

# Intercambios

Newsletter of the Spanish Language Division of the American Translators Association

Volume 4, Issue 2

September, 2000

## Message from the Administrator

Dear Colleagues,

As the 2000 ATA Conference draws near, the Spanish Language Division, with over 1,600 members in its ranks, is getting ready to celebrate in Orlando its fourth anniversary, while it continues to grow in numbers and to thrive in activities and enthusiasm.

In its short history, the Spanish Language Division has grown by leaps and bounds since its inconspicuous birth by Colorado Springs in November of 1996, at the close of the ATA Annual Conference, when six enthusiastic Spanish translators obtained authorization from the ATA Board to launch it. This issue of *Intercambios*, just before the 41st ATA Annual Conference, gives me the opportunity to report on some of our achievements during our short life in the ATA, as I get ready to step down as administrator to pass the baton to the SPD member who has graciously accepted to continue to lead our Division.

*Intercambios*, our most excellent newsletter and the first service provided to the SPD membership in the early days of the Division, during the summer of 1997, continues to play a most important role, bringing timely news and articles of interest to all its readers. To Pilar Saslow, who rose to the occasion and responded to the call of the Division to be our editor, our most profound thanks, my very own personal gratitude for all her support and help, our congratulations for a job well done, and our hopes that she will continue to volunteer her time and energies to this important tool of communication for all the Spanish translators within the SPD. May *Intercambios* continue to grow in quality and editorial excellence, as well as in membership participation, under her editorship! My deepest gratitude, also, to the great team of contributors, proofreaders,

correspondents, and volunteers who help the Division produce our showcase publication. And to those who have not yet begun to participate, don't wait any longer; start contributing, so that you too may enjoy the pleasures of being part of our great newsletter.

And then, of course, *Espalista!* It was during the Fall of 1998 that, as administrator of the Spanish Language Division listserv to the ATA leadership. After many months of discussions and lengthy negotiations, it became a reality with the help of Xosé Castro and Cristina Márquez, who agreed to become the co-moderators of the yet-to-be-born Spanish Language Division listserv. Lengthy negotiations continued, the guidelines came into being and the listserv acquired a name: *Espalista*. But it had yet to be born. During the Division Annual Meeting in Hilton Head, plans for its inception were disclosed, with the expectation that it would soon be operational. However, it would take exactly nine months for it to come into being. It was on July 18, 1999 that it was launched. It certainly caught on, and what a success it has been since then! Another one of the great services offered by the Division to its membership. So, if you have not tried it yet, join the other *espalisteros* and begin to enjoy the pleasures of this SPD cyberspace community of professional Spanish translators who profusely display their vocation and their fellowship every hour of the day (and night), every day of the week, every month of the year, through long threads and never-ending electronic discussions. And let us not forget our new co-moderators, Marianne Pripps and Rudy Heller, and our assistant co-moderators, Virginia Pérez Santalla and Olga Mutis de Serna! To them our most sincere gratitude and appreciation for their contributions of time and energy.

(continued on page 4)

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

SPD Election Notes	2	Hanging out your shingle on the WWW	9
Punto y Aparte: trastrueques electorales	3	Review: Diccionario del Español Actual	11
Spanish Language Sessions Description	5	Fun Farra	12
Algo por el estilo: traducción de siglas	7	Rifa en Orlando	12
Meet your candidate!	8	My Assault on the New York Publishing World	13
Carta a un diario	8	Review: Manual de estilo de la lengua española	15

## Intercambios

Volume 4, No.2  
September, 2000

**Editor:** Pilar Saslow

**Proofreading:** Patricia Jacobs, Cristina Lambert,  
Diana Sherer.

**Contributors:** Daniel Mac Dougall, Emilio Bernal  
Labrada, Alberto Gomez Font, Mario Taboada, Anne  
Sherwin, Liliana Valenzuela, Laura Rocha, Mike  
Stacy, Emilio Delgado López-Cózar, Alicia Marshall.

### Foreign correspondents

Olga Lucía Mutis de Serna - Colombia

Susana Peñaloza - Puerto Rico

Lucía Rodríguez Corral - Madrid, España

Macarena Vidal Fratelli - Uruguay

Mónica de León - México

Isabel Jiménez - Barcelona, España

*Intercambios* is a publication of the Spanish  
Language Division of the American Translators  
Association, a nonprofit organization to promote the  
recognition of translating and interpreting as a  
profession.

### Subscriptions

A subscription to *Intercambios* is a benefit of  
membership of the Spanish Language Division of the  
American Translators Association

### Submissions

Reader submissions are encouraged. Suggested  
length limits; articles 1200 words, reviews 500  
words, letter 300 words. Articles submitted become  
the property of

*Intercambios* and are subject to editing.

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are solely  
those of their authors.

Please submit material in electronic form, if possible  
to:

### Intercambios

Pilar Saslow, Editor

59-1A Taurus Drive

Hillsborough, NJ 08876

Phone:908-281-1084

Fax:908-281-1086

pilarsaslow@compuserve.com

**Intercambios is printed and mailed from  
ATA Headquarters. Therefore, if you have  
address changes contact:**

**225 Reinerkers Lane, Ste. 590**

**Alexandria, VA 22314**

**Phone: 703-683-6100**

**Fax: 703-683-6122**

**maggie@atanet.org**

## SPD ELECTION NOTES

Following the announcement of the opening of nominations for  
Division officers for the next two years, the Nominating Committee  
received eleven names. Of these, four agreed to run and seven declined  
to accept nomination. Out of courtesy, the Committee also contacted  
the current officers to determine their interest in running for office  
again, and they also declined.

Thus initially, there were two candidates for Administrator and two  
candidates for Assistant Administrator. Then one candidate for  
Administrator withdrew and later both candidates for Assistant  
Administrator withdrew. This occurred after the Nominating  
Committee's deadline for submitting candidates.

If there is no candidate for a given office, the incumbent  
automatically continues to serve until replaced. If the incumbent Assistant  
Administrator resigns, the Administrator may appoint someone to fill the  
position until the next Annual Conference, when an election must be  
held to fill the office for the remainder of the two-year term.

There is currently no candidate for Assistant Administrator. The  
sole candidate for Administrator is Rudy Heller.

Given this situation, the Nominating Committee consulted Division  
and ATA leadership, and their judgment is to invite the membership to  
elect the new Administrator by acclamation via those members present  
and voting at the Annual Meeting of the Division.

Distributing a paper ballot by mail in advance and providing for  
mail and proxy alternatives, in accordance with our Bylaws, would be  
complex and time-consuming. It would also serve no purpose. The  
purpose of a ballot is to make a choice among alternatives. There is no  
choice to be made here.

For your further information, we have been advised by ATA  
leadership that in the course of the coming year, the ATA Divisions  
Committee will be examining the issue of Division elections in order  
to establish simpler and more effective election procedures. The  
procedural choices authorized in the current bylaws of many divisions  
have not turned out to match the realities of a volunteer organization,  
where the problem is often to find willing candidates rather than to  
choose among a slate of competitors.

Respectfully yours,

### *The Nominating Committee*

Mike Stacy, Chair

Harvie Jordan, Member

Mercedes Pellet, Member

**TIP lab** is pleased to announce that registration is open for the  
2001 Distance Learning Intensive Spanish Translation/Revision  
Workshop scheduled for January to April 2001. Translations  
submitted will be reviewed by Leandro Wolfson, a professional  
translator from Argentina and organizer of *El Placer de Traducir*  
workshops, and returned with revisions, annotated comments and  
sample translations. Registration deadline is November 2, 2000.  
Participants will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis and an  
excellent command of both Spanish and English is an absolute  
requirement. For further information and an application form, contact:  
AliciaMarshall@compuserve.com

## PUNTO Y APARTE:

Trastrueque electoral con boletas ausentes

Escribe Emilio Bernal Labrada  
de la Academia Norteamericana de la  
Lengua Española

No, no hablamos de las trampas electorales, que según nos han contado, se hacen de vez en cuando en la política. Nos referimos a las trampas lingüísticas que padece el español en medio del singular proceso electoral estadounidense, el cual está dando lugar a un vocabulario muy curioso, seguramente de gran interés para los lingüistas hispanófonos del futuro.

Los candidatos se “nominan” y luego “corren” para un cargo, a fin de quitárselo al “incumbente”, fundándose en la “plataforma” presentada en la “convención” de su partido. Por su parte, los votantes se “registran”, la votación de los “precintos” se “reporta” y algunos votantes usan “boletas ausentes”. Luego nos dicen que se procederá al “conteo” de los sufragios que se hayan depositado en “cajas de votación”.

Expliquémonos. Eso de “nominar” es puro inglés **nominate** y no tiene razón de ser, ya que en español “nominar” es únicamente dar nombre. Si de lo que se trata es de la candidatura de un partido, el término sería “postular” (usado en algunos países), “designar candidato” o acaso un neologismo como “candidatar”. Me atrevería a sugerir la utilidad de acogerlo, pues tiene la ventaja de ser término uni-verbal (ojo, amigo tipógrafo, favor no poner “universal”) --o sea de una sola palabra--, está bien formado y es de gran claridad y fuerza expresiva. Si de “contrato” salió “contratar”, y de “contacto” “contactar” (recién aceptado por las Academias), ¿por qué no de “candidato”, “candidatar”?

Consecuentes con el ilegítimo “nominar”, los comentaristas nos hablan, como un solo hombre, de que tal o cual político busca la “nominación” (**nomination**) de su partido, relegando “candidatura” al cesto de los más inservibles desechos lingüísticos.

En cuanto a “correr” para un cargo electivo no hay disculpa para semejante adefesio, copia del inglés **to run**, pues en español la palabra normal, correcta y tradicional es “aspirar”. A nadie se le había ocurrido decir “correr” hasta enterarse de que así se dice en inglés.

En inglés cada partido arma su “plataforma” (**platform**), pero en español, no tanto, sin recurrir a la enésima acepción. Una “plataforma” es más bien un entramado de madera, andamios u otros materiales, muy usado en la arquitectura y la construcción. En la política lo que se arma o prepara es un programa o plan de gobierno, para que la ciudadanía conozca la postura y los principios del partido. Lo cual por lo general se completa y se proclama durante lo que antes de llamaba “asamblea”, y que hoy también --¿tal vez por obra y gracia de los anglómanos?-- se puede llamar “convención”.

El “incumbente” (inglés **incumbent**) no es, en nuestro idioma, el que ocupa un cargo. Ese señor o señora, según el caso, es el “titular” o simplemente el actual --es decir, el

actual alcalde, representante, o lo que sea--. Eso sí, les *incumbe* a los señores periodistas estar enterados de esta significativa diferencia.

Lo de “registrar” votantes no está del todo mal, pero el término acostumbrado en nuestra lengua es “inscribir” o, en algunos países como México, “empadronar”. Los que aspiran a ejercer su derecho al sufragio se deben antes inscribir o empadronar.

El uso de “precinto” ya se pasa de rosca, porque su inexistencia en nuestra lengua lo hace brillar por su ausencia en todos los diccionarios conocidos. Por muy castellano que suene el término, es una transliteración de **precinct**, que significa simplemente distrito electoral.

El resultado de la votación no se determina precisamente mediante un “conteo”, como nos suelen decir los medios de información (copiando **count**), sino a través del “escrutinio” de las boletas depositadas en las “urnas” (no en “cajas” o “cofres de votación”, que es transliteración de **ballot boxes**). Luego nos dicen que el resultado “se reporta” (copia de **report**), voz que si bien hoy día es aceptable yendo a la séptima y última acepción del DRAE, sería preferible suplantarlo con algo de sabor más tradicional; por ejemplo, “se notifica”, “se comunica” a la autoridad correspondiente, o se “da a conocer” al público.

Por último llegamos a lo de “boleta ausente”, que no tiene perdón de Dios, yendo más allá de lo relacionado con el Todopoderoso para ir a dar a lo verdaderamente infernal, como término cuya sinrazón es un paradigma de lo irracional y lo coloca de lleno en la categoría de lo endiablado.

No obstante lo cual nos lo espetaron no hace mucho por una cadena de muy “poca visión”, diciéndonos que el resultado electoral puede cambiar al contarse las “boletas ausentes”. Pregunta: ¿cómo se cuenta una boleta ausente? Y si la boleta está ausente, ¿se vota con una pluma imaginaria (y tinta invisible)? Nada, una auténtica misión imposible. Cuyo origen está en **absentee ballot**, lo cual, a su vez, nos da la solución: el que está ausente (de su distrito electoral) es el votante, y no la boleta. Conclusión: se trata del *voto por correspondencia*, y no de brujería electoral, aunque ya sabemos que en la política se hacen tantos trucos que cualquier espectáculo de magia profesional se queda microscópico.©

---

Emilio Bernal Labrada, oriundo de Cuba, trabajó en la OEA como traductor e intérprete. Desde 1992, es miembro de la Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española. Autor de numerosos artículos sobre la lengua española, presta servicios de traducción, asesoría y redacción de publicidad del inglés al español. emilio labrada@msn.com

**The Spanish Language Division  
of the American Translators**

**Association**

**Administrator**

Alicia Marshall  
1550 Asbury Avenue,  
Evanston, IL 60201  
Phone: 847-869-4889  
AliciaMarshall@compuserve.com

**Assistant Administrator**

Andre Moskowitz  
1040 Evelyn Avenue, Apt. 2  
Albany, CA 94706  
Phone: 510-527-8659  
Fax: 510-527-8662  
amoskow@aol.com

■■■■

■■■■

**Spanish Division Conference**

**Planning Committee**

Andre Moskowitz, Harvie Jordan, Alicia  
Marshall

**Technology Committee Co-Chairs:**

Cristina Márquez  
Xosé Castro

■■■■

**Electronic Glossary Chair**

Beatriz Bonnet

■■■■

**Dictionary Raffle Coordinator**

**at Annual Conference**

Laura Rocha de Nakasawa

■■■■

**Espalista Co-Moderators**

Marianne Pripps  
Rudy Heller

**Espalista Assistant Co-Moderators**

Virginia Perez Santalla  
Olga Lucía Mutis de Serna

**Message from the Administrator...**

*(continued from page 1)*

The Orlando ATA Annual Conference is almost here and will afford the Spanish Language Division members another opportunity to enjoy good fellowship, during its annual social networking event, and to grow and develop professionally, in the first-rate educational sessions, presentations and workshops. And then there will be more fun, as the SPD joins the Portuguese Language Division (PLD) and the ATA Florida Chapter (FLATA) to sponsor an evening of entertainment and relaxation. More information on this to come. So make plans for Orlando. I certainly look forward to seeing many of you there. This year, the Division is planning a special surprise for all its members who attend the Annual Division Meeting. Thanks to the contributions of several Conference exhibitors, the Division will raffle off a number of books and dictionaries. Be sure to be there so you can be one of the many winners!

Every year since the Annual Conference in San Francisco, the Division has sponsored an official guest from a different country who has brought his talent and knowledge to share with the SPD members. This year, we are proud to announce that Raúl Ávila, from the Colegio de México, has accepted our invitation to come to Orlando. Let us all show our appreciation by participating in his workshop "From the Press to the Internet," on Wednesday morning, September 20, and by attending his Conference presentation, entitled "Languages, Media, Globalization," on Thursday afternoon, September 21.

To those of you who were not able to attend the ATA Conference in 1999, the Division offers you the opportunity to enjoy some of the many good sessions presented during this event with the compilation of a selection of papers related to Spanish from the St. Louis Conference. This publication is available at ATA Headquarters for \$15. Place your order now or purchase it in Orlando.

The Spanish Language Division is still working to offer its members more benefits as our Technology Committee continues in its endeavor to create our web page. And then there are the plans to hold a future Division mini-conference in 2001. On this issue, I urge you to respond to the survey that has been conducted to measure membership interest for this event. Contact me directly if you wish to complete this survey and if you need a copy of the questionnaire.

So, as I bid farewell in this, my last message to all of you in *Intercambios*, I wish you all infinite success in your professional and personal life. I sincerely thank you for all the support you offered me during my tenure as the first SPD administrator. It was a pleasure and a privilege to serve you all. May you continue making your invaluable contributions to *Intercambios*, to *Espalista*, and to all the other many activities sponsored by the SPD, so that our Division continues to thrive within the ATA! ¡Hasta la vista!

*Alicia Marshall*

## You're invited!

Please join your fellow SPD members for the SPD Reception at the annual Conference of the American Translators Association.

**When:** Thursday, September 21, 2000, 7:00 PM

**Where:** Wyndham Palace Resort, Orlando, Florida

When you register for the ATA Conference, don't forget to mark this event on your registration form and include the \$25 fee in your payment.

We look forward to seeing you in Orlando!

## Description of Spanish Language Sessions 2000 ATA Annual Conference - Orlando, Florida

### **S-1 (T, 1:45-3:15pm) – INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED English-Spanish Translation of Financial Documents: English, Spanish, or Spanglish? Part II**

*Silvana T. Debonis*, instructor, Universidad del Museo Social, Buenos Aires, Argentina

#### **Presentation Language: Spanish**

Last year, we analyzed some of the most common mistakes found in the English>Spanish translation of financial documents. This second part will focus mainly on two phenomena: the threat of "false cognates," and the incorrect use of prepositions and grammar structures. In addition, we will analyze the pervasive influence of "the financial press" and its share of responsibility in the development of this hybrid language known as "*Spanglish*."

### **S-2 (T, 3:30-5:00pm) – INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED Languages, Media, Globalization**

*Raúl Avila*, professor, El Colegio de México, Mexico

#### **Presentation Language: Spanish**

The printing press, the first form of mass media, promoted the expansion of the written word and, as a consequence, literacy. The publication of translations of the Bible was an important factor in standardizing the European languages. Five centuries later, cinema, radio, and television have been fundamental in the standardization of the spoken language. And more recently in the global village, the Internet promotes standardization and, at the same time, transmits individual variation in chat-rooms. In this situation some criteria must be defined to determine which structure of an international language, like Spanish, should be used in these media which will be in agreement with the different communicative situations.

### **S-3 (F, 10:15-11:45am) – ALL LEVELS**

#### **Spanish Language Division Annual Meeting**

*Alicia S.V. Marshall*, supervisor, Spanish Translation Section, Rotary International, founder, Translators and Interpreters' Practice Laboratory, and administrator, ATA Spanish Language Division, Evanston, Illinois

#### **Presentation Language: Spanish**

### **S-4 (F, 1:45-2:30pm) – ALL LEVELS**

#### **Topics in Spanish Lexical Dialectology: Kids' Stuff**

*Andre Moskowitz*, hispanist, lexicographer, dialectologist, assistant administrator, ATA Spanish Language Division, and a translator/interpreter, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Department of Justice, San Francisco, California.

This presentation will provide information on how the Spanish-language names for *balloon*, *hopscotch*, *kite*, *marbles*, *seesaw* or *teeter-totter*, *slide*, *slingshot*, and other children-related items vary by country and region. The terms that have been found to be used in each of the 20 Spanish-speaking countries will be presented, and the audience will be asked to share its knowledge of regional children-related terminology.

### **(F, 2:30-3:15pm) – ALL LEVELS**

#### **La Globalización y Los Neologismos**

*Luis E. Quezada*, senior Spanish translator, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.

#### **Presentation Language: Spanish**

This lecture will discuss the many new words that are cropping up in modern Spanish in international, bilingual circles and in newspapers as a result of the globalization of information, trade, and industry. Since English is the main source of new terminology, Spanish speakers are scrambling to come up with equivalents, which are not always all that "castizos." A wide corpus of newly coined Spanish terms is taking citizenship in international circles, sometimes clashing with the traditional, established language usage. From this grab bag, we will try to determine which terms seem acceptable and which are definitely unacceptable.

### **S-5 (F, 3:30-5:00pm) – ALL LEVELS**

#### **International Economics for Spanish Translators**

*S. Alexandra Russell-Bitting*, senior translator/reviser, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.

What do ministers of finance talk about when they get together? Based on a Spanish-language source text on Latin America, this lecture will explore the basics of international economics, with an emphasis on meaning and proper usage in English and Spanish. The main topics covered will be real Gross Domestic Product growth, current account balance, capital flows, foreign exchange, international reserves, interest rates, inflation and unemployment, macroeconomic stability, and structural reform.

### **S-6 (S, 8:30-9:15am) – ALL LEVELS**

#### **Trans-libations: Spanish-English Wine Terminology from the Vineyard to the Glass**

*Kirk Anderson*, chair, ATA Chapters Committee, and independent translator, Miami Beach, Florida

Taken together, Spanish-speaking countries may produce more wine than any other linguistic block on earth, but that's not to say that translating wine literature is big business. This unpretentious, "for the love of the art" presentation will take the audience on a tour through the process of making and appreciating wine in both Spanish and English and, while attempting to break down the barriers between wine snobs and the rest of us, will offer a model for acquiring practical terminological knowledge in any field of expertise.

### **(S, 9:15-10:00am) – BEGINNER**

#### **Corporate Finance: Legal and Financial Terminology**

*Silvana T. Debonis*, instructor, Universidad del Museo Social, Buenos Aires, Argentina

#### **Presentation Language: Spanish**

Corporate finance has become a key success factor for companies, and translators have played an important role in bridging the communication gap between international

*(continued on page 6)*

## Description of Spanish Language ...

(continued from page 5)

credit institutions and companies. English>Spanish translators who want to start working in this field will soon find out that among the most challenging features of corporate finance lies the close interrelation of financial and legal concepts—two areas translators need to address if they are to render an accurate translation. In this presentation, intended for beginners in this field, we will explore some legal and financial concepts (and related terminology) in loan agreements, bond indentures, credit facilities, among others.

### **S-6 (S, 10:15-11:00am) Great Hall Center - INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED Spanish-English Translation of Litigation Documents**

*Thomas L. West III*, president-elect and conference organizer, and owner, Intermark Language Services, Atlanta, Georgia

In this session we will look at civil litigation documents filed in U.S. courts and in courts in Spanish-speaking countries to see how they are alike and how they differ. We will identify recurring terminology and phraseology and consider the best ways of translating them.

### **S-6 (S, 11:00-11:45am) Great Hall Center - ADVANCED**

#### **Risk Management Terminology (English-Spanish)**

*Silvana T. Debonis*, instructor, Universidad del Museo Social, Buenos Aires, Argentina

#### **Presentation Language: Spanish**

Over the last decade, international companies have learnt that the difference between a successful and a failing business also lies in an efficient risk management policy. Consequently, they have been making increasing use of hedging techniques to minimize their risk exposure. Translators working in the corporate and financial field need to have a basic understanding of these instruments, their use, and terminology. This aim of this session is to describe the structure of hedging instruments and to work on the translation of key related words and expressions.

#### **CONFERENCE TIP:**

**MAKE SURE YOU MEET THE DIVISION'S OFFICIAL GUEST RAÚL ÁVILA FROM COLEGIO DE MÉXICO. LET US SHOW OUR APPRECIATION BY PARTICIPATING IN HIS WORKSHOP "FROM THE PRESS TO THE INTERNET" ON WEDNESDAY 9/20, AND BY ATTENDING HIS CONFERENCE PRESENTATION ENTITLED "LANGUAGES, MEDIA, GLOBALIZATION ON THURSDAY 9/21**

## **Spanish Conference sessions are published!**

If you were unable to attend the ATA Conference in St. Louis, we are pleased to offer you the opportunity to enjoy selected sessions related to Spanish that were presented during the meeting. The SPD has compiled and published the Conference sessions related to Spanish that are available in printed, form as originally presented by their authors. It includes:

- **Sources for Translation Theory: Fiction in Latin America** by Adriana S. Pagano;
- **The Author as Translator** by Grady Miller;
- **The Language of International Development** by Alexandra Russell-Bitting;
- **Topónimos y gentilicios: tradición, traducción y transcripción** by Alberto Gómez Font;
- **Three Common Assumptions when Translating English into Spanish: Research into Meaning vs. Form** by Dr. Marian B. Labrum;
- **El Departamento de Español Urgente de la Agencia EFE: historia y objetivos** by Alberto Gómez Font;
- **English > Spanish Translation of Financial Documents: English, Spanish or Spanglish?** by Silvana Debonis;
- **Exhibition of Argentine Silver at the Moscow Kremlin Museum – Translation and Localization Project** by Miriam Golía and Natasha Ostroumoff;
- **The Role of Translation in Advertising for the US Hispanic Market: The good, the bad and the ugly** by Kirk Anderson;
- **Topics in Spanish Lexical Dialectology** by Andre Moskowitz;
- **The History of Translation and Interpretation in Mexico** by Dr. Georganne Weller;
- **What Medical Translators/Interpreters Need to know about Arthritis** (includes glossary) by Michael Blumenthal;
- **Nuestro idioma de cada día EL "ESPANGLES" EN LAS NOTICIAS** by Emilio Bernal Labrada;
- **Translating for Interpreters** by Dr. Cynthia Miguélez;
- **Translator's Note: Use or Abuse?** by Silvana Debonis;
- **Translation Studies and Higher Education: The Case of Spain** by María Barros Ochoa;
- **Academics and Professionals: Collaboration or Conflict?** by Dr. Cynthia Miguélez;
- **Errores ortotipográficos en la traducción al español** by Xosé Castro Roig y Lucía Rodríguez Corral;
- **Internet Search Strategies for Translators** by Manon Bergeron and Susan Larsson;
- **Getting Started as a Spanish-English Translator** by Thomas L. West III

Order your 200-page copy of **Selected Spanish Related Presentations of ATA 40th Annual Conference in St. Louis** now. Send \$15 to ATA Headquarters. For orders from **outside the United States, add \$5, for a total of \$20**, to cover the additional postage and handling for international mail. **This book will also be available in Orlando.**

## ALGO POR EL ESTILO :

Traducción de las siglas  
Guión

Escribe Alberto Gomez Font  
de la Agencia EFE

*Nuestro columnista se tomó bien merecidas vacaciones pero antes me envió estas notas del Departamento de Español Urgente de la Agencia EFE*

### Traducción de las siglas

Cuando las siglas son internacionales, es decir, pertenecen a organismos que incluyen a varios países (o a muchos) con distintas lenguas, lo habitual es que éstas se traduzcan y tengan una forma en cada una de esas lenguas. Si tomamos como ejemplo el inglés y el español, ese caso se da en siglas como NATO (inglés) y OTAN (español); UNO (inglés) y ONU (español).

No ocurre lo mismo cuando las siglas son de un organismo de ámbito nacional, aunque éste afecte a las relaciones de otros países, pues si el organismo sólo tiene un nombre, en su lengua original, ése es el nombre oficial y no lícito traducirlo, aunque en uso no oficial se tienda a hacerlo.

Este segundo caso es el de organismos como la CIA, que en español llamamos Agencia Central de Información o Servicio Central de Información, y no por ellos cambiamos sus siglas a ACI o SCI.

Últimamente ha surgido una duda de ese tipo entre los redactores de la Agencia EFE en los Estados Unidos de América: Hay un organismo que en inglés se llama Immigration and Naturalization Service cuyas siglas son INS, y el hecho de que en español se conozca como Servicio de Inmigración y Nacionalización ha llevado a algunos a escribir las siglas según una traducción –SIN–, sin tener en cuenta que se trata de un departamento u organismos de los Estados Unidos de América y que su único nombre es el inglés, ya que, si se tomara como oficial el nombre español, debería hacerse lo mismo con el correspondiente en polaco, rumano, chino, portugués... y demás idiomas que llegan a ese país.

---

Alberto Gomez Font trabaja como corrector de estilo en el Departamento de Español Urgente de la Agencia EFE (Madrid) desde 1980. Coordinador y ponente en numerosos seminarios y congresos sobre la lengua española, también es autor de los *Vademécum de español urgente I, II y III*. Alberto es moderador del foro de debate sobre el uso del español *Apuntes* (goya.eunet.es/listserv) deu@efe.com

### Guión

El guión es un signo ortográfico consistente en una rayita horizontal que presenta los siguientes usos:

- a) Al fin del renglón que termina con parte de una palabra, cuyo resto debe escribirse al principio del renglón siguiente. Nunca se cortará al final del renglón un diptongo ni un hiato; tampoco se acabará ni empezará un renglón con una sola letra.
- b) Para unir los dos componentes de algunos adjetivos cuando ambos conservan su propio acento: cuestión *teórico-práctica*, elementos *físicos-químicos*, oraciones *interrogativo-exclamativas*.
- c) Para separar dos o más adjetivos que califican conjuntamente a un sustantivo: Museo *Histórico-Geográfico*; Instituto *Económico-Político-Sociológico*.
- d) Entre dos o más nombres propios que se juntan para indicar los partícipes de algo: pacto *Alemania-Francia-Reino Unido*; reunión *Roosevelt-Church-Stalin*.
- e) Los compuestos de los sustantivos del tipo *coche bomba*, *camión cisterna*, *hombre rana*, *buque escuela*, etc., deben escribirse siempre sin guión.
- f) Para unir palabras, cifras, siglas, palabras y cifras o cifras y palabras entre las cuales se omite una preposición: *pasajeros-kilómetros*; *kilómetros-hora*, partido de fútbol *Barcelona-Madrid*, acercamiento *UGT-CC.OO.*, relación *madre-hijo-nieto*.
- g) En los compuestos en que se antepone un prefijo a un nombre escrito con mayúsculas, a una sigla o a una cifra: *anti-Arias*, *anti-OTAN*, *sub-15*. Los prefijos, salvo en estos casos, no han de separarse con guión de la palabra siguiente.
- h) Después del prefijo de una palabra cuando esta queda aislada de él por la interposición de otros u otros prefijos: acuerdo *bi-*, *tri-* o *cuatripartito*.
- i) Entre las cifras se indican los años inicial y final de un espacio de tiempo; por ejemplo: Juan Martínez Sánchez (1902-1986); o siguiendo a la fecha que indica el principio, cuando no se ha producido aún el fin: Pedro Rodríguez Fernández (1912-).
- j) Entre las cifras que indican las páginas en que se expone algo ininterrumpidamente: páginas 58-66.

## Meet your candidate!

Some members of the Spanish Division have honored me by nominating me for Division Administrator. To date my membership in the ATA has been mostly on the receiving end of the hard work of countless people, and I want to thank all of them, especially Alicia Marshall, Harvie Jordan, and Andre Moskowitz for their years of service to the Division. Now it seems to be my turn to join in and give something back to the organization that has been with me during my 30 plus years as a professional translator.

Unless there are nominations from the floor during the election in Orlando, you, the members, will have slim pickings for the position of Division Administrator: As of this late date, I am the only candidate. Thus it would seem appropriate for me to pledge that one of my main priorities will be to look for ways to encourage more participation in the Division, in leadership roles and elsewhere. How is it possible that out of 1400 plus paying members only one is willing to come forward? Am I the only p\*\*\*\*jo in the bunch? I am optimistic that at least a nominee for Assistant Administrator will step forward. Working together and along with the many people already involved in the Division, we will continue to advance the projects in progress: our web page, Espalista, the Spanish Forum at the Conference, and the dictionary project. (Did I forget anything?) In addition, I hope to encourage us to pursue a dream voiced by Alicia and others of developing a separate annual Division Conference.

I look forward to meeting people in the Division that I have not yet met, and working with all of you toward the accomplishment of our many goals. Be forewarned: I will be looking for innovative ways to enlist your help, so if you feel that you have something to contribute, please do not hesitate to come forward. As a matter of fact, I'll take this opportunity to start now: my e-mail is aguayajo@aol.com and I look forward to hearing from you because you (personally and collectively) are the Spanish Division of the ATA.

Cuento con ustedes, colegas. El voto en Orlando es lo de menos ... con lo que cuento es con su colaboración durante los próximos dos años. De antebrazo, gracias.

**Rudy Heller**

FOR LAST MINUTE CONFERENCE UPDATES  
VISIT  
[www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)

## Carta a un diario

*Esta carta fue dirigida a EL PAÍS pero bien podría ser dirigida a cualquier otro periódico. Como traductores y lectores de español también nos toca velar por su pureza*

Me gustaría ver que EL PAÍS evitara los atentados al idioma que son tan frecuentes en libros, revistas, periódicos y televisión. En concreto, sería muy de desear que el mejor diario de España no cayera en los siguientes vicios:

1. El abuso de la voz pasiva. El español odia la voz pasiva del verbo con odio atávico y feroz, y llegará a cualquier extremo (uso del reflexivo o del impersonal) con tal de evitarla. Debido a la influencia del inglés, los medios de comunicación de masas emplean la voz pasiva (artificiosa, complicada y malsonante) en cuanto se les pone un verbo a mano.
2. El empleo indiscriminado de los adjetivos posesivos, fenómeno ya antiguo debido a la influencia del francés primero y del inglés después. El español no mete sus manos en sus bolsillos ni pone su sombrero en su cabeza: se mete las manos en los bolsillos y se pone el sombrero en la cabeza. Al contrario del francés e inglés, no necesitamos reivindicar continuamente la posesión de cosas que nadie nos disputa.
3. El uso sistemático del adjetivo delante del sustantivo (influencia inglesa también). En español, el adjetivo sigue generalmente al sustantivo. Al invertir este orden se obtienen efectos estilísticos sutiles, que se pierden cuando tal inversión ha llegado a ser la norma,
4. Más influencia del inglés: el uso del sustantivo sin artículo con sentido partitivo. A un español con dos dedos de frente no se le ocurre decir que "alumnos de ingeniería bloquean el acceso a la facultad", sino "unos alumnos...", "algunos alumnos...", o "un grupo de alumnos..." o incluso (si los tales alumnos son la mayoría o la totalidad) "los alumnos de ingeniería bloquean el acceso a la facultad".

Me apena comprobar cómo los escritores y periodistas de mi patria (que son quienes enseñan al público a leer, escribir y expresarse) se dedican a destrozarse la lengua. No se trata de academicismos: un idioma evoluciona día a día. Se trata simplemente de buen gusto. Quedo de ustedes atentamente,

Diego Campos Loriz, Niagara Falls (EE.UU.)



## Hanging out your Shingle on the World Wide Web by Ann C. Sherwin

You don't have to be a techie. You don't have to know HTML. All you need is a clear vision for your business, common sense, and a little time, and you too can hang out your shingle on the World Wide Web.

When I walked into a business planning workshop three years ago, I already had enough work but not of the kind I wanted. The presenter challenged us that day to envision what we'd really like our business to be, if we could have it our way. I came up with a vision and, a few weeks later, a plan. Part of that plan was to launch a Web site that would help me focus on the subject areas I enjoyed most. I took the do-it-yourself route and achieved my goal. I'm now as busy as I want to be, doing work that resembles play and getting paid for it.

This article is not about the technical aspects of creating a Web site. There are software manuals for that. It is a casual walk through the process based on my limited experience in site design but extensive experience using the Web to find information. For inspiration, I also took a look at sites of other CATI members, where I found some good ideas and some...well, they didn't work for me. I also came to the conclusion that my own site is too plain and could use a professional overhaul. It's now on my agenda of things to do before Christmas.

### Why Have a Web Site?

An obvious reason for translators and interpreters is to expand your clientele. I get far more business through my Web site than through the Yellow Pages, ads in specialty journals, and CATI and ATA listings. It's my most effective advertising medium next to the all-time winner, word of mouth. A Web site is also a convenient way to capitalize on the latter. Satisfied clients tell their friends about my site by e-mail, and the friends are more likely to follow up while still online than if they get the referral in person or over the phone.

With a Web site, you can establish yourself as an expert in your fields of specialization by including far more information than you would put in a display ad or promotional brochure.

You can compartmentalize your material for different client groups. If you organize it so that the parting of ways occurs on the home page, nobody will have to navigate through pages that do not apply. My areas of specialization are so distinct that if I were to rely on printed brochures, I would need a different brochure for each clientele.

Information is easy to correct and update, even

daily, if you maintain the site yourself. Nothing is more dismaying than to have had 500 brochures printed just before you learn that your area code is going to change. Or to open one fresh off the press and have a typo jump out at you. With a Web site, you always have another chance.

### Research and Planning

You need to keep certain things in mind as you plan your site, even if someone else will actually create it.

What clientele are you targeting? Consider factors such as age, economic bracket, cultural and educational background. Will your clients need your services for business or personal use? Do they know they need your services? How are they likely to use the Internet? Some translation companies recruit subcontractors on the Web. Many small businesses do, especially in areas with no translation service listings in the Yellow Pages. And a large number of individuals do. For instance, in my area of specialization, history and genealogy, my target clientele includes a large proportion of senior citizens in the middle and upper economic brackets

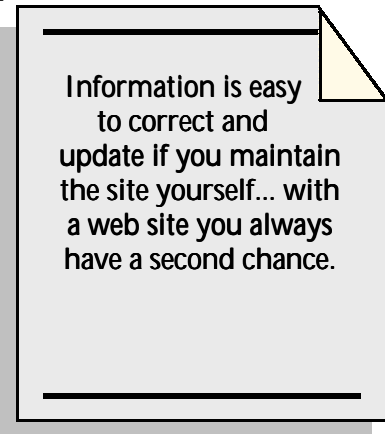
with a relatively high education level. They already know they need my services, primarily for personal use, but occasionally for publication or for business purposes (e.g., auction houses). While not all my clients fit this description, these are the ones I've chosen to target.

Who are your competitors, and how are they presenting themselves? Use a search engine to find them. If you translate from French to English and specialize in telecommunications, try entering the keywords <translator French telecommunications> and see

who comes up. Decide whether you want to compete with these colleagues directly or take a different tack. The most aggressive marketers in my field seemed to emphasize low rates. Since bargain-hunters are not high on my list of desirable clients, I decided to stress professionalism and knowledge of my field instead. And applying the writer's maxim "Show, don't tell," I planned to do this by example rather than words.

What image do you want to project? Formal, friendly, funky? Go ahead and express your personality, within reason, but don't lose sight of your clientele. Chances are your styles will mesh naturally, but not

*(continued on page 10)*



**Information is easy  
to correct and  
update if you maintain  
the site yourself... with  
a web site you always  
have a second chance.**

## **Hanging out your Shingle...**

*(continued from page 9)*

necessarily. If you specialize in financial documents, your chatty, informal personal style may not appeal to the conservative client who needs a prospectus translated for German investors.

Weigh the pros and cons of designing the site yourself, getting help from a knowledgeable friend, or hiring a pro. One approach is to use a template. See Janet McGirt's site for an attractive example. Is time a factor? What are your weak points? Consider getting help with certain aspects even if you decide to do most of the work yourself. Help is available in writing, editing, design, site promotion, maintenance, finding an ISP, and applying for a domain name. If you decide to hire an expert, look for one who has writing, editing, and design skills and shares your good taste. Beware of the friend or relative who offers to create a site for you free of charge. You may feel obligated to accept something less than satisfactory because you don't want to seem critical or hurt their feelings. Stay in control. Regardless of who creates your site, be prepared to maintain it yourself. It's not that hard to do.

Consider posting a bilingual site even if you work in only one direction. But get help with the text in your second language, perhaps by bartering services with a native-speaking colleague. (It's a good idea to run your native-language version by an editor too—see below.) Both Sieberichs and McGirt have bilingual sites.

### **Site Content**

Your site will send a message about your linguistic skills. It's pointless to state that you do quality work if there's a run-on sentence in your welcome message or a dangling participle in your bio. Your writing should be impeccable, even if it is not in your native language. In reviewing CATI member sites, I found one that I would especially like to cite for good writing. The honor goes to Renate Sieberichs and her company, Atlas International. In fact, this site has many nice features, so I'll be referring to it again.

Weigh the merits of a text-intensive site vs. tight copy and bullet lists. If your purpose is to impart information, lengthy reference material can be copied or downloaded and read later. But text that you want visitors to read online should be concise. Keep direct self-promotion to a minimum. Focus on what your target readers want to know, not what you want them to know. Competition is stiff, and it's all too easy for visitors to click and move on. They need to see at a glance why they should linger at your site.

If you're inexperienced as a translator or interpreter, you don't need to tell the world. But avoid empty statements meant to imply more experience than you have. Instead, demonstrate that you handle your

languages well and know the subject areas you claim as specialties. If you're a small company or an individual, there's no need to pretend you're big. Many clients prefer the personal service and predictability of an individual or of a small, specialized company that fits their needs.

Even if you're a generalist, become a specialist on the Web. And get very specific. Anyone who enters the keywords <translator Russian technical> in a search engine is going to get a zillion hits, and you are not likely to rank in the first half-zillion. But if someone is looking for a Russian translator with expertise in environmental science, you may have a chance, if you've mentioned this as a specialty in your site. Of course, if you list 50 specialties, you'll lose your credibility. Pick three or four fields that you know well and enjoy, and build your site around these.

### **Good Ideas**

Sieberichs offers work samples that can be downloaded. I also liked the teaser link on her homepage, "Are you buying promises?"

Jackie and Yasmin Metivier's "Definition of Terms" helps educate clients beforehand, so they know what to ask for. Their use of photographs of themselves in work settings with subcontractors and clients appeals to those who like a personal touch. They also have a location map on their site, with directions to their office, provided by their host, Citysearch.

Freebies and goodies will encourage visitors to bookmark your site, to tell others about it, and perhaps even to link their site to yours. For example, there's a wonderful user's guide on the Global Translation Systems site. ICN Language Services has culturally savvy do's and don'ts and a featured country that changes periodically. My site has a bibliography, informative articles, and outside links of interest to my target clientele, with a glossary coming soon.

Include a response form, to make it easy for your visitors to act immediately rather than tomorrow or maybe never. Global Translation Systems uses one for recruiting subcontractors. Others allow a potential client to request a quote by entering a project description and contact information.

### **Think Again**

Outside links are useful and will attract people to your site if they are carefully selected for quality and relevance. However, links to Babel Fish (see article on facing page) don't fill the bill. Also, don't make outside links the first thing people come to on your home page. You want visitors to take off their coats and stay a while.

If you don't update your site often, don't post the "last updated" date. One site said "Last updated in February 1999" on the homepage. As it turned out, some of the internal pages had been updated more recently, but the visitor who judges a book by its cover may never get there.

*(continued on page 14)*

**Crítica: *Diccionario del español actual***  
**Manuel Seco, Olimpia Andrés y Gabino Ramos**  
**Editorial Aguilar, Madrid, 1999**  
**por Mario Taboada**

El castellano es hoy, quizá más que nunca, uno de los grandes idiomas del mundo; lo confirman las frías estadísticas y lo remacha su riquísima literatura, desde el Cantar de Mio Cid a las obras más recientes de Vargas Llosa, Umbral, García Márquez y tantos otros escritores de ingenio. Es un idioma rico y flexible, aromático, preciso en la captación de sentimientos, voluntades y rebeldías, implacable en el insulto y singular en el humor negro que tiñe la fibra de la lengua y empapa el inconsciente colectivo de sus hablantes.

Desafortunadamente, agotado el Siglo de Oro, y a influjo del academicismo y del aislamiento, el idioma institucionalizado cayó en las garras del casticismo, volviéndose engolado y artificioso, perdiendo su filo y desconectándose del habla real del pueblo. La guerra declarada con inimitable saña por Valle-Inclán y secundada por un puñado de audaces en las primeras décadas del siglo, provocaría, de forma paulatina, la evaporación casi total de la naftalina literaria, proceso que se acentúa con la generación española de posguerra y el asombroso florecimiento de la literatura en América en la misma época; de esta revolución o desentierro del idioma verdadero nada, o casi nada, se veía reflejado en los diccionarios, que todavía practicaban un prescriptivismo a ultranza y una constante censura. Así, Camilo José Cela, en célebre carta dirigida a la Real Academia, protestaba la ausencia en el diccionario de la institución de palabras de uso generalizado (como “cojones”) que figuraban en Quevedo. ¿Si se daba la espalda a Quevedo, el estilista más brillante que ha tenido la lengua, cómo habría de prestarse atención al pueblo?

Hoy día, ya no se concibe la pacatería ni en el hablar ni en el escribir. El traductor, que es un escritor (no un oficinista, ni un siervo, ni mucho menos un *word engineer*), necesita, en primer lugar, de material de consulta actualizado que refleje el idioma tal cual es, de forma descriptiva y no prescriptiva, y con información detallada del registro y la extensión geográfica del uso de cada vocablo o expresión. Los diccionarios, como las gramáticas, siempre amenazan aburrir o amedrentar al lector, aun si se trata de un lector tan desesperadamente cómplice como el traductor. Son una necesidad aceptada a regañadientes, un testigo impertinente de la vastedad del idioma y de su intrincada estructura, de sus dubitaciones. Los hay buenos y malos, frescos y vetustos, especializados y generales, gordos y esbeltos, prescriptivos y descriptivos, pero pocos pueden considerarse materia de entretenimiento y, hasta este, ninguno<sup>[1]</sup> merecía el lugar de honor como libro de cabecera del escritor.

El eximio lexicógrafo español Manuel Seco, tan

apreciado por sus obras de divulgación, particularmente el *Diccionario de dudas y dificultades de la lengua española*, sale al ruedo con un nuevo y voluminoso diccionario (4638 páginas), fruto de treinta años de trabajo, que, inusitadamente, se ha convertido en un clásico instantáneo y en un *best-seller*. La filosofía y el método de Seco y sus colaboradores, Olimpia Andrés y Gabino Ramos, se resumen en la frase “Si se usa, lo ponemos.” La intención fue, pues, recoger el idioma vivo de España, nutriéndose de la prensa y la literatura española de posguerra. El criterio: exigir dos citas del vocablo en libros, revistas, folletos, periódicos u otros impresos, procurando al mismo tiempo evitar los vocablos meramente pasajeros y las antiguallas raras u obsoletas. Cada término va seguido de ejemplos de uso. Estilísticamente, el diccionario es un modelo de su género. El lenguaje es llano, las definiciones claras, y la selección de ejemplos notablemente cuidadosa.

A título de ejemplo, veamos la entrada referente a *panceta*:

**panceta** *f* Tocino entreverado con magro. Medio Andrés 214: Los americanos dicen beicon al tocino, en cuanto le ven la fibra de magro... Vamos, a la panceta.

Nótese la cuidadosa selección del ejemplo, que expresa admirablemente la ambigüedad conceptual que rodea a la trinidad que forman la panceta, el tocino y el beicon.

La socarronería se hace presente en vocablos como:

**meódromo** *m. (col, humoríst)* Retrete público. Mendoza *Laberinto* 110: El teléfono está allí, junto al meódromo.

**clasicoides** *adj (desp)* Que tira a clásico. Torrente *DJuan* 94: Me ha llamado la atención su lenguaje clasicoides. Fuster *País Valenc.* 120: Una ridícula doble galería porticada y semicircular, de aire clasicoides.

Otra faceta importante, quizá polémica para algunos, es la inclusión de numerosos extranjerismos de uso corriente, que el autor, de conformidad con su perspectiva realista, considera enriquecen el idioma.

**scat** (ing: pronunc corriente, /eskát/; pl normal, ~s) *m* Canción de jazz con sonidos vocales improvisados en vez de palabras. J. M. Costa *País* 22.3.80, 25: La aparición sobre el escenario del conocido espontáneo Juan José González, que con una mezcla de sana espontaneidad y de falta de respeto hacia los músicos y la audiencia, cantó una especie de *scat*.  
(sigue en la página 12)

## Crítica: Diccionario del español actual...

(viene de la página 10)

Cabe destacar también la abundancia de citas de autores modernos, particularmente de aquellos que han dado muestra de originalidad en el manejo del idioma; las citas de Cela, García Pavón, Delibes, Umbral y Vázquez Montalbán, entre otros, no solamente aclaran y afinan el significado de las palabras sino que despiertan el apetito del lector, además de entretener. Este diccionario, más que consultarse, se lee por páginas enteras. La impecable presentación tipográfica y la cuidadísima corrección de pruebas redondean una obra que sólo cabe calificar de perfecta. Más que recomendarla, exhorto a adquirirla o robarla sin demora.

### Notas:

<sup>1</sup> Con la posible excepción del magnífico *Diccionario de ideas afines* de Fernando Corripio. A mi juicio, el célebre diccionario de María Moliner padece de una organización defectuosa y de falta de actualidad, además de manifestar ciertas inhibiciones y prejuicios en la selección de vocablos.

---

El autor, notorio *service provider* y *word engineer* especializado en tecnología, reside en Virginia con su familia. [matrxtech@yahoo.com](mailto:matrxtech@yahoo.com).

### Florida Chapter of ATA Spanish Language Division Portuguese Language Division

Invite you to

## Fun-Farra

*A Night of Fun with Latin and Brazilian Dance Music*

Friday, September 22, 2000

Dance lessons: 8:30 PM Party starts: 9:30 PM  
Wyndham Palace Resort Ballroom  
Orlando, FL

### Salsa, Merengue, and Samba Lessons

Come with friends or come solo! Partners are not necessary

Dance Instructor **Sam Ray** from Boston's **Sam Ray Dance Co.**

Music by DJ "**Funky J**" from Washington, DC  
Spinning the best in Brazilian, American, and Latin dance music,  
keeping the dance floor jumping all night long

Tickets: \$5.00 Cash Bar

Dance lessons: 8:30 PM

Party starts: 9:30 PM

Casual attire – No sweaters, shorts or sneakers, please

Presented by **Ganzá Entertainment**  
and **Funky J Productions**

Sponsors: FLATA, SPD, PLD and Adams Translation Services

## Rifa en Orlando por Laura Rocha de Nakasawa

Ya se aproxima el 41° Congreso de la ATA en Orlando, Florida, el cual nos brindará, además, la oportunidad de celebrar el cuarto aniversario de nuestra División de la Lengua Española. Todo esto es motivo para festejar, y dado que estaremos en una ciudad soleada y tropical, esperamos que podamos hacerlo con gran estilo.

Como parte de las celebraciones y para alentar la máxima participación de los miembros de la División en el Congreso de la ATA, iniciaremos un nuevo programa que, si es bien recibido, podría pasar a ser un ritual obligado de nuestras reuniones anuales.

Rifaremos este año varios diccionarios y materiales de referencia o certificados de obsequio, los cuales han sido gentilmente donados por varias compañías que, tradicionalmente, exponen en el Congreso de la ATA.

Ya contamos con varias contribuciones, a saber:

- ibd, ltd - Diccionario Clave en tapa dura o CD-ROM
- Schreiber Publishing - Multilingual Dictionary, recién publicado
- John Benjamins - Certificado por valor de \$50.00
- University of Texas Press - The Writer's Reference Guide to Spanish, por David William Foster, Daniel Altamiranda y Carmen de Urioste, enero 2000
- Tom West - Spanish Legal Dictionary
- Héctor F. Rodríguez - Technical Glossary for Bilingual Technical Writers & Translators
- Bernard Hamel - False Cognates
- Thierry Jambage - Programas de Transit de Star Transit.

A fin de realizar esta rifa, la División pondrá a disposición de todos los miembros que participen en la reunión del día viernes 22 de septiembre, una caja, en la entrada del salón para que a medida que los miembros ingresen, depositen en ella su tarjeta. Al finalizar la reunión anual de la División se procederá a la rifa, extrayéndose las tarjetas de los ganadores y anunciándose sus nombres.

A medida que esta rifa se vaya repitiendo, año tras año, en el Congreso de la ATA, esperamos poder ampliar la lista de premios. Esperamos verlos a todos en Orlando ya que siempre es motivo de gran alegría poder reunirnos con nuestros colegas y esta vez más especialmente con el atractivo adicional de esta interesante rifa, gracias a las donaciones de nuestros generosos contribuyentes iniciales.

## My Assault on the New York Publishing World by Liliana Valenzuela © 1999

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR of those towering New York publishing houses? That was my first question as I considered my upcoming trip to the Big Manzana for the ALTA annual conference in October. Having already published two books of literary translation with a major publisher obviously helps, but the task still seemed daunting. Thanks to the sage advice of former NYC resident and literary whiz Marian Schwartz before, during, and after the conference, I was able to trace my own map with a minimum of wrong turns or missed opportunities. Here's how I tackled this:

First, I worried endlessly about what to wear, what the weather would be like, whether I needed a raincoat (hard to conceive of after 6 weeks of harsh drought in Central Texas), and when I should get a haircut. I even learned how to apply make-up.

Then I turned to secondary matters, such as how to get an appointment. I have worked on occasion with a well-respected literary agent in NY, so I e-mailed her for contact tips. She graciously obliged with the names of editors in major publishing houses working in Spanish for the U.S. market. With this valuable information in hand, I then looked up the publishers' addresses, history, phone numbers, and other pertinent information in the essential volume *Writer's Guide to Book Editors, Publishers, and Literary Agents*, by Jeff Herman (Prima, 1997-1998). In addition to the practical information, this book helped me tremendously in understanding the publishing hierarchy, and learning who owns whom, as well as which imprints or branches do translations.

Three weeks before the conference I composed a one-page letter to each of these seven publishers, in which I briefly described my background, mentioning the two books I have translated and how many copies have been sold to date. I offered my services as a literary translator, dropped my agent's name, enclosed a résumé, and let them know I'd be in New York on such and such a date and that perhaps we could meet. I told them I would be calling the following week. On a whim, I sent an additional letter to an editor I got from the book—a cold call if you will—of whom I knew nothing, but who ended up being the only publisher out of eight with whom I actually got an appointment.

I wrote the eighth letter to a Simon & Schuster editor with a Hispanic last name (a good omen). I let her know that I recently read and enjoyed the book *Gardens in the Dunes* by the Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko published by her house and was wondering whether I might be able to translate it into Spanish. I then included all the other standard information previously mentioned. Each letter went into a large brown envelope with my spotless résumé (an inadvertent mistake here or in the letter itself is “the kiss of death,” as Marian warned me), a color

photocopy of the covers of my two previous books (it costs more than a B&W copy, but it's well worth the extra attention you might get), a copy of a review of one of my books by Austin colleague Tony Beckwith, an article I wrote for the ATA Chronicle about some of the issues I had to deal with when translating *Woman Hollering Creek* by Sandra Cisneros as *El Arroyo de la Llorona* (Vintage Español/Random House, 1996), plus a copy of my ATA certificate of accreditation for good measure. I kissed the packets and sent them on their way.

In between I was swamped with work, but managed to order new business cards and fine-tune my resumé. I also prepared several packets with my own poetry and fiction to slip to unsuspecting editors or literary agents at the conference.

The week before the conference I followed up via telephone. I kept a log of each phone call, whether I had left a message with machine or human, whether the editor I wanted was out of town, on maternity leave, or soon to leave the company. More than half of the editors had the great courtesy either to reply by e-mail or through their assistants, saying that they would keep my records on file for any future translation projects, but that at the moment there was no work for me. One editor didn't reply at all and another one asked me to resend the materials to another person in the company. I also made an appointment with the project director at one of the museums for which I have done translations.

Once in NYC, I made some more phone calls to let the remaining editors know that I was already in town and would be happy to meet with them at their convenience. I had a wonderful time in the city I hadn't visited since I was 12, and I could feel my old “urban blood” from growing up in Mexico City begin to bubble. I arrived two days before the conference so as to have ample time to visit and go to appointments.

After the conference got into full swing the days were packed to maximum capacity and my attention divided between fascinating panel offerings and enticing city attractions. Toward the end of the week, after a call home, my family informed me that I had a message from someone who wanted to give me work. Here was my chance: an editor was actually excited to meet me and was positively impressed by my credentials.

It was Friday. The chances of actually meeting were slim, but I waited around the phone playing a miserable game of phone tag with the editor until finally we spoke. The only time she could see me was between 3 and 4 that afternoon, as she had an author from out of town and was busy showing her around and accompanying her to meetings with different people at the publishing house. I had agreed to read the story for the Spanish workshop led by

*(continued on page 14)*

## Hanging out your Shingle...

(continued from page 10)

Don't let animated graphics distract from your message. A spinning image on every page can get tiresome. Large headers on every page also tend to annoy, especially if they require the viewer to scroll sideways to see all the buttons (some of us have small screens). Several sites I reviewed had headers that took up the top two-thirds of my screen, so that I had to scroll vertically to view the information with every click. Had I not been gathering fodder for this article, I would have moved on to another site.

Don't assume your visitors will endure eyestrain to read your material. I have to be desperate for information to cope with small type, especially against a textured background or one with too little contrast. I also find light text on a dark background hard to read, except in large formats.

"Under construction" links are a disappointment. Better to leave the link off altogether until you have something ready to post. Or at least give a consolation prize. I offer a free lookup service by e-mail in lieu of my glossary.

### Rates and References

Should you post your rates? Some members do. Others list their minimum fee. I explain factors that affect cost and offer to quote a price once I see what the job entails. Here's a bright idea if you do post rates: McGirt includes a link to Yahoo's currency converter/ Währungsrechner on her rates page.

Should you include a list of clients on your site? If so, make sure it doesn't come across as mere name-dropping. The ATA Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices includes the statement "I will use a client as a reference only if I am prepared to name a person to attest to the quality of my work." Sieberichs provides links to her clients' sites and invites prospective clients to contact them. The Metiviers post client endorsements. In any case, it's prudent to ask permission before posting a client's name, and then to state that you have permission. Otherwise a list of clients or specific project descriptions could raise misgivings about confidentiality.

Should you include a personal page? It depends. My genealogy clients share personal information with me, so I don't mind giving them a glimpse of my "other life" as well. It also calls attention to additional subject areas that I could translate in. But it isn't usually done and might turn off commercial clients. If you include a personal page, keep it lowkey.

Once you've hung out your shingle on the World Wide Web with millions of others, how do you attract attention to it? Watch for ideas in the next issue. If you have a success story on this subject that you'd like to share, let me know soon, and I'll incorporate it in the article.

---

Ann Sherwin is a freelance German-English translator based in Raleigh, NC

*Reprinted from the Summer 2000 issue of the CATI Quarterly in slightly modified form with the author's permission*

## Sites mentioned in the article:

**Global Translation Systems, Inc.** <http://www.globaltranslation.com>

**ICN Language Services** <http://www.icnlang.com>

**McGirt, Janet G.** <http://www.translatedit.com>

**Metivier, Jackie and Yasmin** <http://www.bicomms.citysearch.com>

**Sherwin, Ann C.** <http://www.asherwin.com>

**Sieberichs, Renate** <http://www.atlas-igs.com/clients.html>

## My Assault on the New York Publishing...

(continued from page 13)

Sam Zimmerman that required someone to imitate a Mexican sportscaster narrating a soccer game, but this was my chance, my only chance. I found Sam and explained my predicament. He generously let me wiggle my way out, and I was able to call the editor to confirm our appointment for that afternoon.

I was nervous, didn't feel like eating, so I thought about walking around New York for 2 hours, but figured I would probably be too exhausted and too wired from all that city energy. So I did some yoga in the hotel room (otherwise known as an Old World closet with a view), relaxed, and waited another hour. At 2 o'clock I set off on foot to cover the fifteen or so blocks to my destination. I was by now well oriented in the city, so it was an enjoyable walk. The autumn air was a bit nippy for us Texans, but the sun shone brightly through the grand architecture.

The meeting was promising and full of possibilities. The bright, young editor, a daughter of Ecuadorean immigrants, had just replaced the one I had found in the book and was eager to get to business and take the Spanish imprint, *Aguilar Libros en Español*, to new heights. She gave me a pile of books as samples of her publisher's accomplishments in Spanish so far and said that hopefully she would soon have a project for me that would get my juices flowing.

I had done my homework and it had paid off. I didn't yet have a new book project under my arm or a book contract in hand, but I had managed to get in the door with what had been, in essence, a cold call. I made other valuable contacts at the conference, including a literary agent from Writer's House, a translator colleague from Barcelona, another colleague who lives in Mexico City, an art catalog editor, as well as other famous and not so famous translators, all equally passionate about languages, words and cultures.

---

Liliana Valenzuela, a poet and translator, is a native of Mexico City now living in Austin, Texas. She has translated Sandra Cisneros' work into Spanish

*This article originally appeared in the January 2000 issue of the AATIA Letter and is used with permission.*

*Este artículo se publicó en la Página del Español y se reproduce con ligeras modificaciones y con permiso del autor.*

Martínez de Sousa lleva medio siglo trabajando con la palabra, ya sea componiendo, corrigiendo, escribiendo o leyendo textos...

Se nos presenta, un manual que pretende asistir y orientar a escritores, tanto literarios como científicos o técnicos (desde profesores hasta investigadores), editores de todos los ramos, técnicos editoriales, especialmente correctores de estilo y tipográficos, periodistas, traductores...; en definitiva, que está dirigido a todos aquellos que participan de una u otra manera en el complejo acto de la comunicación escrita. Estén seguros todos los destinatarios de este libro de que en él hallarán respuestas a sus preguntas, certezas para sus dudas, soluciones a sus problemas, explicaciones para las cuestiones más enrevesadas.

Es tan inmensa y abrumadora la catarata de conocimientos que aquí se destilan, que todos los sedientos de conocimientos lingüísticos, estilísticos o tipográficos podrán aplacar su sed en esta fuente. Pero, y tal vez no pueda ser de otro modo dada la amplia audiencia a la que se dirige, no todos quedarán igualmente satisfechos. Esta es al mismo tiempo la grandeza y la miseria de esta obra. Los autores y editores científicos, por referirme a aquellos a los que me siento más próximo y de los que puedo hablar con cierto fundamento, deberán seguir sirviéndose de los manuales y estándares de facto vigentes en cada disciplina. Las particularidades terminológicas imperantes en cada campo y el seguimiento masivo que se hace en las distintas áreas de conocimiento de algunas de las normas que intervienen en la redacción de un trabajo científico, con especial mención de los sistemas de citación y referenciación bibliográfica, así lo aconsejan.

Estamos, por otra parte, ante un manual de estilo atípico, si lo comparamos con los libros de estilo que para el consumo de la prensa se han publicado en España (Abc, El País...) o con manuales de estilo anglosajones de la solera del Chicago Style Manual, del American Medical Association Manual of Style o del Council Biology Editors Manual, del American Medical Association Manual of Style o del Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Ante todo, porque todas estas obras son de responsabilidad colectiva. Aunque después de lo dicho sobre la personalidad del autor no nos puede extrañar, pues ya podemos hacernos una idea de lo que es capaz. Por consiguiente, lo que más asombra de este monumental trabajo es que haya sido ejecutado en solitario, algo que ya sorprendió a uno de sus críticos, quien dudaba qué admirar más, si la ciencia o la paciencia

de que hacía gala el autor.

Pero es que, además, ni por la forma en que se estructura y dispone ni por el lenguaje que emplea es un libro de estilo paragonable. Así, mientras que lo habitual en dichos manuales es organizar los temas de manera sistemática, descomponiendo un tema en epígrafes y subepígrafes, en este manual, sin renunciar a esta estructura (la parte primera de la obra sigue este camino), se opta, además, por ofrecer una lista alfabética de los términos pertinentes (segunda parte). Aquí reside uno de los principales activos y aciertos de la obra. La disposición en forma alfabética posibilita que cualquier persona, sin necesidad de disponer de conocimientos previos, pueda consultarla con facilidad identificando el tema de su interés. Es, por otra parte, tal el cúmulo de entradas y de remisiones a otras voces equivalentes o relacionadas, que es difícil que el lector no pueda localizar el aspecto que le interese. Asimismo, está cuajado de cuadros, ilustraciones gráficas y ejemplos que permiten al lector interpretar correctamente la información que se le ofrece. De nuevo Martínez de Sousa nos vuelve a demostrar su maestría en la confección de este tipo de obras. No hay que olvidar que es un experto reconocido, siendo autor de un reputado manual con el que ha sentado cátedra en la materia (*Diccionario de lexicografía práctica*).

Acostumbran los manuales de estilo al uso a emplear un lenguaje claro, preciso, conciso y prescriptivo, cualidades que entiendo deben adornar las obras que se precien de llevar este nombre. De no ser así, se corre el riesgo del rechazo por parte de escritores y editores. Y es que cuando un autor o un editor se hallan en la zozobra de la duda, necesitan, al igual que el enfermo que acude a su médico de cabecera, recetas que palien el mal y resuelvan el problema. Pues bien, que sepa el lector que en este libro no sólo se le ofrecen recetas, sino que estas vienen aderezadas con explicaciones, justificaciones, discusiones, en algunos casos, a mi modo de ver, excesivas para los fines de la obra, pero que estoy seguro de que harán las delicias de los amantes de la lengua y demás bibliólatras. Pero la búsqueda de respuestas racionales al porqué de la realidad es rasgo consustancial al autor. Al igual que su propensión natural a poner nombres a las cosas y a definir hasta lo indefinible. Su amor por la lexicografía le lleva a utilizar, e incluso a crear, términos irreprochables conceptualmente, pero de poco uso y ajenos al vocabulario del escritor y editor de a pie. Sirvan de botón de muestra los siguientes: editorial bibliológica, editorial: hemerológica, editología científica, ortotipografía.

*(sigue en la página 16)*

## Crítica: *Manual de estilo...*

(viene de la página 15)

Creo llegado el momento de calificar la obra. Lo mejor que se puede decir de un manual de estas características es que es útil. No hay que ir más allá de la lista de cuadros y figuras para darnos cuenta de la utilidad de este libro. Escritura de símbolos, números, fechas, unidades de tiempo, unidades de medida, nomenclaturas, antropónimos, topónimos, abreviaturas de todas las clases y un largo etcétera. Pero no se detiene ahí, pues nos suministra orientaciones sobre cómo redactar títulos, citas, notas, referencias bibliográficas; sobre cómo emplear correctamente nuestro idioma (ortografía, léxico, gramática) o cómo hacer un diseño tipográfico coherente y estético gracias a la información sobre tipos de letras, líneas, párrafos, páginas, partes de una obra...

Por todo ello, el *Manual de estilo de la lengua española* es una obra de referencia fundamental para escritores, editores, traductores, correctores; una de esas obras que deben estar siempre a mano encima de la mesa de trabajo. Podría seguir añadiendo epítetos elogiosos, pero esta obra no los necesita. Mucho de ellos, por manidos, han perdido realmente su valor. Si algún reproche pudiera hacerse, es que llega en un momento inoportuno, por no haber visto la luz antes. Su publicación, por varias razones, no sólo era necesaria, sino urgente. En primer lugar, porque los medios profesionales de la edición española, faltos de formación reglada, carecen de la instrucción necesaria para desempeñar con el debido decoro su trabajo. Aunque esta obra no pueda suplir esas carencias educativas, sí por lo menos puede aliviarlas. En segundo lugar,

porque existen campos de la edición española, como el científico, donde la ausencia de manuales de este tenor constituye, más que una laguna, un auténtico agujero negro. En tercer lugar, porque de haber nacido antes esta obra, hubiera prestado un servicio ecológico de primera magnitud, ahorrando el papel y la tinta que se han desperdiciado en la edición de algunos mal llamados manuales o libros de estilo. Ahora tendrá que cumplir otra función: evacuar la laguna de las obras que la han llenado de turbias aguas.

Y en último lugar, porque las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación han convulsionado el mundo de la edición. Sí el ordenador y los procesadores de textos dotaron al acto de escribir y editar un texto de sencillez y rapidez sin precedentes en la historia de la escritura, Internet ha aparecido como el más potente medio de publicación que ha visto el hombre desde la irrupción de la imprenta. Al dar voz a los que antes no la tenían, ha hecho añicos el tradicional circuito de comunicación escrita que descansaba en la trilogía autor-editor-lector. El editor, que venía actuando de filtro entre el autor y el lector, como un agente regulador de los flujos de la producción escrita, se ha visto desbordado desde el momento en que el autor se transforma a la vez en editor de sus propios escritos. Miles de autores, antes anónimos, que soñaban con la posibilidad de ver sus palabras en letras de molde impresas en papel, han hecho realidad sus deseos y, aunque ahora sea en moldes virtuales, tienen la posibilidad de difundir sus pensamientos sin limitación alguna. Para ellos, este manual será herramienta que ayudará no solo a juntar palabras con cierto orden o a hilvanar ideas con sentido, sino a presentarlas con rigor no exento de belleza.

Conociendo al autor, estoy seguro de que este manual no se detendrá aquí. Antes aun de haber visto la luz esta edición, ya estará pensando en la próxima, que, no me cabe duda, está asegurada.

---

## *Intercambios*

**The Newsletter of the Spanish Language  
Division of the American Translators Association  
225 Reinerkers Lane, Ste. 590  
Alexandria, VA 22314**