacific Grove last May 31. Christine Lemor-Drake, the trip's leader, put together a day trip for nine TIVAs. The group of TIVAs represented three languages: Belqis, Abeer, and Alex for Arabic; Claudia Lopez, Noemi Gonzalez, Ines Swaney and Ana Isabel Beltran for Spanish; and Dominique Ferguson and Christine Lemor-Drake for French. When we arrived we met with Cindy Brown, Medialocate's Vendor Manager, and were directed to the recording studio, where the sight of the recording booth made a few of us slightly queasy—in an exciting, jumping-off-a-plane kind of way.

Diverse performances

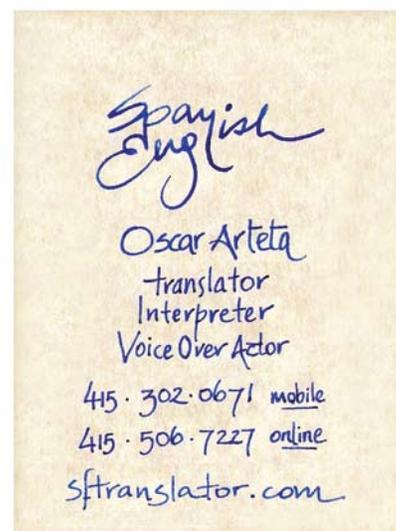
After a somewhat quick and quiet introduction, the Arabic linguists kicked off the recording session. With the exception of Christine and Ines, both of whom have experience in the voiceover industry, we were all beginners. Fortunately, Robin, the sound engineer, made us feel a little bit more relaxed. Still, it was a nerve-racking moment. When we finished, Robin agreed to play back the group's voice samples. Without thinking twice, we all hurried in quietly and crowded the small office,

listening to our own and everybody else's performance. Lo and behold, we sounded like we may just have what it takes to make it in the dubbing industry! Maybe it's because we discovered that commitment to deliver the message in the clearest and most appropriate way possible. Cindy then gave us a quick tour of the studios where we met the rest of the staff. By that time, it was past 2:00 p.m. and stomachs were grumbling. Thanks to Christine, who always knows how to get the best deals, we enjoyed a delicious lunch at a restaurant aptly called "Taste." We happily chatted and got to know each other better while eating, drinking and enjoying the sweet taste of new friendships and the potential of such an exciting twist in our careers.

Imagine

Returning to *Shrek*, these two actors, along with some other extraordinary voiceover artists—and very talented translators—brought entertainment to millions of moviegoers in a way that made *Shrek* feel like a homemade brand to all. But just imagine, you can make it sound just like home from a recording studio in many Bay Area cities: begin the experiment at Medialocate! ✓

Read the full version article online at translorial.com





LOCALIZATION UNCONFERENCE

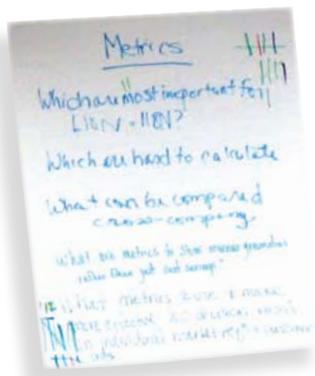
In the absence of a predetermined agenda, participants create their own event, and a learning experience that continues beyond the conference. BY RAFFAELA BUSCHIAZZO

It's April 27, we are in one of the spacious conference rooms on the *salesforce.com* premises in San Mateo. At 8:30 a.m., people are arriving for the third annual Localization (l10n) Unconference in Silicon Valley. I go to the reception desk to help distribute badges to the incoming attendees who will number around eighty. I see many well-known local faces: internationalization (i18n) engineers, localization managers, international product managers, client and vendor-side project managers, translators, tool and translation vendors, machine translation and QA experts. There's some fresh blood as well: young students who are about to graduate from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. It seems more crowded than last year, and I notice even more buzz and excitement for this unconventional meeting—where it's up to the participants to create the event. The beauty of an unconference is that by definition there are no predetermined agendas, *PowerPoint* presentations, or sales pitches. So I find myself with dozens of people standing in front of a long wall full of whiteboards where the moderators have hung 3x2' blank sheets of paper that will soon be densely written with topics, headers, and bullet points. We are passing each other felt-tip pens of various colors to mark the topics that we want to nominate for further discussion, or to add our own.

Eventually I count eight fully marked-up multicolored papers. Here's just a taste of what followed.

Hot topics

"Testing": is A/B testing relevant for l10n; should we outsource QA to LSP, or hire in-house, is it OK to use crowd-sourced testing?



Taking a "bullet" for hot topics; attendees contributed to colorful markups that furthered the discourse.

"Process Automation": what would LSPs (Language Service Providers) like to tell clients, and what would localization clients like to tell LSPs? Automation of management tasks is another item, followed by thoughts on the best methods for measuring translation quality, and heated questions about the role today of Facebook-style community translation.

"Big Data/Semantic Web and l10n": how to increase searchability of international content; how does personalization come into play for l10n; how does the semantic Web help machine translation?

"Sentiment mining"—trying to quantify a user's or author's feelings in source

materials—is the last item. I sign up for this session plus three others.

Other hot topics include crowdsourcing localization, and user-generated content: methods and best practices for quality and community management. There's "optimization of content", with special emphasis on video and other multimedia l10n challenges. Finally, localization in an Agile environment: how to adapt globalization to fit the scrum model, how to deal with rapid turnaround in translation/testing, and how to produce continuous localization?

An ongoing dialogue

At 10 am, organizer Teresa Marshall, Senior Manager of Localization at *salesforce.com*, draws a grid with the most voted topics—16 discussions in all. Not bad for an unconference! I am going from room to room, listening to my peers' challenges and sharing my own, analyzing common issues that we all seem to face in this industry and exchanging tips with others. We continue the discussions over lunch offered by *salesforce.com*. Then it's back to the sessions until 4 p.m. when Teresa wraps up with *salesforce.com* colleague Shawna Wolverton, the initiator of the first Localization Unconference in 2008, and co-host Scott Schwalbach from VistaTEC. I'd like to see more translators from our community at this event next year. It's free and it's the ideal place for major players from Silicon Valley to hear from translators. ✓

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MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY BOOTCAMP

Considered a “dead language” by some, Latin continues to flourish in the world of Science and Medicine. Bootcamp attendees get the breakdown. BY MIKE KARPA



Bootcamp presenter Marlene V. Obermeyer, MA

Marlene V. Obermeyer guided interpreters and translators through the lingo of medicine and the human body in an eight-hour medical terminology bootcamp held June 30, 2012, at the San Francisco State downtown campus. Obermeyer, a registered nurse with a Masters degree, offers online training in medical interpreting and terminology from her base in Kansas through Culture Advantage (www.culture-advantage.com) and Virginia College. She also gives a handful of medical terminology bootcamps annually around the country through the IMIA (www.imiaweb.org/conferences/bootcampseries.asp). Carlos Garcia of the IMIA had been trying to schedule a bootcamp in San Francisco for some time, and he and NCTA organizer Sarah Llewellyn were delighted to be able to jointly host Obermeyer.

Breaking it down

The San Francisco session was a bit of a homecoming for Obermeyer, whose arrival in the US from the Philippines decades ago came as a touchdown at San Francisco International Airport. Obermeyer was quite at ease in the linguistic services setting, and broke the ice by discussing her own language background (Tagalog and Ilocano) and her work with medical interpreters. The session did not focus on any particular language combination.

The eighteen attendees included ten interpreter/translators, four interpreters, three

translators and one dispatcher; two attendees also teach. The languages represented (in addition to English) were Spanish, French, Russian, Tagalog, Arabic, Mandarin, Italian, German, and Japanese. (These numbers include the three organizers; some people work in more than two languages.) Obermeyer got the session started by telling attendees to think of medical terms as a story, with a beginning, middle and end. She listed common prefixes and suffixes used with word roots to create medical terms, such as *thrombophlebitis*—from *thrombus* (blood clot), *-phleb-* (vein) and *-itis* (inflammation)—an inflammation of a vein caused by a blood clot.

The class covered common misconceptions (*-itis* refers to inflammation, not infection), and tricky distinctions such as *atherosclerosis* (*athero* = plaque, *-scler-* = hard, *-osis* = condition, hardening of artery walls or other tissues from accumulation of plaque, a fatty material) versus *arteriosclerosis* (*arterio-* = artery, *-scler-* = hard, *-osis* = condition, a general term for any hardening of arteries). Attendees broke into small groups and used medical flashcards to familiarize themselves with suffix and prefix meanings, and practiced using terms in sentences. Obermeyer encouraged the class to visualize terms, which brought a laugh—this advice happened to come just after the class learned that *dia-* = pass through and *-rrhea* = flow, or discharge.

Armed with this basic knowledge, Obermeyer discussed the body as systems, such as the cardiovascular, respiratory, and digestive systems and guided her pupils using full-color charts in *Human Body*, a 448-page book published by Dorling Kindersley (www.dk.com), provided as part of the bootcamp.

She discussed the mechanics of many common procedures, and also answered questions about the use of some medical devices. Attendees can now discuss with you this impromptu cardioversion applying a home-use defibrillator to, perhaps, restore atrial flutter to normal heart rhythm.

Wiser for the experience

An ample lunch break provided chances for attendees to meet. Periodic breaks helped keep the session calm through the nervous system—and bouts of self-diagnosis—so we were able to pass through the urinary system comfortably without any ESWL (*extracorporeal shockwave lithotripsy*, or breaking up of kidney stones using acoustic waves). It was a true testament to Obermeyer's focus, knowledge, and good humor that she brought her full complement of eighteen across the finish line, with everyone free of *diplopia* (seeing double) and *syncope* (loss of consciousness), and feeling much the wiser for the bootcamp experience. ✓

Read the full version article online at translorial.com



Carlos Garcia and Sarah Llewellyn prepare to introduce the workshop.

LEARNING HOW TO “FISH”

March workshop attendees learn about the techniques, standards, risks, drive, and passion required to excel at conference interpreting. BY STELLA HECHT

It was late winter—March 31st—the date of the Introduction to Conference Interpreting workshop. Driving to San Francisco in rain falling non-stop, I was a little apprehensive, imagining whether attendance would be affected by the weather. My colleague and I arrived at SF State ahead of time and were warmly greeted by the presenter and Sarah Llewellyn. Everybody in the packed room wanted to hear what Jacki Noh had to say! Everything was very organized, from the name tags to the list of attendees. Jacki, who has been an interpreter/trainer/voice-over talent for over 25 years, opened her presentation with definitions of various modes of interpretation, followed by a brief explanation of each technique. Her account of real-life examples provided the attendees with a rare opportunity to learn what happens behind the curtains; later that day we would experience Conference Interpreting first-hand. We had the participation of several seasoned Conference Interpreters who also shared their experiences and opened our minds by posing pertinent questions.

Ready as can be

Jacki also recommended that we always keep ourselves in check regarding our ability as interpreters. Indeed, it's dangerous to feel overly confident! According to her, we should always keep an open mind and a humble approach regarding our knowledge and abilities. Then she continued, telling us about the importance of preparing glossaries that can be sorted as industry-specific and company-specific, accompanied by pronunciations used in the country of the target language and not the pronunciation used by the target audience here in the US. Another important recommendation was to create glossaries for the acronyms that are industry related to better convey them in the target language. She also mentioned that we will encounter peculiar situations when the client is reluctant to share the material in advance; therefore, she recommended we “fish” for the rel-

evant information on websites of specialized publications and make phone calls to universities in an effort to prepare and enrich our knowledge about the subject. Preparation is the key to boost our confidence and to give us some solace in knowing that even after countless hours preparing, reading, researching terminology, reading articles from reputable sources...

*...keep an open
mind and a humble
approach...*

we will make mistakes. You prepare ahead, you come to the battlefield ready, ready as can be, but you need to accept that brains get tired and, sometimes, lack of ideal working conditions can also play a role in degrading a performance! We have to accept that reality: we are not perfect, and we must continue with our quest to better ourselves in every aspect of our lives. strive to follow standards of quality. We owe this to our fellow interpreters, our clients, our listeners. And then, it was time to practice!

Humble reflection

After a nice and lively break with snacks and drinks to replenish our stomachs and dry throats, there came the time to check our abilities.

Jacki played two segments, and we set up to do our best. One of the most important moments of our careers happens when we first look at ourselves in the mirror and check the quality of our rendition. It's the moment of humble reflection, of fine tuning our voices, our vocabulary...

The first item in the job description to become an interpreter is: passion, nothing more, nothing less. Passion for words, for ethical behavior; passion for knowledge and a relentless quest for quality!

Thank you, Jacki Noh, for an awesome conference. ✓

UPCOMING

CSCI Exam Workshop

SATURDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2012, 1 PM - 4 PM
JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA,
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES OF THE COURTS
455 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE, SAN FRANCISCO
This workshop offers attendees a comprehensive preparation for the upcoming *California State Court Interpreter Exam*.^{*}
Presented by Angela Zawadski.

Trados Studio Workshop I

SATURDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2012, 9 AM - 4 PM
SFSU DOWNTOWN CAMPUS
835 MARKET STREET, SAN FRANCISCO
Trados Studio for Beginners is a full-day, hands-on workshop for those who are new to *Trados Studio 2011* software.^{*}
Presented by Tuomas Kostianen.

Trados Studio Workshop II

SATURDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2012, 10 AM - 4 PM
SFSU DOWNTOWN CAMPUS
Trados Studio for Intermediate & Advanced Users is a full-day, hands-on workshop for those who have previous experience with *Trados Studio 2011* software.^{*}
Presented by Tuomas Kostianen.

NCTA General Meeting

SATURDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2012, 1 PM - 4 PM
SFSU DOWNTOWN CAMPUS
Learning Languages with Music, TV, Radio & Other Media will explore the use of everyday free and low-cost, yet culturally relevant, resources available to supplement foreign language classes and facilitate self-directed learning.
Presented by Susanna Zaraysky. ✓

^{*} Pre-registration and fee required to attend.

THANKS!

NCTA WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING EVENT SPONSORS:

ION Translations, LLC – May GM
Wordfast – QA Tools Workshop
Blurb – September GM
Venga Localization – Successful Selling Workshop

If you would like to support association events, please contact events@ncta.org.



Left to Right: Mimi Wessling demonstrates her recording pen for Veronique Fox and Christine Lemor-Drake; Kåre Lindahl tells new members about other NCTA programs in English; Tuomas Kostiainen and Raffaella Buschiazzo engaged in a spirited discussion.

BREAKING THE HABIT

Word-for-word, General Meeting attendees learn to conceptualize translation and deliver a meaningful product. BY ELIZABETH STOKKEBYE

Let me start with some background: I am now a happy member of NCTA, thanks to my dear friend Sonia Wichmann. Sonia and I shared an office in the Department of Scandinavian at UC Berkeley during the years 2007 to 2009. We quickly became good friends as we taught Reading and Composition to undergraduates. In particular, we talked about the non-happy endings to most Nordic literature and film, and how the Nordic sensibility is difficult to convey to a group of American and International students. A frequently asked question was: “How come somebody always dies at the end?” As we were teaching works in translation, we understood that the English words alone would not deliver full understanding of the texts, but that we had to present the cultural, social, and historical perspectives necessary for the complete meaning of the texts.

On the spot

This brings me to the May 12 General Meeting of NCTA. The keynote speaker Tanya Pound, of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, spoke on *Sight Translation: A Translator’s Perspective*. The concept of sight translation means to transfer written information in one language directly into spoken information in another, not unlike my job as a lecturer, where I read the literary text in Danish and then I present it to my students in English. The difference between my lectures and sight translation is that my students read the text, too, in translation; however, they still need a translated version from me to reach a full understanding of the text. This is where my lecture compares to the sight translation Tanya spoke about. As Tanya said: “to think conceptually over literally”—that is the key. Of course, when

you deliver a translation on sight, you may be seeing the text for the first time and you are dealing with on the spot thinking, and therefore it is important to have the text in your hand, as you translate the gist of the text into the target language. As a lecturer I have read and worked with the text I’m discussing any times and have obtained a healthy distance from the text. However, the point is this: you have the information in front of you, you are immersed in this information, and you are trying to translate this information conceptually over literally to a listening audience—it is healthy to keep some kind of distance! And that means breaking the word-for-word translation habit! Think concepts (ideas) over words. Basically, that frees you up to deliver a more meaningful translation with a higher degree of understanding among your listening audience.



Left to Right, Carlos García, NCTA member and California Chapter Chair of the International Medical Interpreters Association; Elizabeth Stokkebye introduces herself as a new member; Tanya

NCTA SUMMER PICNIC!

BY NINA KUNG

Before I decided to join NCTA, I had read everything on the association's Web site and thought I would check out the group before joining. I was looking for a professional support group that saw the world through the lens of more than one language and from a global perspective. Also, I needed to find out about freelance translation as a career option. NCTA's picnic at "Paradise Park" on Saturday, June 24, provided just the perfect opportunities for both things.

I arrived at the park on a mild, sunny day. The park had a sweeping view of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Bay. A group of about 15 people—plus a small dog—were present around two picnic tables and a BBQ grill. I introduced myself and was greeted warmly by Kristen, Raffaella, Mark, Javier, Linda, Seungmin, Yana, Sonia, and a few other people. The world languages represented included French, Italian, Spanish, Korean, Russian, Mandarin, Swedish, and some others. The food, of course, reflected wonderful gifts and abundance from many cultures. The conversations I had were the most interesting and international ones I had ever had. We talked about a South Korean TV epic, *Dae Jang Geum* ("Jewel in the Palace"), which had gained worldwide popularity, a Peruvian term from Chinese for "dining out on excellent food" resulting from the popularity of Chinese food in Peru, the usage of the term "crowd sourcing", and the European convention of using a bidet.

As people left to beat the traffic home, I luckily had a chance to ask Sonia Wichmann about freelancing as a translator. She generously answered all my questions and pointed me to two useful reference books. As we parted, I thought, "What a cool and special group of people!" I decided I was definitely joining NCTA ✓



NCTA friends enjoy a beautiful day in Paradise Park.

A CONTINUING TREAT

BY COREY ROY

NCTA Happy Hours continue to be held regularly at Mijita restaurant in the Ferry Building in Downtown San Francisco. The event has long been an ideal venue for translators, interpreters, and other language industry professionals to unwind after a day's work, meet colleagues, and discuss their work—or just chat informally.

Happy Hours tend to bring together a smaller, more intimate group of people, which affords the opportunity for everyone to get to know each other fairly well and relax, all within eyesight of the beautiful San Francisco Bay. The group is very welcoming and always glad to see a fresh face. Why not come out to the next one? ✓



an orientation session just before the General Meeting;

A smooth transition

Three months into my membership of NCTA, I am happy to report that I have prospective translation job opportunities, which is good news, as it is my intention to transition into translation work and away from lecturing and teaching. I know that words and languages have always been a big part of me, from when I grew up in Denmark, learning English, German, and French in school until I entered UC Berkeley as a 45-year-old undergraduate student in 1999. My extensive linguistic knowledge of Danish and English has finally borne fruit and I am on the right shelf (Danish idiom literally translated!).

Finally, I would like to thank Juliet Viola for her invaluable assistance in setting me up as a professional translator: she helped me with my résumé and my on-line NCTA presence. Because of her help, my transition from academia into the professional identity of translator has been smooth, not only for myself but also for my prospective clients. Reading ATA chronicles and writing this article for the NCTA *Translorial* is a first step in the right direction. ✓



a Pound, presenting *Sight Translation: A Translator's Perspective*.



TRANSLATION AND ETHNOGRAPHY: ETHNOCENTRIC OR NON-ETHNOCENTRIC?

Two disciplines, common goals: understanding cultural codes, discovering order in “the foreign,” rendering through language an appreciation of “the unknown other.”

BY MEHDI ASADZADEH & ALI ABBASI

To an ordinary reader, translation might mean finding “equivalents” for the words of the source text in the target language, thereby making the words of one language understandable in another. But for a translation researcher, it denotes a broader phenomenon where the strangeness has to be found out, decoded, and incorporated into the rendered text. In his or her way of doing so, a professional translator uses different strategies, goes through various procedures, and seeks help from many other disciplines. In the present paper, the interrelatedness of translation and ethnography is briefly elaborated upon, aiming at stimulating further research on potential areas of interaction and/or cooperation between ethnography and translation studies.

Core focus

The underlying philosophy of ethnography is to make significant thematic or symbolic elements of one culture meaningful in terms of another. The ethnographer’s task could be posited as epitomizing humanism in its desire to provide knowledge about so-called “unknown others”—which translation and translators also pursue. As is well known, the most difficult concepts and words to render are those with roots in culture, necessitating that a translator extract and convey the proper meaning. In that sense, translation could be seen as the

area of linguistics that makes sense for the product of ethnography. In fact, the interaction between ethnography and translation studies has created a trend of interdisciplinary research within translation studies where the focus of the discussion lies not only on how translation changes the object, but also on how it reformulates a translated reality. The phenomenon of translation is best dealt with by taking account of knowledge about the unknown others’ ways of thinking, knowing, and living—all central issues in ethnography.

*A work of translation
should try to consider
the interests of all
cultural groups
within a society...*

The basic principle of ethnography is in fact a translation, but in the sense of showing how a social action from one point of view makes sense from another. This is what a professional translator does by trying to convey the points in a way that is tangible, understandable, and digestible to target readers.

In translation studies, there is always a concern that cultural codes of a community might be misunderstood or misinterpreted by target readers because of mistranslation or lack of sufficient cultural knowledge of both languages in the mediator agent, i.e., translator. This concern is also found in ethnography in its emphasis on cultural codes to be decoded and conveyed correctly, duly, and properly; that is, to understand and transfer the intention of the concept as well as the proper wish of the writer. The ethnographic perspective toward translation invites us to regard it as a production process that relies on networks of intermediaries. A translated text is thus no longer assumed to be a reflection of a society’s norms or a translator’s subjectivity, but rather as expression of the relations between various intermediaries in the production procedure.

Cultural codes could be adapted to the receiving culture partly because there might not be equivalents in the target culture. Pálsson (1993) presents this idea of translation as a means of bridging the gap between cultural boundaries by referring to it as “discovering order in the foreign.” This suggests that seeing the world as bound up is an ethnocentric way of looking at culture. Pálsson argues that perceiving difference between cultures as boundaries presents the world as multiple worlds, rather than just one. [1]



Ethnocentric vs. non

Two important concepts that must be considered here are ethnocentric and non-ethnocentric translation. An ethnocentric translation is one that “generally under the guise of transmissibility, [it] carries out a systematic negation of the strangeness of the foreign work” (Berman, 1992: 5). An acceptable translation tries to limit ethnocentric negation by staging “an opening, a dialogue, a cross-breeding, and a decentering”, thereby forcing the domestic language and culture to register the foreignness of the foreign text. A work of translation should try to consider the interests of all cultural groups of a society rather than only the dominant one(s). While paying due attention to the originating culture of the texts, a translation project should address various domestic constituencies. By doing an ethnocentric translation, the fact of translation is erased by suppressing the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, assimilating it to dominant values in the target-language culture, making it recognizable, and therefore seemingly untranslated.

By non-ethnocentric, a kind of translation is meant in which there is an ideal balance between domesticating and foreignizing processes and thus, while respecting all cultural codes of the receiving society, the foreign culture is also duly maintained. A non-ethnocentric translation has the capacity to alter the reproduction of only dominant domestic ideologies that do not correctly and properly represent foreign culture, and also marginalize domestic constituencies other than dominant one(s). It fosters non-academic intentions from flowing into academic realms by trying to per-

suade and also to offer practical methods for faithful translation to translators so as not to demolish the text by over-domestication or over-foreignization. It stimulates the translator to side neither with source nor with target context and to try to follow a medial manner when rendering. In this way, his/her translation reveals an opportunity to reform the cultural identities that occupy dominant positions in the receiving society. It of course needs mentioning that a too non-ethnocentric translation would be subversive of domestic ideologies and institutions. After all, trying just to reflect foreign culture at any price without respecting the domestic one would definitely lead to unintelligibility and, in certain cases, to cultural marginality. Nevertheless, provided that the balance is observed, non-ethnocentric translation is suggested, in that it promises greater openness to cultural differences.

Last but not least, the point that texts carry the cultural codes of a community in fact denotes the point that cultures also could turn into text. This way, the connection between ethnography and translation studies becomes more evident, research in each field gaining direct pertinence for the other. In the book *In Translation: Reflections, Refractions, Transformations*, [2] the connection of ethnography with translation studies is stated in some exciting sentences:

“The analogies between the two have only increased over the past forty years. Extending the metaphor of Clifford Geertz, who ‘read’ culture as a text and defined the ethnographer as a ‘cultural translator’, certain anthropologists—such as Clifford and Marcus (see Clifford 1997; Clifford & Marcus 1986)—have followed

in the footsteps of Walter Benjamin, the author of *The Task of the Translator*, while translation studies specialists have quite recently begun to use work by these anthropologists to explore the connections between interlingual translation and post-colonial literature, travel literature and ethnographic writing (Valero-Garcès 1995; Tymoczko 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Cronin 2000; Wolf 2000; Polezzi 2001). Although translation involves some form of ethnography, and ethnography some form of translation, there is at least one fundamental way in which the two practices are distinct: whether literary or pragmatic, translation makes no claim to being scientific. This difference affects research, since, contrary to what is the case in anthropology, translation studies is a discipline in which theory and practice are not inseparable and have, in fact, for a long time been kept separated.” [3] ✓

NOTES

[1]. A term used in postcolonial studies to indicate the discourses that surround colonized people. Also, a mode of thinking that leads to people being regarded as different and inferior. A key element in the work of Foucault on those excluded from power, including prisoners, gay persons, and the mentally ill.

[2]. See Berman, Antoine. *The experience of the foreign: Culture and translation in romantic Germany*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1992. Print.

[3]. See St-Pierre, Paul, and Prafulla C. Kar, eds. *In Translation- Reflections, Refractions, Transformations*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007: 40. Print.

THE TRANSLORIAL TOOL KIT

The Tool Kit is an online newsletter that comes to its subscribers' mailboxes twice a month. In *Translorial*, we offer a quarterly digest of Jost's most helpful tips from the past season. BY JOST ZETZSCHE © 2012 INTERNATIONAL WRITERS' GROUP, COMPILED BY YVES AVÉROUS



Refactored memoQ

Rather than just looking at the new features of recent tools and versions of *memoQ* (<http://kilgray.com/products/memoQ>), I chatted with the developers to get some of the background story. I met with István and Gábor to hear them out about *version 6*.

Much like previous major releases, this one has a “theme,” something that explains and justifies the changes that are being made. It’s “refactoring.” By “refactoring,” Kilgray wants to communicate that they left everything the way you’re used to, only better. By “refactoring,” of course, they also let us know that they are still geeks at heart (this may have been unintentional, though). But, hey, who doesn’t love geeks, especially of the Kilgray kind, who strive for excellence with utmost precision and reliability.

The program has not only become faster but also smaller. A case in point is the **Project** home page, where a confusing (and ever-growing) array of options from previous versions has been streamlined and renamed (**Import** sounds better than **Add document**), and we’re all glad that options like the mysteriously named **Reimport as...** or **Import/update bilingual** have vanished.

memoQ developers have taken many steps in the right direction. There are some interesting new features for the freelancer who uses the *Pro* edition. A number of those have been in the *Server* version for some time but have now made it into the *Pro* version as well. These include version control (so you can compare and track two different versions of the same source document) or folder connections (this allows you to instruct *memoQ* to watch a specific folder for source documents; if files in that folder are updated, *memoQ* will automatically transfer those updates to the relevant project). *memoQ* also offers predictive typing (AutoComplete) now—just like *Trados*,

Déjà Vu, and *Wordfast*—which many users have really grown to appreciate as a productivity aid. The predictions that are displayed come from the termbase, subsegmenting results, and automatic concordance matching. You can select between having the suggestions shown in a ghostly, greyed-out script in the actual translation cell, or a dropdown box like other products, or both.

Earlier versions of *MS Office* (.doc, .xls) files can now also be processed without having *MS Office* installed; you can view the target cell you are currently translating in underneath the source cell if you would like to; the Concordance dialog has been revised; and the list goes on and on (<http://tinyurl.com/memoQ-whatsnew>).



Should you upgrade? Most certainly if you are on the automatic maintenance plan. (By the way, you can leave the earlier version of *memoQ* simultaneously installed to be able to serve customers who are still using *version 5*, since due to a different database structure you cannot work with *version 6* on a *version 5* server project.)

What if you haven’t bought into the maintenance plan and now have to retroactively pay for it to get to the latest version? Well, you should upgrade if you are a power user who enjoys the latest features, OR if you would like the program to be faster, a little bit “lighter,” and a little less error-prone, OR if your clients are using the new version and you want to continue to work with them.

The Better Kind of PDF

I recently stumbled on an interesting twist to PDFs and the ability to process them directly in translation environment tools. It has to do with the way that PDFs can be created and then processed in the free office suites *OpenOffice.org* (<http://OpenOffice.org/>) and *LibreOffice*

(<http://LibreOffice.org/>). *LibreOffice* just released a new version 3.4. that you can download at <http://tinyurl.com/office-news>.

LibreOffice (by default) and *OpenOffice.org* (through an extension that you can download at <http://tinyurl.com/services-extensions>) offer the option of creating a PDF that has a *LibreOffice/OpenOffice.org* file embedded, making this PDF completely editable within its originating application. In fact, when you open this PDF within *LibreOffice/OpenOffice.org*, it automatically opens in the word processing/spreadsheet/presentation component it was created in just like a normal document. If it’s “only” a normal PDF that is not directly editable, it opens in the graphics component.

These PDF files are called hybrid PDFs, and you can create them by selecting **File > Export as PDF > Create hybrid file (OpenOffice.org)** or **Embed OpenDocument file (LibreOffice)**.

There are plenty of translation environment tools that offer PDF compatibility, but in essence they have simply integrated one of the readily available PDF converters. For small and less heavily edited PDFs this often works fine, but for more complex PDFs you’re usually better off converting the PDF using your own preferred method and then processing it in a TEnT.



The latest TEnT that offers this PDF compatibility is the latest version of *Déjà Vu X2* (<http://www.atril.com/>). It uses the same PDF converter as *VisualTran Mate*, *Alchemy Publisher*, and *Wordfast Pro*—the BCL Technologies plugin—but *Déjà Vu X2* automatically also uses *CodeZapper* (<http://asap-traduction.com/CodeZapper>), a little utility that strips the resulting *Word* files of unnecessary codes, resulting in much cleaner files than some of its competitors. ✓

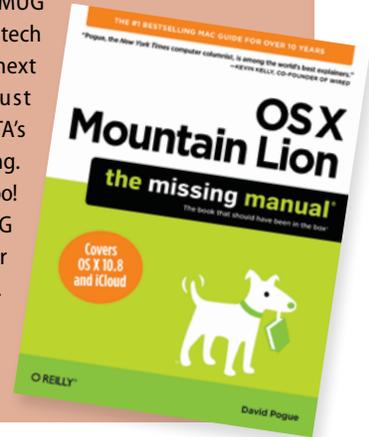
THE TRANSMUG REPORT

THERE'S A NEW LION IN TOWN

Unless you have built a wall against all sorts of Apple® marketing, you cannot ignore that the new version of OS X® is out. The *Lion* has lost its mane, changed latitudes and is now a *Mountain Lion*! Version 10.8 of our favorite operating system comes with more than 200 new features, or so they say. This count includes many tweaks and also major enhancements. I will not review them here, as many people have done it all over the press and the "interblogs." I have re-tweeted a number of recent these articles and you can find their links at transmug.com, in the central column, or by directly following the tweets at twitter.com/transmug. Notably tweeted, is the review by David Pogue—the famous columnist for the *New York Times*, "The Payout in an Apple Upgrade." In the same breath, Pogue also released his new *Missing Manual*. O'Reilly, his publisher, has sent us a copy of the heavy

book to raffle at our next quarterly meeting. This is not to be missed: if you have ever read Pogue's detailed handbooks to the *Mac*® operating system, you know that they are chock-full of fabulous timesaving tricks, all the while offering a detailed review of all the nook and crannies of the extensive software in a clear and often humorous tone. Pogue's article, on the other hand, weighs the pros and cons of upgrading—if you still needed convincing. True, some of your applications may not run on the new system until their developers update them, but that shouldn't be an obstacle for most of us, most programs having been already upgraded in time. Besides an ever more enticing price of \$20, I have personally enjoyed such features as the VIP instant smart mailboxes in *Mail*; the better thought out combination of Calendar-Contacts-Reminders-Notes à la *iPad*®; renaming and moving files directly from the title bar; better *AirPlay*® functionalities; and many more. Before your get your hands on Pogue's book, you can

also follow the tweet link to *AppleInsider's* series of articles on *Mountain Lion*. Each article offers an in-depth analysis of a new salient feature of the OS. In summary, this new release is the continuation of Apple's effort started with *Lion* to have all Apple devices, from *Macs* to *iPod*® touches, work seamlessly together. And since many TransMUG members are also *iPhone*® or *iPad* users, you will now find tweets for productivity tricks for these devices, too, on the TransMUG website. More tech talk at our next meeting, just before the NCTA's General Meeting. Check our Yahoo! Groups TransMUG mailing list for more details. YA



David Pogue gives you the keys to Apple's latest operating system in its new Missing Manual for Mountain Lion.

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Translation technology can be **simpler** than that.



CLEAN . INNOVATIVE . EASY TO USE

WHAT MAKES AN INTERPRETER?

Our profession was up for interpretation at the 2012 Summit. Is it a matter of education? Certification? Organization? Conversation? Or is it something much, much more?

BY MARILYN LUONG & EDURNE CHOPEITIA

If you were asked: What makes an interpreter, and what does an interpreter make, how would you answer? Is there such a thing as “the interpreting profession”? We all agree that interpreters work to bridge the language barrier between parties who would otherwise not understand each other. But how interpreters perform this noble task is not the same: some interpret without previous training; others have a master’s degree. Some are conduits, others contribute as cultural brokers. Some make a subsistence living, others make a good income. Some work across different interpretation sectors, others are employees in an organization. Some are freelancers, others are single language service companies. Defining an interpreter is not easy, so how then can different interpreters come together, talk to each other? The 3rd North American Summit on Interpreting, organized by InterpretAmerica, took on this challenge.

A holistic influence

This year, InterpretAmerica’s Summit was held in Monterey, CA, home to the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS), in June. Naturally, there was a good attendance from the MIIS Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation, and Language Education. Indeed, the Summit attracted many persons who further the education and training of interpreters, not only local, but from different institutions and programs in the US and abroad. They influence the next generation of interpreters and came to the conference for a more holistic view of the industry in the high-level discussions about the profession. There was talk about building a consortium for Interpreter Trainer and Educators. Dialogue ensued on how to best put together educational frameworks for interpretation students.

Conferences often have lunches not long enough for in-depth dialogue, but this summit had a full 90-minute lunch with good food. Good food you can find in a lot

of places in Monterey, but invaluable conversations over good food with interpretation experts you could have only at the Summit. The roundtables were bubbling with exchanges of ideas and insights.

Conversations that started over lunch often continued in the exhibit hall, where one could find the best names in interpretation services, such as William Sound. Almost all interpreters who work with transmitters and receivers have used William Sound equipment, and they were there to talk about their equipment, and, importantly, to listen to their client—the interpreter. We also had the omnipresent IntransBooks booth, with great reads and good customer service.

*Interpreters sometimes
have difficulty trying
to explain to their
family and friends
exactly what it is
that they do...*

When the keynote speaker came to stage, the exhibit hall emptied into the conference hall to hear technologist Scott Klososky, who invited us to step into the future. In his keynote speech, Klososky emphasized that technology can be friend or foe, and that will depend on whether you fear it or not. As technology changes, how we work will have to change. As the industry changes, how we prepare and adjust will determine whether we survive and prosper or whether we just struggle to survive. That said, adjustment does not necessarily mean leveraging technology; it could also mean niche market and/or boutique service. However you choose to position yourself in a changing technology space, you have to find your place.

Connecting the world

From inspiring sessions to intriguing discussions, interpreters learned a lot about each other. The conference interpreter learned that interpreters in other sectors also work in the simultaneous mode of interpretation. The legal interpreters realized that their code of ethics has much in common with that of the community interpreter. The community interpreter learned that medical interpreters are also called healthcare interpreters, and that it is a sector that is highly organized looking to create professional alliances to advance their profession, as legal interpreters did to be where they are now.

In the summit, we learned that interpreters indeed do identify with each other: they share stories and understand each other. Interpreters sometimes have difficulty trying to explain exactly what it is that they do and what challenges they face in their jobs. But at the Summit, interpreters found others who understand them.

The Summit reminded us of many things interpreters have in common. We will need to be more prepared for changes in technology. We all contribute to connecting the world, with meaning units and conversion, décalage and split attention, balancing register and transparency. We do work in a uniquely stressful profession and therefore need to care for our mind and body. We must also advance the status of the profession through client education and continuing education. But perhaps the most important thing we have in common is that each sector has much to offer others: intervention protocols, certification processes, client education methods, marketing ideas—just to name a few.

So much in common

With so much in common, then, will interpreters with so many inherently different approaches find a way to unite? The Summit discussed questions such as: Should we have a national interpretation certification, and, is it even

feasible? Should we develop an interpretation training curriculum in schools? Will this attract more young people into the profession?

To these questions, some say “No”, because interpreters come from working environments so varied that it is hard to categorize interpretation sectors. Even within a sector, there can be a wide range of categories. When you say legal, do you mean translating transactions or litigation? If litigation, in legal court settings or the legal private market? Healthcare/medical interpreters disagree on how to name themselves. Even if they can agree on a name, medical interpreters work in different settings and through different channels. When it comes to certification, medical interpreters can choose from two different national certifications. Most medical interpreters believe the two certifications are redundant, and some even say the certification bodies should unify the credentialing efforts. In the meantime, many interpreters in this sector select simply by tossing a coin. Clients, after all, don’t know the difference.

Putting it in perspective

The branches of the interpretation category tree grow long and tangled as interpreters indeed come from different sectors and from a variety of work environments. From variety comes perspectives just as varied. The different perspectives are like oil and water, which might be hard to mix, but InterpretAmerica’s Summit did manage to get interpreters together. As lively discussion ensued, awareness and understanding resulted. For example, interpreters can perform roles as conduits, clarifiers, cultural brokers and advocates, and often find themselves in one or more roles. With better understanding of this framework, an interpreter who works more in the conduit role might realize cultural broker is simply another role, rather than an unethical practice of interpretation.

It is not surprising that some interpreters don’t have a better understanding of the role other interpretation sectors fill. After all, interpretation can be a lonely profession: the interpreter receives an assignment, travels to the assignment location, performs the service, and leaves.

Sometimes you run into a colleague, but not often. The medical interpreter might not run into the community interpreter. The conference interpreter will not get to talk to the legal interpreter. But at the Summit, you not only could talk to each other, you could even debate each other.

Participants left the Conference knowing that it is not the sector of interpretation that makes you a rock star, but the quality of your service, the contributions you make, the mark you leave on the profession, and just as importantly, your own job satisfaction. Interpreters, after all, help their clients communicate, and how ironic would it be if interpreters themselves were not able to communicate with each other.

The end of the two-day Summit was an introduction to deeper thought about the our profession(s). To further the conversation, mark your calendar for next year’s North American Summit on Interpreting, June 2013 in Washington DC. To learn more, go to the Conference Web site at <http://www.interpretamerica.net>. ✓

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BOOMERANG-TRANSLATING ON THE INTERNET

An abundance of free translation services are available online; but what do you get for free? Will a simple sentence auto-translate cleanly across multiple languages? Or will the end result bear little resemblance to the original language? BY SARA GREENWALD

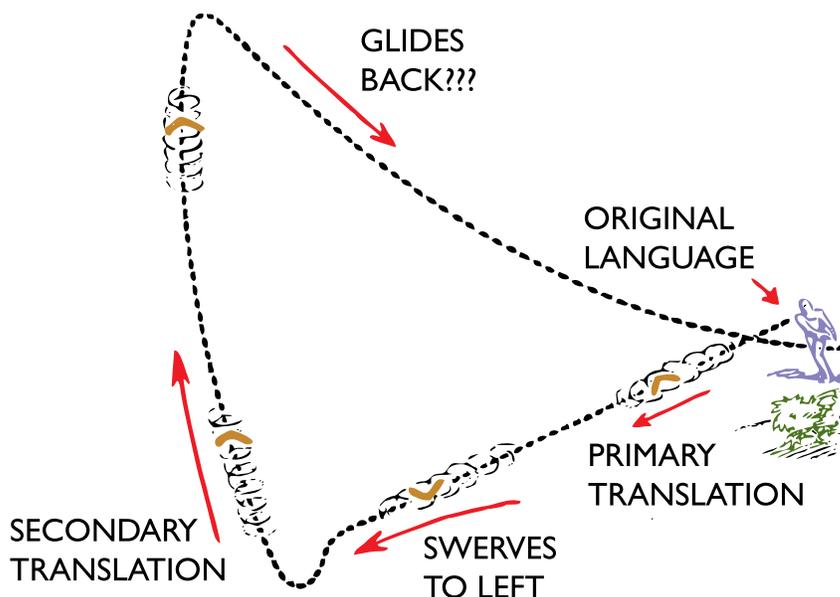
Most translators are all too familiar with the “free instant translation” services available online. I tried boomerang-translating, first using a translation website to translate from English to a target language, and then back-translating to English. Doing this shows what happens when the peculiarities of English are stripped away. If an English phrase or construction doesn’t have an exact counterpart in the target language, the translator has to make decisions based on meaning. When the translator and back-translator are making decisions based on words and phrases in their databases, the result can be pretty odd.

Disclaimer: My method was unscientific; I chose translation websites at random (names omitted to protect the guilty).

Back translating

Boomeranging in real life. Colleagues once brought me a protocol for a laboratory-instrument washer that had titles like: Instructions to respect in case of changing the product formula. Nobody was sure where the book came from, so I tried back-translating from German, because US tech writers here say German companies make employees translate their own protocols using the English they learned in high school and forgot. A website gave *Anweisungen, um respekt für das produkt ändern Formel*, which back-translated to For instructions on how to respect for the product formula change. No good.

For French, the website gave *Consignes à respecter en cas de remplacement de la formule produit*. Even to my scant French it didn’t sound right, and sure enough, back-translation produced a disturbing command: Baggage rooms to be respected in case of produced replacement of expression. But another site gave *Les instructions de respecter en cas du changement de la formule de produit* and back-translated to Instructions to be followed in case of replacement of the formula product. Aha! We sent the book off for improvement



Auto-translation tools are increasingly used for quick translations; but, once thrown, will the boomerang return to its originator or spin wildly off into an incomprehensible back translation?

by a professional translator of French to English. Later, the machine was moved and dusty installation diagrams found underneath it bore a company address in France.

A simple sentence?

A simple sentence: She told him not to go meet them until six.

Well, I thought it was simple. Both word order and declension pinpoint the subject, object, indirect object, and which verb is the main one. True, someone writing for translation might replace “go meet” with “go to meet,” and follow “until six” with “o’clock.” And English has lots of prepositions, so they can be used to convey a lot of information; “until” marks the end of an interval of time, not distance.

The Spanish auto-translator had no problem and back-translation even added the missing words. *Ella le dijo no a ir a reunirse con ellos hasta las seis.* / She told him not to go to meet them until six o’clock. That was the only language for which it quite worked.

In French, the auto-translator tried to make sense of “go meet them” by inserting “their meeting,” which clarified the phrase with a little more redundancy than English uses. *Elle lui a dit ne pas y aller à leur rencontre jusqu’à six.* A human knowing both languages would back-translate easily. The computer’s attempt: She told him to not go there at their meeting up to six.

In German, the auto-translator demanded a comma: “she told him not,” perhaps because of its archaic meaning, “she didn’t tell him.” In any case, the back-translation started leaking there and by “until” it sank: *Sie sagte ihm nicht, gehen sie bis sechs treffen.* / She told him not, they make up six.

For Traditional Chinese, I can only speculate on what the auto-translator did to return: She tell him not to man them until six foot. Chinese has fewer tenses, though there is a past tense in Chinese, and “told” is an oddball even among the irregular verbs that came to English from German, “To man” is one of those nouns that can be a verb, but I’m stumped—can’t figure out how it crept in here.

Clause and effect

"I want to progress from sitting in the audience to standing at the podium." This sentence starts with a clear subject, verb, and object followed by two prepositional phrases, made up of a gerund, a preposition, an article, and a noun. What could be simpler? Hah: "to" here is part of an infinitive and preposition. A translator has to interpret the object of "I want" as an infinitive, not some kind of noun phrase although "progress" is usually a noun.

In French, the result was *Je veux faire des progrès de m'asseoir dans l'audience à la réputation à l'estrade*. Reputation? I couldn't find it in any dictionary as anything but its English cognate. Googling *réputation à l'estrade* produced no hits. Auto-translators don't exclude a phrase just because no self-respecting writer would use it. Most likely it resulted from one of the most oversold features of computer translation, that the software "learns" by storing past translations in its database. Of course the elegant touch only made things worse: I want to make progress to sit down in audience in reputation in the podium.

Spanish really had me fooled. I thought this looked fine: *Quiero progresar de sentarme en el auditorio a la posición en el podio*. But "the position at the podium" wasn't in the back-translator's database and the back-translating *de* required more understanding than the computer possessed: I want to progress of sitting down in the auditorium to the position in the podium.

Finding balance

From a *New York Times* article by Thomas Kaplan: "Nik Wallenda climbed up a scaffold, stepped onto the steel cable and slipped the harness of his balancing pole over his head." This kind of specialized term can confront translators. A translator can gather that a "balancing pole" is a tool used by the famous tightrope walker, and that "balancing" isn't something a pole does by itself. The need to understand that, and to know the prepositional phrase "of his balancing pole" is a modifier for "harness" made this sentence a general Waterloo for all the auto-translators I tried.

In Spanish, the back-translator couldn't recover the sense of "stepped on" or "over his head," and the different meanings of pronouns, together with the balancing pole, wound up casting aspersions on the

reader: *Nik Wallenda subieron un andamio, pisó el cable de acero y se resbaló el arnés de su contrapeso en la cabeza.* / Nik Wallenda went up a scaffold, floor the steel cable and slipped the harness of your weight in the head.

**Auto-translators
don't exclude a
phrase just because
no self-respecting
writer would
use it.**

Back-translation from French made the pole balance itself, scrambled the meanings of the verbs, and left Nik in an uncomfortable spot: *Nik Wallenda grimpa sur un échafaud, renforcé sur le câble d'acier, a glissé le faisceau de son pôle équilibrage au dessus de sa tête.* / Nik Wallenda rode on a scaffold, strengthened on the steel cable, slipped the beam of her pole balancing on top of his head.

The German auto-translator and the back-translator threw Nik on the floor: *Nik Wallenda kletterten auf ein Gerüst, auf dem stahlseil und rutschte von seinem balancing pole das gurtzeug über seinem Kopf.* / Nik Wallenda climbed on a scaffold, on the steel cable and slipped from his balancing pole the harness over his head.

Nothing risqué

Adage: Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Some databases contain good translations of short little sayings like this one. It's really an "if...then" sentence, in the passive voice, with the verb "to be" left out: If nothing is ventured, nothing will be gained. So I expected any computer without a human-chosen translation on hand to fail.

Back-translation opened my eyes to the truth of another adage, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. From French, the word *tente* led the auto-translator to No tent nothing is nothing. Spanish came back correct if awkward: Nothing ventured, we have not won.

The German, which looked so accurate to me, fell into the computer "learning" trap. Somewhere it had apparently picked up the idea that "risk" was equivalent to "venture," but the word "nothing" made it want to turn the noun to an adjective. The result: Nothing risqué, nothing won. ✓

READ MORE

What is a better translation? Reflections on Six Years of Running Evaluation Campaigns, 2001, Philipp Koehn, Tralogy. This readable overview of the mechanics and problems of computer translation is available online from the author at:

<http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/pkoehn/>

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NCTA CALENDAR

October 20	Prep for CA Court Exam Workshop *	November 14	NCTA Lunch in Albany
October 24-27	ATA 53rd Annual Conference in San Diego	November 27	NCTA Happy Hour in San Francisco
October 25	Intro to California Court Interpreting	December 1	Trados Studio - Intermediate/Advanced *
October 30	NCTA Happy Hour in San Francisco	December 8	General Meeting
November 10	Trados Studio - Beginners Workshop *	December 18	NCTA Happy Hour in San Francisco

* Pre-registration and fee required for this event. See <http://ncta.org/calendar.cfm> for up-to-date information.

