



PROTEUS

*The Newsletter of
The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators*

Vol. IV, No. 2

Spring 1995

New York, NY

A CALL TO ARMS

Mirta Vidal

These are contradictory times for the interpreting profession. In some respects, our efforts to obtain recognition have netted modest gains, including improved working conditions and better wages. In others, we seem to be standing still and even losing ground.

At the state court level, some significant steps forward have been taken recently. In New Jersey, new guidelines adopted by the state administration have resulted in a more equitable distribution of the work among qualified interpreters, who are compensated in some cases at rates comparable to those paid by the federal courts. Another positive development is the National Center for State Courts' publication of a manual entitled *Court Interpretation: Model Guidelines for Policy and Practice in the State Courts*, which is a serious attempt to educate the judiciary and administrators about the problems they must address and to provide some solutions.

Still, conditions and standards in most states lag behind those at the federal level. This is not to say, however, that the situation in the federal courts is ideal. Far from it. For one, the fees for federally certified interpreters have not been increased since 1991, despite a considerable rise in the cost of living in the last four years. In many courtrooms, moreover, unenlightened judges still refuse to approve the use of two interpreters for proceedings lasting more than one hour, oblivious to the detrimental effects that having one person interpreting all day without relief can have on the quality of the interpretation, not to mention the interpreter's health. Too many courts--both state and federal--include filing and other unrelated clerical duties in job descriptions for staff positions. The Clerk of Court in Puerto Rico, eager to improve the view from the federal courthouse windows, had a staff interpreter do an in-depth study on the planting of trees!

Unfortunately, many administrators, who should

be the ones responsible for implementing measures to improve interpreting services, are instead intent on eliminating essential interpreter expenses from their budgets in order to gain Washington's approval. Some courts openly admit that they do not hire certified interpreters because non-certified interpreters are cheaper, in flagrant violation of federal law. The Administrative Office in Washington,

which has not even managed to publish a manual of policies and procedures it has been drafting for years, has shown little willingness to aggressively enforce the basic norms and standards that are sorely needed nation-

wide--use of certified interpreters, team interpreting during longer proceedings, universal use of equipment, to name just a few.

The prevailing political atmosphere, of which the budget cuts are merely a symptom, is also cause for alarm. We can expect that, for those of us whose job is to provide a service free of charge to the underprivileged and often undocumented, things will only get worse.

This should not give rise to despair, but to a greater determination to fight for our rights and those of the people we serve. We must continue, day by day, to chip away at misconceptions and ignorance concerning what we do--the degree of difficulty, the demands placed on us, the kind of preparation it requires. In short, we need to launch an educational offensive aimed at the legal profession, and particularly at judges, who have the power to set policy and see to it that norms are applied.

To this end, NAJIT is preparing a brochure addressed primarily to judges that will explain a number of fundamental issues they need to take into account when working with interpreters in the courtroom. Members will be able to order it in bulk quantities at a nominal cost.

The other side of this offensive involves our efforts to constantly improve our knowledge and

The prevailing budget-cutting political atmosphere is cause for alarm.

skills, demonstrating that we are highly educated and serious professionals who deserve to be treated and compensated as such. The attendance at NAJIT's recent educational conference in San Francisco--the largest ever--reflects the fact that many in the field agree.

We thank all those conference participants who took the time to provide so much detail and frank commentary in the evaluations, which were on balance quite favorable. We will seriously consider these as we plan future events, including the 1996 annual meeting and educational conference, slated for May 17-19, in Miami. We urge everyone to contribute ideas for next year's program, become active in a committee, send material to *Proteus* or help in some other way.

This is our fight. No one can fight it for us. Join us in making it succeed.

Send submissions to *Proteus* electronically! E-mail your letters, articles, announcements, etc. in any major word processor format c/o David Mintz via the Internet:

dmintz@ix.netcom.com

- or -

CompuServe: 70323,1710.

Drawing by Nicholas Luttinger, visual artist and federally certified Spanish court interpreter.



"We ran out of money for landscaping, Your Honor, but we can get some interpreters to plant more trees."

Proteus is published four times a year by the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, Inc., in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Editors: D. Orrantia, N. Festinger, D. Mintz. *Proteus* is mailed at no charge to all NAJIT members. Mailing address: 531 Main St., Suite 1603, New York, NY 10044. Address submissions to Dagoberto Orrantia, Editor, *Proteus*, Department of Foreign Languages, John Jay College, 445 West 59th St., New York, NY 10019. Submissions subject to editorial review. All opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors. Deadlines: Spring issue, March 1; Summer issue, June 1; Fall issue, September 1; Winter issue, December 1. Annual subscription rate: \$16.00

San Francisco 1995: Welcoming Remarks

Good morning and welcome to NAJIT's 16th Annual Conference. I'd like to thank the San Francisco State University Court Interpretation Program for co-sponsoring this event. I'm David Mintz. I should be Mirta Vidal: most clearly I am not. I'm very sorry to say she is too ill to attend. It's really a pity because she did an enormous amount of work organizing this conference and she's not here to see that work come to fruition. Having to stand in her shoes on short notice as I'm now doing, even to the limited extent of ceremonial functions, is a crash course in respect and admiration for all that she does, and for the superbly professional and graceful way in which she does it. I hope her ears are itching right now as we're talking about her. She asked me to make this welcoming speech on her behalf, and then faxed me her own notes, to get me started.

I am reminded of an anecdote about Samuel Johnson in this regard. An aspiring author, after submitting a manuscript, asked him, "What did you think?" Johnson responded, "Your manuscript is both good and original; but the parts that are good are not original, and the parts that are original are not good." In these remarks, if there are any good parts, they are Mirta's. The rest is original.

It's extremely gratifying to see such a large turnout at this meeting. This is the best attendance NAJIT has ever had. Even allowing for the fact that California has a continuing education requirement that motivated a lot of people to come, why do we have such a large turnout? Our profession is expanding and maturing. It's increasing in numbers of serious practitioners like yourselves who have the wisdom to appreciate the importance of continuing to upgrade their skills and their knowledge, who care enough about their work to want to exchange ideas and information, who welcome the chance to get a large dose of shop talk, who are eager to interact with colleagues and get a sense of what is going on elsewhere in the United States. Enlightened people like yourselves understand that the court interpreting and legal translation profession is us, the people in this room. It's up to us to carry on the struggle for recognition of our profession, for respect, for standards, to get and keep our collective and individual acts together, if you will.

It's all too easy to rationalize your way out of attending a meeting like this. It's expensive, it's

time-consuming, there are other things you'd rather be doing. But everyone who is here made the sacrifices because they understood, they rightly believed that it's worth it. Not everyone shares your positive attitude. Every year a few people drop out of the association. It's called "attrition," in the association business. And when they don't respond to two or three renewal notices, they are sent what is known as an exit survey, a multiple-choice questionnaire asking them to explain why they are withdrawing. A few people grumble that they don't get their money's worth for their annual dues, they'd like NAJIT to do more for them in addition to holding annual national meetings that I think we can safely say are second to none, and publishing a fine quarterly periodical that is truly unique. To respond to that criticism, I can't

NAJIT is an organization that consists of people. Nothing happens unless someone does it.

help but fall back on that tired old truism: you get out of an organization what you put into it.

NAJIT is not a magical entity that reads minds and satisfies people's every wish. Rather, NAJIT is an organization that consists of people, you and me. Nothing happens unless someone does it. And those who expect more to be done for them apparently don't comprehend that they themselves have to get involved and do something, or at least let us all know what they'd like NAJIT to do.

For example, a local group in Chicago, CHICATA, alerted the Board recently that there was a bill making its way through the Illinois state legislature that sought to privatize court interpreter services. It included a provision that if a defendant has the economic wherewithal to pay for the interpreter, then he has to pay for that interpreter. They alerted the Board and immediately we drafted a resolution condemning the bill. NAJIT's condemnation might not be enough to strike terror in the hearts of politicians, but it's better than standing around and doing nothing.

Another example involves good things happening in New Jersey. When there was a public comment period, NAJIT expressed its support of some new state guidelines governing how interpreters are to be

hired and administrated, a progressive, enlightened policy that is now being implemented. Later, when the architect of that policy got into an editorial duel with someone in the opinion pages of a trade publication, he was able to point to NAJIT support as ammunition in favor of his argument. So NAJIT's endorsement in that case was meaningful.

The good news, then, is that NAJIT is healthy, growing, and in good financial shape. And it's probably safe to say that things are better for our profession in 1995 than they were in 1975. The bad news is that we're going to need all that strength, solidarity, resilience and flexibility to confront the challenges we face.

There are clearly two observable trends in our national life nowadays. The first is a demographic trend toward increasing linguistic and ethnic diversity, hence more demand for court interpreting services; the second, on the other hand, is a political trend exemplified by the so-called Contract with America, by the boom in prison construction, by the bill in Illinois I referred to a moment ago, and by California's own Proposition 187. With respect to this latter trend, there is already evidence in some parts of the country of efforts to roll back the clock, to reverse some of the progress court interpreting has made in the last 20 years. While we are making strides in some parts of the country, in others we face considerable problems just holding the ground that we've gained so far, to say nothing of actually moving forward.

It is, therefore, good timing indeed that NAJIT is growing and strengthening its membership now, with a flourishing group of capable and committed professionals who are prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

[Adapted from the opening remarks made on May 20, 1995, at the 16th Annual NAJIT Meeting in San Francisco]

TO CALIFORNIA COURT INTERPRETERS:

The Continuing Education Approval Subcommittee has granted CIMCE credit for the 1994 NAJIT conference. This credit is valid through February 1996.

CIMCE # 094

Contact hours: 3

Course title: NAJIT - 15th Annual Conference

EXAMS ON ICE

Federal Certification Frozen for Languages other than Spanish

Although in August of 1994 an English proficiency examination was administered throughout the U.S. for interpreters of Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Arabic, Polish, Italian, Russian, Mien and Hebrew, and candidates were told that if they passed they would be eligible to participate in an oral skills examination scheduled for 1995, federal certification in languages other than Spanish has now ground to a halt.

The University of Arizona, under contract to the Administrative Office [the AO] of the U.S. Courts, has been administering federal certification exams in Spanish since 1985. In the past five years, Navajo and Creole were added to the certification program; and in 1992 the Judicial Conference Committee on Court Administration and Case Management directed the AO to provide for full certification in some languages and "modified certification" in others. But a recent decision by the AO not to have the University of Arizona administer oral examinations in nine languages has effectively suspended the exams in midstream.

There has been no official announcement to the interpreter-candidates, and no notice of when, if ever, a federal exam will be given to interpreters of the previously-identified languages.

National qualification, the best guarantee of quality for the courts, remains a chimera for many interpreters now. Long overdue testing on the federal level in languages other than Spanish is only the latest program to be swept away in an era of penny-wise, pound-foolish budget crunching.

The orals in Spanish, the second step of the two-step certification process, will proceed as planned, with nationwide testing in September. Although the oral examination fee was originally announced at \$100, eligible candidates are now required to pay \$175 to register.

Meanwhile, the state courts are preparing to strengthen interpreter testing programs. Under the aegis of the National Center for State Courts, a consortium of states plans to pool resources for interpreter testing in a variety of Asian and other languages.

To inquire about when federal testing may be reinstated, write to: Ralph Mecham, Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, 1 Columbus Circle, NE, Washington, D.C. 20544 (202) 273-3000.

Speak Up If You Want to be Heard

The Honorable John J. Conway addresses
NAJIT Meeting in San Francisco

When I accepted your invitation to speak to the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators I decided to do a little preparation: I asked my colleagues about complaints so that I could discuss them with you as concerns interpreters in the courtroom. But there were no complaints. I then thought, this is going to be a very short speech, my discussion will be limited to "There are no complaints," and then I'll sit down. But, I thought, I have not had the opportunity to speak to interpreters on a one-to-one basis. So I went over to the court coordinator and asked her if she would mind asking interpreters if they would please speak with me. And did I get a response! My door is always open, but they were flooding in. Over a dozen interpreters came in. And did they give me an earful! The primary complaint I heard from them was that judges are not aware of the needs of court interpreters. "They don't know that we're there." And I said, "How can you say that? I see you there every day." And they said, "You don't understand. You don't understand that we need to take a break from time to time during a full day of trial. We cannot speak all day, translating English to Spanish and back and forth without a break." Previously, I had become aware of the need of sign language interpreters because that interpreter was not shy. He said, "Judge, after an hour I can't hold my hands up anymore. So I've got to take a break because ethically I cannot communicate at this hearing for an impaired person." So I didn't understand, to my embarrassment, until I was asked to speak at this conference, that people who have a *spoken* language to translate similarly have a fatigue factor that I was not taking into account.

It was also brought to my attention that interpreters frequently hold microphones, and that is also physically fatiguing. And I was educated that there is a mental fatigue factor. One way that this was underscored -- because, to be honest with you, skepticism is something that serves judges well -- was that one of the interpreters suggested that when I listen to television or the radio, I attempt to do a simultaneous repetition of what is being said, to see if I could do it for an hour. Well, I did, and I couldn't.

The next suggestion that was brought to my attention-- and it had not been done in my court, because it had not been asked of me-- was to give the names, dates and technical words that would come up in particular cases so that the interpreters can familiarize themselves in advance of being called to interpret.

Because of the educational process from the interpreters, I now intend to give my interpreters copies of both counsels' trial briefs as well as a witness list. And, I will submit, that is just the beginning. I need, and other judges need, your input as to what other kinds of materials will be of assistance to you so that you can continue the high level of ethical professionalism that I see in my courts.

How many judges meet with you prior to preliminary hearings or jury trials? May I see a show of hands? One out of over a hundred. You will not offend a judge by making a request like the following: "Your Honor, I understand this is a difficult case we're about to undertake, and I know you wish to maintain a high level of professionalism as a jurist. I also hope to maintain a high level of professionalism as an interpreter. Would you kindly give me a copy, or allow me to photocopy the pretrial briefs, the witness list?" -- or whatever other information you might need.

There is a California judicial administrations standard section 18.1 entitled "Interpreter Proceedings" instructing participants on procedures. This was never referenced to me in judicial college or in any of the conferences I attend every year. This is a tool you can use to approach the judges and say, "Judge, not only do I need this, but here's the law to back me up." And it dictates that the interpreters are given certain instructions on the procedure that is to be used with witnesses. And it is also a tool because paragraph 12 says that the court should be informed if the interpreter becomes fatigued during the proceedings. So on an ethical as well as a legal basis you have a citation to bring to the judge's attention, and if you are not able to communicate, raise your hand and ask for a break.

Every judge I know wants the proceedings to be on the highest level, and you can do that in a

courteous manner and complete your duties. There is also another code section, California Code Section 305 to 755.5, which mandates the appointment of court interpreters for persons who cannot understand the English language. And as important as that is code section 730, which tells you how you get paid.

After meeting with many of the interpreters in my chambers over several hours, I've come to the conclusion that I have not been aware of the needs of court interpreters. I told the ten or twelve people I spoke with that I would like to continue the dialogue, have them come into chambers to point out problems and suggest improvements on how interpreters can comply with the court's needs.

I've begun my fellow judges' education by distributing a publication I highly recommend to those of you from outside California. I'm sure everyone who's an interpreter in California is aware of the book *Professional Ethics and the Role of the Court Interpreter*, put out by the Judicial Council of California, the Administrative Office of the Courts. This again is part of my education. I immediately brought this to the attention of the judges on my bench, and as far as I know every judge now has in his possession this publication which discusses the creed of court interpreters-- accuracy, impartiality, confidentiality, not giving legal advice, professional relationships, continuing education and the duty of the profession. And there are as attachments various rules of court and the codes of professional responsibility for the federal courts and many other courts. If there are those of you who would like a copy, give me your cards and I'd be happy to mail them to you. This is something you can bring to the attention of the judges before whom you appear.

By educating or informing the judiciary of your needs you will be doing a great service. It does require your cooperation and your participation.

I think if there's one criticism I would make of interpreters it's that they are silent, they do not speak up when they should do so. I only became aware of the challenging nature of your profession after this invitation to speak, because I inquired. I think you could do more by way of contacting your judges and bring your needs to their attention.

In closing, I want to thank you for the invitation. I believe I'll be a better judge because of the awareness I now have of these problems. I intend to continue the dialogue with the interpreters in my court, and I also intend to have further conversations with my colleagues in San Francisco. But in the final

analysis, it is you who must continue to voice your needs to the individual judges who will listen to you and to the judiciary as a whole if you are going to maintain the high standards of your profession.

Judge Conway is Municipal Court Judge, City and County of San Francisco. He spoke at the luncheon on May 20, 1995.

NAJIT OPPOSES ILLINOIS SENATE BILL 357

The following resolution was adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators at the Association's Annual Meeting, held on May 19-21, 1995, in San Francisco, California. It was adopted in response to a proposed bill before the Illinois legislature that would require defendants to pay for interpreting services if they were deemed financially able to do so.

In NAJIT's view, this would constitute a violation of a right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Interpreters Act. The resolution was sent to State Representative Robert W. Churchill on May 22, with a copy to the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA), which initiated the campaign to have the proposed bill defeated.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the right to an interpreter flows from the due process clause of the United States Constitution,

-and-

WHEREAS, passage of Senate Bill Number 357 would be a fundamental violation of said constitutional right,

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) unequivocally opposes Senate Bill Number 357 in its entirety.

Board of Directors of NAJIT
May 21, 1995

LOST IN THE TRANSLATION

Courtroom Interpreters All Too Easily Are Made Scapegoats

Roxana Cárdenas

On what grounds should a certified court interpreter be removed from a court proceeding? This is the million-dollar question many court observers have asked of late following the Rosa López testimony in the O.J. Simpson trial.

Some people have claimed that the argument of linguistic incompatibility made by attorney Johnnie Cochran, which led to the change of interpreters in the case, was just a tactical ploy. Worried by inconsistencies in Rosa López's testimony, Cochran attacked the weakest link in the presentation, the interpreter. By submitting the first, Mexican-born, interpreter Cochran could always argue that the Salvadoran-born López was not properly understanding the questions-- an alibi for the alibi witness.

Let us assume the replacement of interpreters was done with the best of intentions, that the defense just wanted to have a Salvadoran interpreter for its Salvadoran witness. Is that reason enough to remove the interpreter, a certified and by all accounts highly competent, professional? The answer is: Nobody knows. There are no procedures on this subject in any legal code. The Judicial Council, the statewide group of California judges that determine the California Rules of Court, has established no guidelines on this. As a result, interpreters have become scapegoats, easy targets of criticism by parties without knowledge of our highly specialized field. (Curiously enough, certified court interpreters are commonly called to be expert witnesses in court proceedings involving language issues. When in that role, the interpreter cannot be removed by the judge.)

Many people are unaware of the extensive training undergone by court interpreters. Most court interpreters are graduates of intensive certification programs bearing Certificates or Master's Degrees in Translation and/or Interpretation from learning institutions around the world. Among the 600 plus interpreters working for Los Angeles Superior Court, you can find professional writers, doctors, engineers and, yes, even attorneys who have passed the bar. (It should be noted that an interpreter is not automatically a translator.) Translations are written, as opposed to interpretations, which are oral.

Consequently, the individuals you see in court should be addressed as interpreters, never as translators.)

Moreover, merely being bilingual does not qualify one to interpret. Interpreters earn their certification by passing a series of rigorous written and oral exams administered by the state of California and the county.

Removing an interpreter from a trial over a single word is like removing a baseball pitcher for not pitching a no-hitter game. Interpretation is a mixture of art and science, not just a set of rules and vocabulary. Two interpreters may give different renditions of a passage and both may be correct. Furthermore, just as attorneys commit errors and have objections sustained against them, so can even the best interpreter make an occasional mistake.

In an afternoon of testimony, an interpreter will process an average of 10,000 words. If one of these words were to be incorrectly interpreted, it would still represent an accuracy rate of 99.9 percent. Removal of an interpreter on such a basis damages rather than safeguards our justice system.

We would suggest that the Judicial Council Court Interpreters Advisory Panel -- coincidentally, chaired by Judge Lance Ito -- establish a procedure in the near future for dealing with situations like the one that occurred with Rosa López. Proper remedies for challenging interpretations that would obviate the need to replace an interpreter include a sidebar conference with the attorneys, the judge and the interpreter; an examination of the witness to clarify what was meant, and testimony on the subject by qualified court interpreters with expertise in the particular field.

Otherwise, the replacement of an interpreter during a proceeding will continue to seem an act of capriciousness or slick legal manoeuvring rather than what it should be -- an act of last resort.

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The author is a California certified court interpreter, a U.S. State Department Certified Seminar Interpreter and recording secretary of the Greater Los Angeles Court Interpreters Association.

GRAMMAR NOTES FOR TRANSLATORS V

BORROWED MORPHOLOGY

George K. Green

One curious corollary to the existence in English of a cosmopolitan lexicon borrowed from a wide variety of languages is the related borrowing of morphology that does not conform to usual English grammatical patterns, most especially plural formations taken from other languages. In the course of accepting foreign nouns to name previously unknown flora, fauna, objects, customs, attributes and techniques, English also adopted some of the associated foreign plurals that are unlike the three plural formations considered native: addition of *-s* or *-es*: *cat* > *cats*, *bus* > *buses*; change in the root vowel: *mouse* > *mice*; or invariability: *deer* > *deer*. English today regularly employs a substantial number of plural formations that have been borrowed from Greek or Latin, some from French, Italian or German, one from Hebrew, and an occasional plural form from yet other languages.

By far the most common case of foreign plurals used in English is the noun of Greek origin with a singular ending in *-is* and a plural that changes it to *-es*: *analysis* > *analyses*, *basis* > *bases*, *hypothesis* > *hypotheses*, *synopsis* > *synopses*, etc. Words of this lexical group are particularly common in a wide variety of the terminologies of specialized fields, including medicine (*dialysis* > *dialyses*; *exeresis* > *exereses*, "surgical removal"), life sciences (*anthesis* > *antheses*, "the opening of a flower", *chronogenesis* > *chronogeneses*), psychology (*neurosis* > *neuroses*; *psychosis* > *psychoses*), theater (*agnorisis* > *agnoreses*), Greek mythology (*nemesis* > *nemeses*) and grammar, literature and rhetoric (*ellipsis* > *ellipses*; *catalexis* > *catalexes*, "omission of last foot of verse").

Other plural formations borrowed by English from Greek morphology are generally limited to specialized terminology. Nouns with final *-on* change this singular ending to *-a* in the plural. The word *criterion*, the singular of the more common plural form *criteria*, is one of the few examples in the general vocabulary; but *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* gives the plural *criteria* as also acceptable. This formation is not uncommon in the terminology of fields such as medicine (*ganglion* > *ganglia*), classical architecture (*acroterion* > *acroteria*, "pedestal on a building that is meant to support a statue"), philosophy (*adiaphoron* > *adiaphora*, "a

matter without moral merit"), biology (*protozoan* > *protozoa*), and Greek culture (*prothalamion* > *prothalamia*). Another plural formation of Greek origin, nouns in *-ma* that add *-ta* in the plural, is generally limited to medical vocabulary and the terminology of Greek classical tradition, and may often be replaced by a plural in *-s* when not employed in a highly specialized context: *trauma* > *traumata* or *traumas*; *stigma* > *stigmata* or *stigmas*; *pteroma* > *pteromata* "closed area in Greek classic architecture). One final and relatively unusual plural found most often in terms relating to Greek history and life is the noun with a singular ending *-os* that becomes *-oi* in the plural: *parodos* > *parodoi* "first choral passage in a Greek play of antiquity"; *paranephros* > *paranephroi*, "adrenal gland"; *aristos* > *aristoi* "aristocrat".

English has systematically borrowed three plural endings from Latin, one for each of the three genders. Most Latin nouns of feminine gender in *-a* add *e* in the plural: *alga* > *algae*; *alumna* > *alumnae*; *amoeba* > *amoebae*. The most common group of masculine Latin nouns ending in *-us* changes this ending to *-i* in the plural: *abacus* > *abaci*; *chiasmus* > *chiasmi*, in classic rhetoric, "repetition with inversion." Common Latin borrowings in this group often are used with *-es* in the plural, when not employed in a technical context: *cactus* > *cactuses* or *cacti*. Another group of masculine Latin nouns ending in *-us* belongs to a different declension and therefore does not have a plural in *-i*: *corpus* > *corpora*. Perhaps the largest group of Latin nouns that often preserve their original plural form in English are the neuter nouns that end in *-um* in the singular and *-a* in the plural: *abecedarium* > *abecedaria*; *bacterium* > *bacteria*; *candelabrum* > *candelabra*; *desideratum* > *desiderata*; *postscriptum* > *postscripta*. A number of the words in this group usually form their plural in *-s* (*equilibrium*, *emporium*, *honorarium*) but may also be found with the original plural form in special contexts such as Roman history.

The biblical tradition of Hebrew has given English a small number of plural formations that add the ending *-im*: *cherub*, *seraph*. A few vocabulary items from Hebrew of modern reference such as *kibbutz*

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RESEARCH Update

José L. Varela-Ibarra



Research in the Courtroom

Court interpreters often reflect on their performance or discuss their colleagues' -- those who interpreted for Rosa López, for example -- identify linguistic difficulties or complain about work-related problems, and at times even dare to dream of how "things" could be if were they different. All of these lend themselves to some form of research.

Elementary school foreign language teachers and court interpreters may seem to be two birds of quite different feathers. Yet both work in environments upon which they feel they have little control. Anna Uhl Chamot's recent article, "Action Research in Your Classroom," [ERIC/CLL News Bulletin, Vol. 18, No. 2, March 1995] suggests ways primary school teachers can conduct research which "frequently leads to changes in the instructional context." If teachers can produce change through research, why not court interpreters?

Chamot begins by describing the two usual types of research: quantitative, which "seeks to answer a question through experimentation and statistical analyses" and qualitative, which "seeks to draw conclusions from careful observation and description of the phenomena observed." Both methods can be employed simultaneously.

The first step in any project, according to Chamot, is coming up with the question or issue to be investigated. Her suggestion is that teachers keep a journal. Court interpreters can do likewise: record puzzling language, comments by fellow interpreters that reveal problems, observations about what does and does not work in the job setting, etc. Reviewing the journal periodically you may discover a particular topic that merits research.

The topic, of course, should be of importance or interest to the profession. For us, an important question could be: What are the attitudes of professional interpreters toward university interpreting programs? Of much less importance would be: What form of recreation do interpreters enjoy?

Adapting some of Chamot's suggestions for research to the court interpreting context, some possible projects could address the following questions:

- What terminology or types of glossaries are most valuable to court interpreters?
- What interpreting problems occur at different points in a career?
- What difference exists between successful and less successful interpreters?
- What types of continuing education are best suited to court interpreters?
- How can the concept of teams be promoted in the profession?

In a previous column other research ideas were listed. Once you decide on a topic or issue, then you need to do background reading (library research), identify the information you'll need and decide how you are going to gather it. Methods for collecting information suggested by Chamot include: diaries, think-aloud interviews, stimulated recall, structured interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Involving colleagues, court reporters, paralegals, lawyers, judges and others can contribute positively to your research. And why not involve clients, too? Information collected through research can be disseminated at NAJIT's annual and regional meetings, in articles published in *Proteus*, or in local interpreter group newsletters.

Thank you, Joaquín Chan-Sánchez

Those of you who are receiving credit for having attended NAJIT's conference and all of us at NAJIT owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Joaquín Chan-Sánchez for taking on the daunting task of ushering this program through the California Judicial Council Court Interpreters Advisory Panel. Mr. Chan-Sánchez performed this service to his fellow Californian judiciary interpreters in a spirit of devotion to the best interest of his colleagues and his profession. The fact that each of you attended different sessions complicated tenfold an already complex, time-consuming process. We at NAJIT thank him from the bottom of our hearts -- and we know that you do, too.

DEBATE**DRUG LEGALIZATION? THINK AGAIN**

Harcourt M. Stebbins

Re "Drug Legalization: Food for Thought," by David Mintz (*Proteus*, Winter 1995). Mr. Mintz gave a personal opinion: "Court interpreters, as witnesses to the devastation caused by this futile drug war, may be more likely than the general public to agree with Duke and Gross; at least some of us believe that legalization is ultimately the best course for society."

I am not to be included in "at least some of us." My thoughts are based on a long and broad association and training with drugs.

It was difficult to discern whether Mr. Mintz was making an observation at a given point, or whether the statement was the authors'. An initial quote from the article: "A small but significant number of people--distinguished legal scholars, judges, economists, political scientists, physicians, and even a few politicians--have come out in favor of drug legalization in one form or another." But other distinguished persons in other times said such things as: auscultation was stupid; doctors did not carry disease from obstetrics child bed fever patients to well parturients; marsh gases caused yellow fever; the mosquito had nothing to do with malaria; sterilization techniques were unnecessary; the commercial use of the airplane was an impossibility; we would experience a high rate of heart disease if we traveled in automobiles at a rate of over 25 miles per hour; the airplane would not play a significant role in naval warfare; a flight to the moon was not feasible. We could go on and on about great pronouncements by distinguished persons.

For a number of professional reasons, I have been extensively involved with drugs: undergraduate and graduate studies in anesthesia, extensive practice and teaching that and related subjects, and personal involvement with health care professionals--physicians, dentists and others--involved in the misuse/abuse of drugs.

Physicians, nurses and dentists have a much higher incidence of drug abuse than any other identifiable occupational group. They also have a high degree of education--much more than other groups--in pharmacology, physiology, posology and other "ologies" related to these drugs. By dint of such fine, extensive education these professionals should, theoretically, be practically free of drug abuse. Anesthesiologists,

for example, should be in the forefront of non-abusers; in fact, the opposite is the case. One factor distinguishes the various health care professionals who prescribe or dispense and abuse drugs from other groups: availability of drugs.

How are they "cured"--if indeed they can be rehabilitated? They are removed from contact with drugs. If restored to practice, they are restricted in their contact with these substances.

In regard to various forms of legalization, the article states, that "the most desirable is a system of commercial distribution licenses under government regulation." Would all producers, manufacturers, designers, sellers, etc. be licensed, examined, approved, and continuously monitored? Would bakeries be licensed, inspected and monitored while producing products laced with various agents? Will confectioners, bakers and candy makers be regulated in selling and mailing their products? What about stationery and paper products manufacturers? There are excellent ways of distributing drugs in paper products. What about gambling ships and casinos? Grocery stores? Restaurants? With what countries would the U.S. government make trade agreements regarding the import/export of raw or finished products? There are some 29 nations involved in the illegal drug trade. Will there be favored nation agreements? Will the growers be subsidized? Human rights violations pursued? Will the GATT and Nafta and other existing agreements apply? If we can produce such raw products, will we insist that we can export finished products to those countries? That we can advertise in their media? If we can make the synthetic, active ingredients and they can't, will we insist on making them import our synthetic, cheap products? What about advertising codes? Will advertising for these products be allowed on radio, television? During sports events? Or only after 9:00 PM on all channels? Which page and edition of the newspapers? What about the tabloids?

What about on and off campus? A fairly large number of college students, and some in high school, already have an alcohol problem. Would we allow only the twenty-one year-olds and above to purchase drugs and paraphernalia? Will we have inspectors to make sure the substances and use instructions are stored safely and securely?

The article states: "Heroin addicts could be provided with transdermal patches [By whom? And at the taxpayers' expense, I presume?] which would obviate the need to shoot up every few hours, enabling them to work."

The author is saying in effect, "Addiction will occur." No mention is made of addictions to other drugs. I don't care to have that heroin-patched person work with me. Many addicts of most substances do not want to be maintained. They secure additional drugs. Many more addicts of different substances--cocaine, meperidine, secobarbital, amphetamines, zanax, soma, nitrous oxide, 'designer' drugs--would be created. What will the government do with them?

One final quote from the article: *America's Longest War* "suggests that there are racist and elitist aspects of the drug war. Although most users of illegal drugs are white, minorities are overrepresented in the drug using population, and thus suffer the impact of prohibition disproportionately." Is this a suggestion to remove the prohibition on some people in particular? Why are minorities overrepresented? Which minorities? Blacks? Chinese? Hispanics? Japanese? Jews? Koreans? Native Americans? Because there is a prohibition on drugs? That statement alone could form the basis for a symposium.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the subject of drug legalization. I believe that my view, opposing Mr. Mintz's, should be equally treated in *Proteus*.

Harcourt M. Stebbins, originally from Puerto Rico, is a Spanish interpreter and translator in Lake Charles, LA. He is a retired dentist.

David Mintz replies:

I thought it was clear that I was stating my own position in the first and last paragraphs of my review; the rest of the text describes what the book says. But I'll further explain my personal view: I think the drug war is great, and I think it's appalling. Great, because it provides me with a way to make a decent living doing something I enjoy -- interpreting. Appalling, for all the reasons so lucidly expounded by Duke and Gross.

Dr. Stebbins appears to be trying to accuse me of an *ad hominem* fallacy, because I said that there are "distinguished" persons who advocate drug legalization. My point was simply that legalization is not some eccentricity of anarchists, libertarians, or the lunatic fringe, but rather a serious idea advocated by

a growing number of people both and within and without what is commonly regarded as the scientific/cultural/political establishment. The fact that distinguished persons have espoused ideas that were later proven wrong has no bearing on whether we should accept or reject the pro-legalization arguments set forth by Duke and Gross.

Next, Dr. Stebbins seems to be arguing that the availability of a substance makes possible, maybe even encourages, its abuse; if you remove that substance from the environment of the abuser, the abuse stops. True! Should we therefore continue to seek to suppress these substances through coercion? The only problem, as Duke and Gross put it, is that "prohibition has not worked in the past, does not work now and will not work in the future." They argue (and I agree) that a more constructive approach would emphasize treatment and true education (as opposed to politician- and TV-fed hysteria), and drastically reduce incarceration.

I gather Dr. Stebbins would resent having his tax dollars support a heroin user's habit. Even if self-interest is his only consideration, I bet he would not mind having a few of his tax dollars diverted from prison to treatment (including maintenance doses for heroin addicts) if he were persuaded that it would substantially reduce the likelihood of having his house or car broken into. As for not wanting to work with drug abusers, in his own letter he attests that he already has done so. Welcome to reality. With respect to the many addicts who want to get high rather than merely being maintained, he has a point -- and I suspect neither of us knows any facile solution. Mass incarceration, however, has served only to create huge social and economic problems for everyone except the corrections industry.

Moreover, there does not appear to be any convincing evidence that legalization would produce all the addicts he claims. Once again: virtually everyone who wants to get high already does, irrespective of the legal status of his/her substance of choice.

Some of Dr. Stebbins' seemingly rhetorical questions about the risks of legalization raise valid points. Legalization is not a panacea and would not be without risks. Support for legalization flows from a rational analysis of both costs and benefits, based on reliable, objective information (as opposed to irresponsible hype). The book I reviewed discusses the relative merits and ramifications of various legalization schemes (e.g., the problems of juvenile access and drug advertising; the authors would

(continued on page 12)

Grammar Notes

(continued from page 8)

also form their plural in this way.

Most French noun borrowings form their plural in *-s* or *-es* and therefore do not introduce any unusual morphology. However, English has also borrowed a number of French nouns that end in *-eau* and form their plural by the addition of the letter *-x*: *bateau*, *eau*, *niveau*. Other loan words that originally belonged to this group most often form their plural with *-s*: *bureau*, *chapeau*, *plateau*.

Italian loan nouns with borrowed plural formations in English most often deal with art or music. The largest group of such words are those that are derived from masculine nouns of Latin. Their modern Italian derivatives, which are sometimes used as loan words in English, have a singular in *-o* that changes to the old plural *-i* of Latin: *abbozzo* > *abbozzi* "rough sketch"; *cello* > *celli*.

A few German plurals are sometimes used in English, quite often in the context of music or philosophy: *weltanschauung* > *weltanschauungen*, "world view"; *lied* > *lieder*. These and other occasional plurals from yet other languages, however, are too varied to lend themselves to systematic commentary.

The translator working into English may find it appropriate to borrow not only the singular but also the plural forms of certain nouns without any easy English equivalent.

Legalization Debate

(continued from preceding page)

ban both, including tobacco and alcohol advertising). But space limitations make it impossible for the book -- much less for a review -- to exhaust the subject. The countless endnotes that document the book's every factual assertion also suggest further reading.

The racial implications of the drug war is not a subject that lends itself to reduction into simple-minded soundbites. I will nonetheless try to summarize part of Duke's and Gross' argument in this regard. First, drug prohibition does much more harm than good. Second, because of patterns of enforcement, minorities -- mainly blacks and Hispanics, especially the former -- suffer the adverse consequences of drug prohibition disproportionately, as compared to white folks. Most users of illegal drugs are white, but most of the people in jail for drugs are nonwhite.



NAJIT FINANCIAL STATEMENT

	1994 Budget	1994 Actuals
		1/1-12/31/94
Income		
Dues	22,500	22,545
Advertising	1,000	220
Seminars	18,750	0
NY Workshop 1994	0	10,785
Journal	0	0
Bank Interest	100	0
Book Sales	0	0
Annual Meeting 1993	0	345
Annual Meeting 1994	0	18,525
Mailing List	0	120
Publications	250	1,110
Subscriptions	0	96
Miscellaneous	200	0
Total Income	42,800	53,748
Expenses		
Management	8,000	12,500
Office Supplies	300	428
Telephone	1,130	1,934
Postage	1,500	4,625
Printing & Photocopying	3,150	6,728
President's Expense	300	984
Special Consultants	200	225
Accountant	350	0
Lawyer	1,500	0
Board Expense	5,055	3,287
Publications	4,000	1,955
Refunds	0	5
Seminars	16,125	0
Annual Meeting 1994	750	11,679
NY Workshop 1994	0	1,260
Travel	0	293
Bank Fees	240	435
Dues Bounced	0	375
Miscellaneous	200	903
Total Expense	42,800	47,615
Total Profit/(Loss)	\$0	\$6,131

LETTERS

Thank You, Marianne

To the Editor:

I want to express my deepest appreciation to Marianne Pripps-Huertas, who so generously gave of her time to help NAJIT and me personally during the San Francisco conference. I was not able to attend for personal reasons, and I am forever indebted to Marianne for volunteering to read my paper. Thank you, Marianne!

To those who inquired about my paper, "Moving from the Trenches to the Officers' Club: The Transition from Judiciary to Conference Interpreting," I will be glad to provide copies. Write to me at: PO Box 324, Old San Juan, PR 00902.

JANIS PALMA
San Juan, PR

Interpreting in Kentucky

To the Editor:

I have been receiving *Proteus* for a year now and have been enjoying it a great deal. I live in Kentucky, and attending meetings and conferences is not feasible for me. I would like to see an article about what is expected of an interpreter in a court of law—besides accuracy and thoroughness. How much control of the courtroom, if any, can an interpreter exert at trials and hearings?

I have been interpreting here in Kentucky for several years and I have been my own student/teacher while at the same time I have been trying to educate officers of the court. If you could please offer some general guidance to those like us who are geographically isolated, so to speak, it would be greatly appreciated.

ADRIANA VOWELS
Louisville, KY.

Answering to a Higher Authority

To the Editor:

First of all, my congratulations on *Proteus*. I assume the NAJIT office forwards our Bulletin to you; I ship several copies so as to save on postage.

In your article "The Sky is Falling" you deal with a most interesting topic. I'd be grateful if you could send me a copy of the Department of Labor document that started the debate. I can understand how agencies may be somewhat nervous. When you get the bulletin I've sent to New York you'll see that there is a very interesting story that you may wish to mention in the next *Proteus*: an Arabic interpreter will be prosecuted because he refused to interpret in Berber, a language for which he had not been hired. This matter is being widely discussed, and the defendant has promised me an article after the trial is over. The key question is the choice one must make between the duty of assisting justice and the duties and obligations one assumes through a work contract. The debate promises to be very exciting.

JOSEP PEÑARROJA FA
Barcelona, Spain

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

July 30-August 12, 1995. St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, England. Intensive Refresher Course in Conference Interpretation. Address: Christopher Guichot de Fortis, Koxberg 15, B-3040 Huldenberg, Brussels, Belgium. Tel./Fax: (322) 688-0433.

July 31-August 19, 1995. Havana, Cuba. First International Summer Workshop on Conference Interpreting. Address: Centro de Traducciones y Terminología Especializada, Apdo. Postal 2014, C.P. 10200 La Habana, Cuba. Tel. 60-3411 ext. 1270. E-mail: Internet ctte@ceniai.cu

August 7-11, 1995. Mission Valley Marriott Hotel, San Diego. 77th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. The program includes a half-day workshop on "The Profession of Interpretation: An Overview," and a session on "The Translation of High-Level U.S. Government Diplomatic, Legal and Administrative Documents into Spanish." Address: AATSP, Frasier Hall 8, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639.

September 30, 1995. International Translation Day.

October 26-29, 1995. Radisson Hotel, Austin. "Crossing Borders: The Translator as Outlaw"; 1995 Conference of the American Literary Translators Association. Address: Marian Schwartz. Tel. (512) 442-5100 or 703313.163@compuserve.com.

September 25-30, 1995. Charles University, Prague. "Translators' Strategies and Creativity", The 9th International Conference on Translation and Interpreting, organized in cooperation with the University of Geneva's Ecole de Traduction et d'Interprétation, will take place on Sep. 25-27; the First Congress of the European Society for Translation Studies will be held on Sep. 28-30. Address: Institute of Translation Studies, Charles University, Hybersnká 3, CZ-110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic. Tel. +422-24217965.

November 8-12, 1995. Stouffer-Renaissance Hotel, Nashville. 36th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association. Address: ATA, 1800

Diagonal Road, Suite 220, Alexandria, VA 22314; Fax: (703) 683-6122.

February 9-16, 1996. Melbourne, Australia. "Translation: New Horizons"; XIV FIT World Congress 1996. Address: Clare MacAdam, Congress Management, Fauth Royale & Associates Pty Ltd., P.O. Box 895, North Sydney, NSW 2060, Australia. Tel. +61 (0)2 954 4544; Fax: +61 (0)2 954 4964.

May 17-19, 1996. Miami Beach Ocean Resort, Miami Beach. 17th Annual Meeting and Educational Conference of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. Address: NAJIT, 531 Main Street, Suite 1603, New York, NY 10044. Tel. (212) 759-4457; Fax: (212) 759-7458.

August 4-9, 1996. Jyväskylä, Finland. International Association of Applied Linguistics. Address: Udo O.H. Jung, Language Centre, University of Bayreuth, D-95440, Bayreuth, Germany. Tel. (0921) 553595; Fax: (0921) 553594; E-mail: udojung@bayreuth.de.

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Obtain information and application forms from: Maricopa County Human Resources Department, Suite 200, 301 West Jefferson Street, Phoenix, AZ 85003-2277. Tel. 602-506-3755. TT: 602-5-6-1908. Completed Maricopa County application forms are required. Closing date: Open until filled. EOE.

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