

Professionalism abounds at 14th CATI Conference

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Is it just my bias, or are translators and interpreters getting more serious? If the 14th annual conference of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters is any indication, professionalism is increasing.

Consider, for example, the length of the conference: for the first time in many years, the conference, held at Meredith College in Raleigh, spanned two days instead of one.

Opening speakers helped to set the tone of the conference. On Saturday, April 21, Jonathan Hine, freelance Italian-English translator and frequent speaker at ATA conferences, spoke to attendees about the business side of language professions. And on Sunday, April 22, Robyn Miller of Goodwill Industries gave translators and interpreters a glimpse of what a good business relationship with a consumer of language services can be like.

In between were other practically oriented talks: not one, but two opportunities to learn more about computer-aided translation and terminology management, as well as sessions on simultaneous interpretation, problem terms and constructions, editing and proofreading, and legal terminology for North Carolina. Freek Lankhof and his wonderful stock of dictionaries appeared once again at the i.b.d. Ltd. table in the main hall, and attendees had ample time to exchange experiences and business cards over generous lunches and coffee.

In the conference's opening session, Hine demystified the process of setting up a serious business in language mediation by presenting various aspects separately, such as charging, budgeting, record-keeping, and taxation. In a comprehensible, reassuring manner, Hine focused on practical advice while remembering who his audience was: people who like what they do. "Business is not about getting rich," he reminded listeners at the beginning. "It is about making a profit so we can continue to do business." Hine stressed one of his principles several times in his talk — that translators sell time-based units of expertise — and then bridged the gap between theory and practice with concrete suggestions on charging for time rather than word or line count (and how to calculate the former while working with the latter!).

FORUM

CATI members were asked the following question:

What do you do when someone corrects a term that you are 100 percent sure you have translated/interpreted properly?

That very thing has happened to me several times. Of course, there are terms which may be in doubt, or about which I feel less than certain, and many times I accept correction from someone who knows the field better than I. But if I have a sure knowledge of the concept and term in question (for instance a term from a field in which I have worked extensively, whereas the person making the correction has not) I politely but firmly insist that the correct term be used. Usually this works best over the phone, mainly because of the possibility it gives for an immediate exchange of opinions. I recall a very recent case in which the person editing my translation completely reversed two concepts in the electric power industry, of which I have very extensive knowledge. Her choices totally obscured the intent of the text. She eventually ceded on both the corrections, but sent me an e-mail later saying that "I should avoid this sort of problem (!) in the future" because she "was not a native English speaker" [the translation was into English] and greater effort on my part would save her time and effort with the post-editing. (!!)

The above story is not the only time this has happened, and on more than one occasion my "correct correction" has been declined. The moral of the story: you may be right, and you may get your way, but in today's market, don't expect anybody to say "thank you" if you do! –

Michael Arrowood

I believe that this depends upon the setting. If this involves a literary translation and one is convinced that the other person or "expert" is mistaken — and this is one of many examples of fallacious corrections — I would seriously request having my name removed from the translation. On one hand, if the person, other than a client, is convinced and can demonstrate the correctness of another translation, then it should not make that much of a difference, in my opinion. If, on the other hand, a client requests a specific translation, then one does not have much choice but to attempt to educate the client in a non-combative way. I try to keep in mind the adage: "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." – **Dan Mac Dougall**

This happens to me on rare occasions with an agency that sends me the editor's changes to accept or reject. It's no problem, since the agency always gives the translator the final word. I accept only the changes that I feel would improve (or not detract from) the translation. If the "correction" would change the meaning, I would cite my source or explain the reason for my original choice in a cover letter. But I try not to be defensive, since this can be a real turn-off for future jobs. If my version is right but the correction is equally good, it's not worth contesting.

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The CATI Quarterly

Editor
Janet Golden McGirt

Proofreader
Ann C. Sherwin

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Please submit material in electronic form, if possible, to
The CATI Quarterly
Janet Golden McGirt, Editor
1300 DeBoy Street
Raleigh, NC 27606
Tel (919) 233-4148
Fax (651)-327-1259
jmcgirt@earthlink.net

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One translator's story: Joyce Lott

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about people in our profession is the diversity of our backgrounds. The following article, contributed freely by Joyce Lott, is the story of one member's path to becoming a language professional. We hope it will be the first of many!

I first heard about CATI in approximately 1988, after having moved here from Denver, Colorado. A friend gave me a page of information about CATI, and I labeled a file folder and placed that significant paper in it. Soon after that I called to inquire about the meetings. I also asked about how I could become a translator. Someone explained that there was a test I could take to be certified. I thought, "I can never be a translator." (At that time, I did not realize that I was not required to take the test.)

I had been a teacher of French, Spanish and English for fifteen

years. The idea of being a translator filled me with wonder, but I thought I could never become one. When I took a pre-graduate study test at Furman University to evaluate whether I needed any undergraduate courses before starting a graduate program, I did well and was not required to take any. This boosted my confidence.

I took some courses at night and on Saturdays. I then received several grants. One was for an immersion program in which I lived on campus for two weeks and studied. I took a vacation from my employment and experienced the great opportunity of an immersion program.

Several years later, when my employer was closing the doors of its corporate office and selling all of the branches, I again searched for work, this time with the desire for a position using everything I had taught. Michelin had that exact position, and I

began in 1994 as a bilingual administrative assistant to the Executive VP of Marketing and Sales. By 1996, I was a translator in one of the divisions and looked into the possibility of attending a meeting of the local Palmetto Association of Translators and Interpreters. After attending I decided to join. I then attended the CATI conferences in 2000 and 2001, as well as the American Translators Association conferences in Hilton Head (1998) and Orlando (2000). I also plan to attend the conference in Los Angeles this year.

My experience has taught me that if there is something I want to do, I can start taking the steps to reach that goal. The steps may be small, but they can lead me to the end target. I am thankful for the opportunities that allowed me to be a part of PATI, CATI, and the ATA. ■

Letter from the editor

I'm sitting at my "desk," a marble-topped affair that looks amazingly like a bistro-style dining table (and actually doubles as one) in my Zurich apartment. The courtyard outside is darkening. At home in the Carolinas, translators and interpreters are hard at work during the after-lunch stretch. One in particular is very hard at work, helping to get this issue of the CATI Quarterly out. It is to her, Galina Raff, that this letter is devoted.

In the rush to pack during my last weekend in the States at the end of April, I left the only software I really needed during my four-month stay here:

PageMaker, which I use to put together the Quarterly. When I finally finished editing the articles for the newsletter at the end of June, I went in search of the installation CDs. It took three calls home to determine that they were still on my desk in Raleigh. Sending them via Federal Express was too complicated; Adobe Europe couldn't supply me with replacement media. Then I remembered that Galina Raff worked with PageMaker. Miraculously, she was delighted and able to take over the desktop publishing. You see the results here.

Raff illustrates a valuable trait among translators, one that I've

discovered even while working on the Credit Suisse translation team in Switzerland: the readiness to help colleagues out. Although translation is basically a solitary activity that appeals to individualists and those who scoff at the corporate virtue of "team spirit," professional translators such as Raff and my co-workers here rival the most enthusiastic of professional athletes when it comes to pitching in.

The moral of this missive is that when you're in need, turn to your fellow language professionals. They really can help.

Janet Golden McGirt, Editor

Should the Passive Voice Never Be Used?

By Eileen Brockbank, © 2001

When my computer grammar checker accuses me of the error it calls "Passive," I laugh out loud. Of course, it then goes on to tell me how to rewrite the offending sentence in the active voice. To show the computer who's boss, I'm ready with a comeback: "If you think this is bad, you should have seen the source text!"

"Passive" is now defined as bad English by the grammar police in some word-processing programs as well as by some teachers of business English. While I agree that active voice often works better, the assumption that passive = bad is a bit simplistic. Sometimes the meaning *is* better served by a passive form.

To create a passive construction, you combine a form of the verb "to be" with a past participle. Because the past participle is invariably used in these constructions, the tense is always indicated by the form of "to be."

You may use the passive to report an action when you do not know — or it is unimportant — who or what caused it. "Two laptops were stolen from the office yesterday." (In this case, we don't know who did it.) To express this in the active voice, you would have to say "Somebody stole two laptops..." or "They stole two laptops..." Neither is wrong, but the passive form actually sounds more direct. Also: "When was the site discovered?" (Here, the person asking the question only wants to know when. Who made the discovery is not important.)

In addition, you may use the passive to emphasize the thing/person acted upon, as in: The struggling dot-com was bought by a larger company. It's worth considering the word-processing program's suggestion whenever your passive sentence includes "by." In

this case, the corrected version would be: A larger company bought the struggling dot-com. While the active version does not change the facts, the sentence no longer emphasizes that poor struggling dot-com. Thus, depending on the context, I might not accept the change.

On the other hand, you may find that there's no particular reason for your sentence to be passive. For example: New bidding guidelines were set by the City Council today. Why not: The City Council set new bidding guidelines today. The passive version of this sentence shows how the passive got its bad name. Here the active version is direct and succinct, while the passive version makes me yawn.

An important consideration for a translator is whether the writer of the source text was using a passive form deliberately, to avoid attributing responsibility. We are accustomed to sifting through source-text verbiage in the belief that we will eventually unearth some meaning. Once we have untangled an obfuscation, it is tempting to clarify it. Clarification is acceptable up to a point, but as translators, I believe we should respect what could be deliberate attempts to obfuscate. (Here's where a diplomatic consultation with your client could be helpful.) We should not disclose what the source-text writer wished to hide. Excessive use of passives in documents originally written in English should tip you off that something is fishy. Either you are dealing with a writer who is loath to give up the bureaucratic style of mid-20th-century business writing, or the writer is trying to hide something. One more possibility: the writer is a lawyer.

CATI Board of Directors

Janet C. Austin, President
7907 NC Highway 57
Rougemont, NC 27572
(919) 644-7842
jcaustin@visionet.org

Dr. William M. Park, Vice President
6639 Bruning Glen Court
Charlotte, NC 28215-3708
(704) 547-4239 or -2338
104564.2212@compuserve.com

Jackeline J. Metivier, Secretary
Bilingual Communications
315 N. Academy Street, Suite 156
Cary, NC 27513
(919) 380-7066
Bicomms@mindspring.com

Monique Glass, Treasurer
215 Old Town Way
Simpsonville, SC 29681
(864) 288-9040
megbglass@juno.com

Ann Manning, Director
100 Gateway Boulevard #806
Greenville, SC 29607
(864) 422-4364

Maria Rodriguez, Director
809 S. Ellis St. #3
Salisbury, NC 28144
(704) 633-8191
mrdinterpret@yahoo.com

Irene Selent, Director
119 Woodstock Lane
Greer, SC 29650
(864) 244-7418 / iselent@cs.com

M. Eta Trabing, Director
604 West Academy Street
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526
(919) 557-1298 / ET2639@aol.com

Carolina Association of
Translators & Interpreters
318 Baddock Drive
Durham, NC 27703
(919) 577-0840
C.A.T.I.@pobox.com
<http://www.catiweb.org>

American Translators Association
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 683-6100
ata@atanet.org
<http://www.atanet.org>

Forum

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In the hypothetical case where I am shown the revisions but do not have the final word, I would respond the same way. If I failed to convince the client that a "correction" was actually an error, I would add a disclaimer, keep a copy of my version on file, and insist that my name be removed from the flawed translation. – **Ann C. Sherwin**

When a client challenges the use of a term that I know is correct. I show my client why I've chosen that particular word and provide him/her with a copy of my dictionary or source of information. – **Jackie Metivier**

I tell the other person that their word/phrase may be a suitable fit for certain situations or certain groups of people. And if my phrase/term is most fitting for the population for which I am interpreting, then I explain, briefly, why it is so. Then, after all is said and done, I do further investigation on the side to be sure that my phrases haven't become obsolete through my lack of exposure to the language and culture.

This is an evolutionary business and it is vitally important that translators and interpreters stay abreast of the changes occurring daily. – **Alice Bolaños**

I go back to really make sure that I am 100% right, then I discuss it with the proofreader or editor to prove my point or with the translation bureau that gave me the work. I would provide quotes or Xeroxed pages from books and dictionaries that I had used to show I was right. – **Eta Trabing**

It does not happen very often. I do take it up with the client and go through the matter with him/her. Who changed the language/term? Do I need to take it up with a proofreader? In other words: My main concern is that the

client gets a correct translation, and there could be a reason to use different wording/terms. – **Anne Ekenslov**

It depends who the "someone" is. If it is an agency I would immediately get in touch with them and explain that and why my translation was correct in the first place. I would also ask them to change the document accordingly. This has happened to me before, and I have never had a problem convincing the agency of my version. However, in case the translated document had been sent out already, I would insist in writing that in the future they should consult with me first before they make any changes to my version.

If it is a private client, I would do the same but would definitely send them the above comments in writing. If they do not take my concerns into consideration, I would not work for them again.

If this were a general concern of mine I would make it my personal policy to negotiate with clients that I provide them with a notarized "Statement of Accuracy" (for a small fee) together with my translation. I would also make sure that they understand that this applies to my translation version only. – **Sylvia A. Smith**

I had this experience at work not too long ago. Here is what I did:

1) Even though I was sure, I double-checked what I had used and confirmed that I was right.

2) Responded to the person who sent me the comment giving them a list of items confirming why I was correct and why. The list included

a) a statement about my research with a very well-known and reputable resource about this matter (in my case it was the Real Academia Española) and I attached the link to their Web site highlighting the wording in question.

b) a summary of my findings from different Web site conclud-

ing that what I used and the way I used it was the most common one throughout the Internet.

I didn't even hear back from this person. – **Rosanna Quiroz**

As the translator, the final decision as to which "suggested" changes will be incorporated into my translation remains mine.

As interpreters, we use the cough button and discuss terminology, and present a united front. – **Claudia Kellersch**

If a colleague or competitor is the one who disagrees with my choice of terminology, I might guide them very graciously to the correct term in a reference using a humble approach like, "Well, I may be mistaken, let's check."

However, if the person who disagrees is impolite or unpleasant, I am not inclined to be so helpful, and might choose to allow him or her to continue using the wrong term, while I would feel smug and confident in my superior knowledge ... and polite demeanor. After all, if I need to defend my term to a client, I can.

If it is the client who disagrees with my terminology, he or she can have it his or her way, since he or she is paying for the job. However, I will never sign my name to something I know to be absolutely incorrect, nor will I attest to it. Short of that, I don't argue with clients. – **BB Rodriguez**

I ask, in the most polite form possible for me, why they chose this term and not the one I used. Unfortunately, the answer is rather often: the editor/proofreader said so. I have in the past found that a few (few) of our colleagues use this method to make themselves indispensable.

If the objection comes from a direct client, I ask the same question, but then the answer very often is: One of our engineers in Germany objected to this term. Then I ask to contact this person and very often we manage to come to a solution. Here the problem

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very often is that almost perfect English just does not suffice. –

Astra van Heest

Personally I would pass this along to someone else and ask for their opinion. There are great translators out there; some have been my teachers. I would run those particular questions by them by e-mail or by phone call.

– **Irina L. Teixeira**

If the someone who corrected my term is my editor, I would fax him/her the source(s) where I found the term and discuss it with her/him. I usually make a note in my glossary as to where I found it — so I can always get back to it if I want to reread it or show it to any doubting Thomas. Of course it is always possible that there are two or more correct terms. In that case there would be a discussion with the editor until we come to an agreement. –

Sabine Dmoch-Ames

The most important thing to do first is to listen to the person's reasoning. Ask them, "Can you give me another example of this term being used this way? Show me your reference materials — I would like to make a note of this for my records." It's best not to attack them on the spot. You can learn a lot from an individual from the way they accept counsel. Best to remember people are allowed to have their opinions. They may not be right; that is what makes us all unique. Once a mistake is out there in print, the entire world can have a review. Feedback from someone who was not directly involved can be possible, and perhaps that will get their attention. Our personal attitude is what will draw people to us again and again. Most important, don't sweat the small stuff. Don't let negative energy rent space in your head. Move on; we have more important issues each day. – **Debra Kennedy**

Question for next issue:

How do you tell that client that a client's expert, although almost fluent and quite able to make himself understood, just is not qualified to translate?

(Many thanks to Astra van Heest for the question)

CATI member gets ATA accreditation

Angelika Woods, a member of CATI from Columbia, SC, recently gained accreditation from the American Translators Association for translation from English into German. Woods, whose native language is German, translates both into and out of German in the areas of medicine, law, industrial patents and software. We congratulate her on her hard work and dedication to her profession.

Translator Interpreter Hall of Fame accepting 2001 nominations

The Translator Interpreter Hall of Fame (TIHOF) is now accepting nominations for 2001.

The TIHOF was founded September 30, 2000, to recognize the achievements of and pay tribute to the men and women who have helped penetrate cultural and linguistic barriers between the world's peoples.

Language specialists the world over observe International Translators Day every year on September 30, the Feast Day of St. Jerome, the patron saint of translators and the TIHOF's first honoree. Each year on this date the TIHOF will honor additional outstanding practitioners of the art of translating and interpreting.

Nominations for historical or contemporary figures should include a biography and/or essay on the nominee (700 words or longer) with optional illustrations. Send entries to nominate@tihof.org by the deadline of July 31, 2001.

Nominations will be judged by a panel drawn from various translator and interpreter associations.

New honorees will be announced on International Translators Day, September 30, 2001, and published on the TIHOF website <http://www.tihof.org>, with proper credit given to essay authors and translators.

Submissions will become the property of the TIHOF. Nominees not inducted at the 2001 ceremony may be considered for future years.

The Onionskin: Of home brew & blades in China

By Chris Durban

"The Onionskin" is a regular column in the ITI Bulletin, a publication of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (UK). This article is reprinted with permission.

Some of the most appealing skewed translations are those that allow readers a peek into unknown cultural territory.

"Made the first in China, it's both good as cold / Drinks and hot. best becerage for the middle, the old and / mental workers." One imagines the furrowed brow, the ruffling of dictionary pages, the blanket application of grammar rules pulled from well-worn schoolbooks, half-learned, three-quarters forgotten.

For the Onionskin, most of these bizarrely worded texts are good fun (not to mention consciousness-raising tools for the client-educationally inclined).

They are obviously produced by suppliers for whom basic accuracy poses a major challenge — style never comes into the picture. Who knows, from a marketing point of view, manifestly foreign texts may even reinforce the perceived authenticity of the product, on condition the confusion factor remains under control. China's LeLing Shi Hua Jian Zaolu Cang Zhi Zao sells the tea mentioned above in packets amply inscribed with Chinese characters, rounded out by an English plug: "Chinese style coffee make your body strong / Present friends suitable for old ang young." Happily the nature of the beverage is clarified on another flap: "This Kind of tea has a rich sweet scent of date."

Despite better phrasing and typesetting, the English-language text accompanying the Tehao Rechargeable Shaver (ref. RCCW-320) stood at least one Onionskin reader's hair on end: "Smuggle the razor blade (refer-

ence value around 400 g) on your muscle vertically. Then drag your skin and shave back slowly. Too much strength on muscle (reference value 800 g) may cause quick wear and tear, poor shaving feeling and outer razor blade's tear." Gulp.

Yet with translation standards set so low, will potential consumers be offended? Buyers of the Tehao shaver are clearly price-driven, making even basic instructions an "extra." And to its credit, the company does throw in some helpful safety information: "To the difficult points like jaw, you should shave by dragging the skin upward. When shaving near the throat, lift the face." That should ward off a few lawsuits.

More machine mayhem

Another example of misapplied machine translation (MT) cropped up this month, this time in the form of accounting headings run through Systran's Version Professionnelle by a French company. The near-victim enhanced the application's output by using a specialized "dictionnaire économique" module, but even that failed to deliver.

La Clôture Mensuelle (aka Month-end) emerged as "The Monthly Fence", while *Positionnement Chrono Journal* (Ledger Log Position) became "Positioning Stopwatch Newspaper". *Non lettrés des périodes antérieurs* (Unmatched items from prior periods) was translated "Not well-read men of the former periods", and *Sens de saisie des comptes* (Account entry

type — debit or credit) was rendered "Feel seizure of the accounts".

"The failure of the machine was made all the more total by the admittedly cryptic nature of the headings supplied for translation," says Chartered Accountant and translator Stephen Reynolds, who struggled to work out some of them himself. "But they are still pretty breathtaking." When asked to correct the machine-generated text, Reynolds preferred to start over from scratch.

At Systran's French distributor Mysoft, manager Laurent Schuhl insists that the experience in no way invalidates the vendor's claims of producing "high-quality translation." Nor does he feel a word of caution might be in order for monolingual users tempted to use the package for crucial outbound documents. "It all boils down to vocabulary," he told the Onionskin. "No system or dictionary can possibly include every single word in the world. OK, there were problems in this instance, but Systran has the biggest terminology base in the business, and it is growing all the time." The company refuses to release figures on the number of packages sold, but claims to have millions of satisfied users around the globe. ■

Chris Durban is a freelance translator specializing in finance and capital markets. She has been writing The Onionskin, a client-education column, for the ITI Bulletin (UK) since 1996. It features real-life translation stories, culled from the business press, personal observation and items submitted by readers. Chris can be reached at ChrisDurban@compuserve.com. (All leads gratefully accepted.)

CATI Conference 2001: Sessions reviews

Newcomers/Beginners

Orientation: How to Get Started in the Translation/ Interpretation Business

Presented by M. Eta Trabing
Saturday, 2:45 - 4:45 p.m.
Comments by Joyce Roberts Lott

From Eta Trabing's session, I learned that I really should go ahead into interpreting, because there are times when one is up and the other down, and vice versa. When I am not occupied with either, it is time to market my services. I should find someone to work with for editing, and help other translators. I can proofread others' work, and they can do the same for me. As has been said before, it is not so much what you know as whom you know.

I also learned that I should choose an area of expertise that is secure. Trabing's expertise is with crime, an area that she said is always a part of society. It is important to study to keep current with terminology in my area of expertise.

Trabing also advised finding local organizations dealing with that area. It is also a good idea to subscribe to the journals for it and to check the blue pages for groups that could use your services.

Finally, a translator or interpreter must keep the languages going. They change.

Trabing did not know she had the possibility of being a translator until she arrived in Houston from Argentina. She had received an education in Argentina in which she studied British textbooks in the morning and Spanish textbooks on the same subjects in the afternoon. Thus, she obtained a truly bilingual education, which prepared her in a marvelous way to be the successful translator

and interpreter she is.

How did the session affect my interest? I think I should interpret along with translating. I made that decision after the session, and then in another session received additional support for my decision. With earphones on, I could do much better at listening to one language and letting the other flow out of my mouth. That gave me confidence in interpreting. I doubt I will ever attain the level Trabing has reached, but she inspired me to attain the best level I can, getting a later start in life.

Looking for a Simultaneous Interpreter

Presented by Yasmin Metivier
Sunday, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Comments by Alice Bolaños

When we all got into the language lab for the simultaneous interpretation session, you could tell we were a little frightened. Even in the informal setting of the CATI workshop, simultaneous interpretation can be nerve-racking. Once we were all set up and ready to interpret for the "guest speakers" whom Yasmin had previously recorded, we gave it a shot.

The first, an obvious Southerner by his manner of speech, was a gentleman speaking about minority issues. With his Southern accent, partial sentences and localized jokes, we did our best to interpret simultaneously as we listened to the tape through our headphones. Not what I expected. As a translator (and therefore a perfectionist) I could not follow the speaker's incomplete sentences. Then when it came time to interpret his jokes, they weren't funny at all to the Hispanic listeners. At that point I was ready to relinquish the thought of being a simultaneous interpreter.

The second tape was a pre-recorded aviation instruction manual, in English. The unfamiliar text made simultaneous interpretation even more stressful. With the AC, beacon lights and other unfamiliar terminology, I began to lose my train of thought, or should I say my "plane" of thought. Soon, I was back in sync with the speaker, interpreting in my best Spanish. Then Yasmin tapped me on the shoulder to tell me I was talking too loud. With headphones on, I had forgotten that simultaneous interpreters are supposed to whisper so as not to disturb the audience. I acknowledged my error and finished the session.

Wow! What an eye-opener! Simultaneous interpreters deserve a lot of credit. It indeed involves a very high level of concentration and memory. I salute CATI's simultaneous interpreters for accepting this very specialized challenge. And who knows, maybe with a little practice whispering, I might become a simultaneous interpreter as well.

Beyond Spell Check: Editing and Proofreading for Quality Control

Presented by Janet Golden McGirt
Sunday, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Comments by M. Eta Trabing

McGirt started her session by testing her audience with a little verse called Ode to the Typographic Error and asked us to count how many instances of "the" we could find. Only one person actually found the 12 that were there! That got our attention! She also said that she would not go into grammar rules — a welcome note.

Her well-presented PowerPoint talk then went into the differences between editing and proofreading. Her presentation also

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highlighted the following points: the reasons for going beyond built-in spell-checkers; the reasons to use an editor or a proofreader, other available resources when there is no time to get a proofreader or editor; and aids in editing and proofreading, such as the “three-pass” process, stylebooks, and online resources.

McGirt offered a few tips on how translators can work better with proofreaders and editors: Use their suggestions or you’ve wasted your money. You are paying them to find errors, so they should! Provide them materials so that they can properly check your work — i.e. source texts and style points — ahead of time.

McGirt also had tips on how to proofread for others. She advised listeners to show a healthy respect for style differences. She also recommended asking the client whether they wanted to see changes made, and who the target audience is. Also, she suggested, an editor or proofreader should question things that sound “off,” and find answers before handing over the proofread text — in other words, add value to the product. Good advice for all of us, so let’s listen to this pro!

Computer-Aided Translation and Terminology Management Software

Presented by François Tardif and Daniel Gervais
Saturday, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.
Comments by Michael Collins

CATI members who attended the Saturday session of the 2001 Conference at Meredith College were party to a rare treat: the demonstration of a new and emerging computer-aided translation package. MultiTrans, launched in September of last year at the ATA conference in Orlando, is a product of Multi-

Corpora, a Canadian-based software company. The goal of the software is to attain those elusive gains in translation productivity through use of already-translated materials. However, the demonstration showed that it was not just another garden-variety translation memory program.

The presenters, François Tardif and Daniel Gervais, took the audience through a quick simulation — with an emphasis on “quick.” In a matter of minutes, and using a laptop with a 433 MHz AMD processor, they had built a body of source and target text of over 300,000 source words that they were able to search through to extract terms. Anyone who has spent hours aligning files with one of the traditional TM programs will immediately understand the significance of this.

The “file alignment” process with MultiTrans uses a different approach. Instead of laboriously matching up files line by line, the user associates the file-names of source and target files. These files can be plain-text or MS Word files. With one click of a mouse, the user sets the software to aligning the files automatically. It did this with amazing accuracy in the presentation. According to the presenters, the program first matches the files by user-definable sentence delimiters, then looks for non-translatable items (such as city names, numbers, proper nouns) to fine-tune the alignment.

Once this process is complete (a matter of a few seconds), the user is ready to search for terms in context. This is done with a simple search program. The source and target text appear in two windows on the screen. A search then takes the user to the source term and the approximate target sentence

where the translation is to be found. The search result seems generally to place the user within a couple of sentences of the target term. A quick selection of the appropriate target translation, and the pair is added to the terminology database. Thus, the user searches for and enters only those terms that are needed, not every single sentence, whether needed or not, as is the case with other alignments.

The translation program is sophisticated and easy to use as well. Users can pretranslate a document using terms from their database. The program inserts the segments it finds, but gives the user the option to reject the proposed translation, select the appropriate one, if more than one possibility is present in the TermBase, and to enter terms quickly and easily as the translation progresses. A two-window feature called DoubleVue allows the user to toggle quickly between the source and target files as needed. The program also features analysis functions, which can help a translator develop his/her terminology before beginning the translation. If there is a high degree of repetition in the document, this can result in tremendous time savings. While translating, the user can freely search through the corpus of associated files for terms and expressions, adding them to the TermBase as they are inserted in the translation.

The limitations of the software appear to be mainly linked with the available file format filters and languages. At the moment, MultiTrans only works with ISO Latin 1 languages and with MS Word, HTML, and text formats. However, Tardif and Gervais stated that filters for tagged file formats for Quark, PageMaker,

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Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary



The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (A.S. Hornby, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) has a use for most of us. Those of us who consider ourselves to be lifelong learners will enjoy browsing through this dictionary of some 1500 pages, discovering or rediscovering words and definitions that are totally new or once learned and then forgotten. For the non-native English speaker, this dictionary is indispensable. For the language lover in us, there are distinctions made throughout between British, American, Australian, New Zealand, Northern, Scottish and Irish English.

The cover proclaims: "Radically revised for the new millennium", but that is only one of its virtues. Leafing through the pages, one sees copious illustrations with labels, lengthy definitions with examples, cross-references to subject-related terms, and special boxes with headings like "Which Word?".

The last of these will be useful to more than the non-native speaker of English. For example, such a box appears under the entry for "landscape", and includes three lists of adjectives generally used for each of the three words "landscape", "scenery", and "countryside". (From a cultural standpoint it is interesting to see the inclusion in two of those columns of the adjective "English", as though these were found exclusively in England.) How many of us have actually thought about choosing from among these words when translating?

More to the literary translator's taste are entries like "crinkle", which along with the definition includes a diagram illustrating the difference between "folded", "crinkled", and "crumpled". However, even the average, non-literary, into-English translator will profit from entries like this as a way to recheck one's word choice.

Other helpful features are a section of study pages, laid out not in gray, unreadable format in the Roman numeral section as with other dictionaries but in the middle of the volume, with lively headings and graphics, similar to a manual. Included are sample letters, easy-to-read explanations of the parts of speech, and a very useful page about words that are new to our vocabulary. The latest dictionary also has 10 new pages devoted to specialized terminology in computing, cooking, health, musical instruments and sports.

Few are the quarrels this reviewer has with the accuracy of this dictionary. Naturally, being a British publication, the dictionary is arranged according to British spelling conventions, but there are cross-references from American spellings. A few U.S. variations given were not the most commonly used terms, but it was plain wrong in only one instance found – the glossy page on clothing and fabric includes a close-up view of the fabric of a bathrobe labeled "toweling" in American English, instead of "terrycloth". For things like this, fortunately, there are specialized multilingual and monolingual dictionaries.

To delight the inner child in all of us, there is also a glossy section with color illustrations of food, clothing, common animals, and games and toys, with labels distinguishing between British and American usage for the grown-up professionals we are today. ■

Sessions reviews

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FrameMaker, Interleaf, SGML, and more are in the works, as are Cyrillic and double-byte language capability. Release of these features is planned for later this year.

In short, MultiTrans appears to offer immediate benefits to its users. It offers a short learning curve. Users would have the ability to sharply reduce the amount of time spent aligning old files, to effectively and competitively quote a project based on internal repetition, and to eliminate the duplication of effort inherent in conventional translation memory programs, where separate operations are needed to enter terms in a memory database, a terminology database and the translation itself.

As far as pricing goes, the product comes in at the medium to low end for TM products: around \$690 for a light (freelance) version and \$2200 for the full version (more applicable for agency use and translators working with high volumes). Purchase includes free support and upgrades for one year.

One caveat: the audience saw only the presenters' demonstration, done with files that were chosen in advance. Each potential user should take the time to download the 30-day trial version and experiment with his/her own materials. Nevertheless, the demonstration was impressive. If this product lives up to its billing, translators will have an innovative, fast, and user-friendly alternative to traditional translation memory solutions. ■

CATI Conference

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In presenting their MultiTrans translation tool, Daniel Gervais and François Tardif of MultiCorpora R&D managed to move in a direction opposite from Hine. They took the staple of translation — words and sentences — and turned them into numbers. The audience heard statistics on how long it takes to do a translation with MultiTrans, how long it takes to reach the point at which that rate is possible, and how large a database, or corpus, one can build. Rather than explaining the challenging subject step by step, Gervais, CEO of MultiCorpora, took a total-immersion approach, leaving listeners to flounder in a sea of translation-memory terminology (much of it their own) only minutes after beginning. Still, the audience's curiosity was apparently piqued, judging from the traffic both days at Multi-

Corpora's booth in the main hall. (For a more extensive review of their talk, please read Michael Collins' comments on page 9.)

On Sunday, Robyn Miller shifted the attention of conference participants to interpretation. "Do You Hear What I Hear?" provided the perspective of one employer, Goodwill Industries of Eastern North Carolina. Goodwill's use of language professionals (mainly Spanish-English) is based on its mission to prefer in its hiring persons with disabilities and disadvantaging conditions — one of which, Miller emphasized, is a lack of proficiency in spoken or written English.

But to stay competitive with other businesses in the area, Goodwill must attract and keep good employees. That is where language professionals come in. "When we're talking about

translation and interpretation in the workplace, we're talking about equity, employer commitment, and, for me, competitive advantage," said Miller.

Miller also shared her expectations of language contractors, stressing two things in particular: familiarity with the company and its mission and an understanding that the contractor is representing management and is expected to interpret everything that is said. In closing, Miller described what she saw as effective translation and interpretation. "I want to make my great expectations [of equitable treatment, showing her commitment to diversity, and remaining competitive] to come closer to reality," she said. "And effective translations and interpretations help me do that." ■



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