



PROTEUS

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The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators*

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INTERPRETERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: THE ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ CASE

Isabel Framer

In April 1998, I gave a presentation at a Continuing Legal Education seminar for the Ohio Hispanic Bar Association. My topic was "Standards, Training and Certification of Interpreters in Ohio." I had for some time been advocating the certification of judiciary interpreters and had had conversations with the Administrative Director of the Ohio Supreme Court concerning the impact of interpreting errors. Another presenter at the seminar, Veronica Dalhberg, spoke on behalf of the Alejandro Ramirez Defense Coalition. I listened to her presentation intently and with disbelief. I knew then that the Ramirez case would some day help to bring about the changes that are needed within the judiciary interpreting profession in Ohio.

The story she told goes as follows:

Alejandro Ramirez, a 20-year-old Mexican national who had arrived in the United States for the first time in January 1997, was arrested for the shooting and killing of a 35-year-old male intruder. Ramirez shared a home with eleven other Mexican immigrants, some of whom were undocumented. On the evening of May 7, 1997 some household members were partying and drinking heavily. Ramirez became drunk and fell asleep, and his roommates had to carry him to bed. A male intruder, whom witnesses described as appearing to be high (a toxicology report showed that he had traces of cocaine in his system), came into the house. One of the house mates, Alejandro Vargas, ordered the intruder to leave, pushing him out. Vargas noticed his cousin and another house mate, Germán Muñoz, holding two of Vargas' guns (he owned four). Muñoz pulled the trigger, but since the gun was not loaded it

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Twenty-First Annual Meeting and Educational Conference

May 19 - 21, 2000

Wyndham Miami Beach Resort

The Conference at a Glance:

Pre-Conference Workshops:

Fri., May 19, 9 a.m.-12 noon; 2-5 p.m.

Gala Opening Reception:

Fri., May 19, 6-9 p.m.

Educational Sessions:

Sat., May 20, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Annual Meeting and Luncheon:

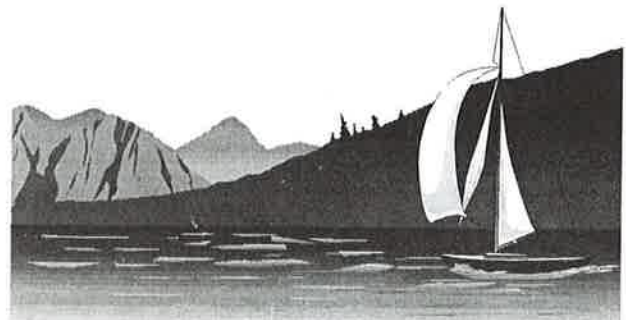
Sat., May 20, 12:30-3 p.m.

Educational Sessions:

Sunday, May 21, 9 a.m.-12 noon

EXHIBIT OF FOREIGN-LANGUAGE BOOK VENDORS ,
INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR TECHNOLOGIES AND SERVICES

For details, see page 18



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Proteus

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Report of the Election Committee

On or about January 24, 2000, every NAJIT member in good standing was mailed a secret ballot for the election of three members to the Board of Directors to serve two-year terms, along with biographical information about the four candidates for office. The ballots were to be returned postmarked no later than February 7, 2000. Members outside the continental United States were given an extension on the return date to accommodate delays in mail delivery. They also had the option of faxing back their ballots if they wished to waive anonymity. All members were informed that ballots received without name, address and signature on the mailing envelope would be invalidated.

A total of 866 ballots were mailed, and 323 were returned. Of these, 69 were invalid, leaving the remainder, 254, as the total number of valid ballots. The valid ballots were tallied as follows: Maria Cristina Castro, 205; Cristina Helmerichs D., 204; Steven Mines, 194; Lita van Duzer, 143.

The candidates receiving the largest number of votes were: Maria Cristina Castro, of Portland, Oregon; Cristina Helmerichs D., of Austin, Texas; and Steven Mines, of Austin and Washington, D.C.

NAJIT extends its gratitude to Lita Van Duzer for her willingness to serve.

Respectfully submitted,
Mirta Vidal Orrantia

NAJIT Board of Directors Meeting

March 13, 2000

Present via conference telephone call: Arlene Stock, Cristina Helmerichs D., Jeannette Bustos-Gilhooly, Holly Mikkelsen, Maria Cristina Castro, and Steve Mines.

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 pm EST.
2. Bustos-Gilhooly/Helmerichs: Moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 10 meeting. Carried.
3. Treasurer's Report: Attached.
4. Election of Treasurer: Helmerichs/Mines: Moved and seconded that Maria Cristina Castro be elected Treasurer. Carried.
5. Mines/Bustos-Gilhooly: Moved and seconded that Board members approve minutes electronically through email so that approved minutes can be timely published in *Proteus* and on the NAJIT website. Carried.
6. Mines/Castro: Moved and seconded that the United States Court Reporters Association be invited to dialogue with the NAJIT Board about their interest in greater contact between our two organizations. Carried.
7. Castro/Mikkelsen: Moved and seconded that an item be written for

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THE ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ CASE

(continued from page 1)

did not fire. Vargas heard a voice that he identified as his cousin's and then heard a shot. The wounded intruder collapsed on a nearby lawn and later died at a hospital, but the members of the household did not learn until much later of the death of the intruder.

Ramirez woke up from a loud discussion occurring in his room. Some of the men were discussing who would take the blame for the shooting. Most of them had family to support and Alejandro Ramirez did not. He was asked by others to take the blame, was told that the intruder had not been seriously hurt, and that he, Ramirez, would only get deported. No one in the house spoke English except for Alejandro Vargas. When the police arrived, Vargas explained to the police what had happened. Ramirez was arrested.

Police brought in a woman named Jennifer Rodriguez, who had interpreted for them on other occasions. Rodriguez had taken less than two years of Spanish in college, had not had prior training in judiciary interpretation and was not fluent in Spanish. Alejandro Ramirez was later indicted and the matter proceeded to a jury trial.

The prosecution hired a professor of language and literature from a local college to transcribe and translate the recorded interrogation. Not trained in legal translation or interpreter/translator ethics, she later admitted to transcribing and translating the Miranda Warning (as given to Alejandro Ramirez by Jennifer Rodriguez), so that it would make sense. For nonsensical or incorrect words, the professor substituted words that would have made more sense--had they been said. When she gave testimony at the trial, she stated that if she could understand what Rodriguez meant, so could Alejandro Ramirez. Her "sanitized" version of the advice of rights is the one the attorney, prosecutor, judge and jury saw.

Veronica Dalhberg, a bilingual Mexican American, was an advocate for the rights of Hispanics in the jails. Alejandro Ramirez' girlfriend heard about her and approached her with the case. Dalhberg contacted an attorney she knew and asked him if he would work on the case pro bono. The attorney accepted. He used Dalhberg to interpret for him during interviews, and that is how she heard the tape for the first time.

Dalhberg listened to the recording; she was outraged and publicized the case to the media and the community. A defense coalition was formed and she

served as the defendant's interpreter. When the case went to trial, a secretary for the county probation department acted as the prosecution's interpreter.

The defense coalition claimed that the prosecutor's interpreter provided a very poor interpretation of the trial testimony for Alejandro Ramirez. Ms. Dalhberg brought this fact to the judge's attention, but she was told to sit down and keep quiet. Ramirez was found guilty of murder and sentenced to an indefinite prison term of 15 years to life with a three-year additional consecutive sentence for the firearm specification.

Ms. Dalhberg had heard my presentation at the Ohio Hispanic Bar seminar and called to ask my opinion of the way the Miranda Warning had been interpreted to the defendant. The following, as can be seen from portions of the transcript, are just some of the problems with the interpretation: the interpreter omitted, mispronounced and misused words of the Miranda Warning as given, spoke in the third person and answered on Mr. Ramirez' behalf without asking him first.

Q: Jennifer Rodriguez is a translator...and we are going to advice Alejandro of his rights in, uh, Spanish.

Interpreter: O.K. Alejandro, aquí son sus derechas abajo la ley. O.K.? El señor Lutha es una policía.

Answer: ¿Cómo?

Q.: [Reads the Miranda Warning]

Interpreter: Eh, usted tiene la derecha de que algo...que usted, uh, va...puedes usar contra usted una corte de la ley. Usted tiene la derecha absoluta para quedarse en silencio si usted prefiere. Usted tiene la derecha a dar visa de abogado antes y usted también tiene la...uh...derecha con la presencia de un abogado aquí con usted durante las preguntas, y también si usted no puede pagar para un abogado es posible para tener un abogado. O.K.? Sin pagar antes las preguntas. O.K.? Entiendes usted todas esos derechas abajo la law?

A: Sí.

Interpreter: O.K., bueno. He does understand his rights as I have read them.

Q: O.K. Does he...does he know that he doesn't have to have to talk to us, right?

Interpreter: That's right.

Q. ...That he can have an attorney?

Interpreter: Yes. That is correct.

Q: Ask him does he want to make a statement without

a lawyer.

Interpreter: Alejandro, ¿quieres, uh, hablar un poquito...

Q: Ask him the question.

Interpreter: ...Y por el incidente sin un abogado o prefieres que usted tiene un abogado?

A: Oh! Sí, sin abogado.

Interpreter: O.K. He will talk without the presence of a lawyer.

Q: Alejandro, see what this... This is the Rights card that you read if... So he knows that...

A: ¿Cómo?

Q: Es en inglés.

Interpreter: Necesitamos tu firma, por favor, Alejandro. Aquí, en la carta. Esta es una carta de... Con la inscripción de... [ininteligible]... Y de tus derechos.

Q: We should have one in Spanish, huh? O.K.... Does he does he know that he doesn't have to--have to talk to us, right?

Interpreter: That's right.

Q: That he can have an attorney?

Interpreter: Yes. That is correct.

During the interrogation, the interpreter asked her own questions and because she didn't understand Ramirez's answers she gave the officer misleading information.

The coalition appealed the conviction, and Ms. Dalhberg again contacted me for advice. I reviewed all the interpreting issues with the attorney for the Mexican Consulate and provided an accurate translation of the Miranda Warning.

The Mexican consulate then filed an amicus brief. The amicus brief referred to the Vienna Convention, errors made by the interpreter, and the fact that if the consulate had been notified they could have assisted with a competent interpreter and with tracking down potential witnesses who had fled to Mexico. An appeals brief was also filed.

On December 27, 1999, the Eleventh District Court of Appeals, Lake County, overturned the conviction. The Court's decision reads in part as follows:

Appellant timely filed a notice of appeal and has now set forth the following assignment of error:

1. The trial court erred in denying Defendant's Motion to Suppress where (1) it is undisputed that the defendant could not speak, read, write or understand a single word of English, (2) the translator deployed to orally translate the requisite Miranda warning into Spanish made numerous translation errors which rendered the warnings confusing and meaningless, (3) the Spanish translation never apprised defendant that he had a right to free counsel and that anything he said could be used against him, and (4) when the interrogating police officer asked if the defendant knew he had a right to remain silent and to counsel, the translator never addressed the defendant, but simply gave her own personal conclusion that the defendant knew and understood these rights.

2. Defendant was denied his rights under article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1) to have the assistance of the Mexican Consul at the time of his interrogation and throughout the ensuing criminal proceedings and (2) to be informed of these rights by the arresting authorities 'without delay' when he was detained and taken into custody.

3. The conviction should be reversed because Mr. Ramirez was denied the effective assistance of counsel.

4. The lower court erred in denying defendant's motion for a continuance of three hours to present expert testimony on the issues of bullet trajectory and police procedures."

In the first assignment of error, appellant contends that the trial court erred in denying his motion to suppress because he did not knowingly, voluntarily or intelligently waive his Miranda rights before giving an oral and a written statement to Painesville Police. Specifically, appellant maintains that the state's attempt to give him Miranda rights was unsuccessful due to a poor translation by Ms. Rodriguez.

We agree.

The opinion goes on to point out the translation errors, as well as the comment and corrections made by the professor regarding the transcript and translation. The opinion concludes as follows as to the remaining assignment of error:

It is appellant's contention that 'Article 36(1) of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, April 24, 1963, TIAS 6820, 21 U.S.T. 77, guarantees an alien arrested on a criminal charge a right to be informed of the right to contact the consul of his home nation.' It is undisputed that the appellant was never informed of his right to contact the Mexican consulate.

However, based upon our decision regarding appellant's first assignment of error, all remaining assignment of errors are moot and need not be addressed pursuant to App. R. 12(A)(1)(c). Any opinion offered with respect to any other issue raised would be merely advisory. We note that if the Vienna Convention had been complied with in this case, the error detailed in appellant's first assignment of error would have been avoided. First, a competent translator would have been present to ensure that appellants rights were not violated. Second, the American legal system would have been explained to appellant who, as a Mexican national, had not been exposed to the nuances of our justice system the way that most Americans are through the intense

media saturation that exists in this country. Finally the Mexican consul could have assisted in tracking down potential witnesses who had returned to Mexico between the time of the incident and the time of trial. As the Supreme Court of Ohio stated long ago, it is 'the imperative duty of the judicial tribunals of Ohio to take cognizance of the rights of persons arising under a treaty to the same extent as if they arose under a statute of the state itself.' *State v. Vanderpool* (1883), 39 Ohio St. 273, 276-277.

Accordingly, for the reasons stated herein, the trial court erred in overruling appellant's motion to suppress the statements he gave to police. Thus, appellant's first assignment of error is sustained. Appellant's second through fourth assignments of error are moot.

The judgement of the trial court is reversed, and the matter remanded for further proceedings consistent with this opinion.

As we all know, the interpreting and translating issues highlighted above are more likely to occur in states that do not provide standards, training and certification of judiciary interpreters.

The Ramirez case is opening the eyes of many in Ohio. Being bilingual or merely having studied some Spanish is not sufficient for being a court interpreter. Lack of knowledge about the field is rampant. Standards, training and certification are the solution. Educating the legal profession benefits all sides.

Ohio is now actively studying the issues related to competent interpretation. Judge Ron Adrine, chair of the Racial Fairness Commission, and I have been working together to promote professional standards. The Commission recently recommended that the issue of certification be submitted to the Ohio Supreme Court. This path is the one that most states that have to set standards and implement certification testing have taken. Interpreter certification has become a priority with the Supreme Court of Ohio.

I hope that all states that currently do not provide standards, training or certification will join in promulgating standards, training and certification of interpreters so that a corps of qualified, competent interpreters can be created to serve their courts well into the future.

Isabel Framer is an interpreter and translator in Akron, Ohio.

Editor's Note:

On March 11, 2000 Mr. Ramirez pled guilty to one count of involuntary manslaughter. Observers noted that the proceeding was not simultaneously interpreted to Mr. Ramirez.

An Attorney's Primer: Working With Interpreters

Isabel Picado

Working with a witness or client through an interpreter requires patience and practice. The interpreter is sworn to interpret truly and accurately, but source and target-language utterances rarely result in a perfectly neat match. The common perception is that interpreters just repeat words, but the process of interpreting is a complex task for the brain, one that involves many cognitive skills. Lawyers would do well to remember that interpreters convey concepts, not isolated words. This is why one cannot interpret in a vacuum. An interpreter needs a context, however limited, and for this, police reports, depositions, complaints, indictments or grand jury minutes are helpful. When lawyers provide interpreters with these basic documents, they help to prevent potential mispronunciations, misunderstandings, or requests for clarification.

When expert testimony is given by forensic doctors or ballistic experts, it is essential that interpreters be provided with a copy of their depositions or their reports ahead of time, if available. Interpreters are expected to handle vast vocabularies in both languages; but only a small percentage of these words spring immediately to mind. While interpreters know the most frequently used expressions in certain areas of expert testimony, they don't have every equivalent on the tip of their tongues; for that, they need to study the subject matter ahead of time because arcane or specialized terminology remains in the "hard disk" area of the brain, not in short term memory. Seeing a pathology report, for example, would enable the interpreter to get a preview of what the medical testimony will be, and to research unfamiliar words. Even so, surprises or unfamiliar terms can always come up, which is why interpreters arm themselves with dictionaries.

Ambiguous Subject Pronouns

Lawyers who are not aware of the potential linguistic challenges of a trial may find themselves at a disadvantage when a language problem arises. Below I will illustrate some of the linguistic challenges that interpreters face, especially when interpreting for a witness at the stand. I will use examples in the language pair I work with, English 𐄂

and Spanish.

One aspect of grammar that can be a problem is pronouns. For example, in Spanish, the possessive pronoun "su" may refer to "your," "his," "hers," "its," or "their." This ambiguity is best illustrated by the following joke.

A bank manager has a loyal employee who often skips lunch and works late. But when that employee starts disappearing at lunch time and returning late, the manager becomes concerned. He calls the bank detective and says, "I want you to follow Lopez at lunch time just to make sure he's not involved in anything shady."

The detective does so and reports back to the manager: "Lopez goes to his house (su casa) for lunch, makes love to his wife (su mujer), smokes one of his excellent cigars (sus cigarros excelentes), and returns to the office."

"Well, I don't see anything wrong with that," says the manager,

"May I address you in the familiar, sir?" (¿Me permite tutearlo?) asks the detective.

The manager consents.

*The detective then says: "Lopez, I repeat, goes to **your** house (tu casa) for lunch, makes love to **your** wife (tu mujer), smokes one of **your** excellent cigars (tus cigarros excelentes), and returns to the office."*

This joke arises out of an ambiguity inherent to Spanish pronouns. The same pronouns in English would be unambiguous.

On first hearing "su casa" and "su mujer," the manager assumes logically that the pronoun refers to the employee, who goes home to "his wife," and "his house." It is only when the detective drops the formality that his boss can see the reality: his wife is cheating on him.

Plays on words often don't translate. This joke requires a long explanation in English for what is carried in Spanish by the dialogue alone. Unfortunately, interpreters often find themselves in the position of the bank manager. They are the last ones to find out who everyone is talking about. One may spend ten minutes interpreting "su" as "his" because given the context, "his" is most logical, only to find out later that the witness was referring to a woman, not a man, and that "su" meant "her," not "his." By then it is too late. The interpreter can correct the record, of course, but the lawyer would have to recommence the examination to clear up the confusion and the witness

may then appear less credible to the jury. Lawyers and interpreters cannot always foresee every possible linguistic trap, but the more context an interpreter has, the more avoidable these become.

In the example above, had the interpreter known that the witness could have been referring to either a man or a woman, she could have alerted the lawyer by interpreting "su" as "his or her," for example, as in "Then we went by his or her house." Lawyers have to listen for these cues, because interpreters are not allowed to ask their own questions, or clarify or edit in any way. Catching these problem areas is the responsibility of both lawyers and interpreters. Language is so vast, spontaneous and quirky, even the best of interpreters will be caught unaware on occasions. Fatigue, poor acoustics, and other factors may also interfere with message reception.

Additionally, native speakers of Spanish tend to omit subject pronouns. Instead of saying *El llegó* (he arrived), they'll say *llegó*, because usually the context will be enough to make the subject clear. However, *llegó* may also mean "she arrived" or "you [polite form] arrived." In addition to these natural ambiguities of the language, witnesses may sometimes be deliberately ambiguous.

Another example: a witness, testifying about what the alleged victim in a rape case said right after the incident, states: "*Dijo 'Me van a matar.'*" ("She said, 'They are going to kill me.'") The problem is *Me van a matar*. The verb *van* corresponds to the third person plural, "they." The interpreter renders this sentence as "She said, 'They are going to kill me.'" But the assistant district attorney knows that only one person was involved. She asks a follow-up question, "Did she say 'They are going to kill me?'"

The interpreter now has to specify the subject. "¿Dijo ella, 'Ellos me van a matar'?" The witness responds: "*No, ella no dijo 'Ellos me van a matar,' dijo 'Me van a matar.'*" A literal translation would be: "No, she didn't say 'They are going to kill me,' she said, 'They are going to kill me.'" How do you solve it? But an experienced interpreter would render this as: "No, she didn't say 'They are going to kill me,' she said, 'I'm going to get killed.'" By using the passive voice the interpreter is able to avoid the surface meaning that lurks in a literal translation. It is impossible for lawyers or even for interpreters to anticipate every linguistic pitfall. But lawyers who are familiar with the details of the case and who understand the limitations of interpretation can

avoid the worst of these problems by keeping a keen ear out for the pronouns.

The Gender Gap

Another problem area is gender. Let's say a lawyer asks a witness the following: "But the defendant was with his cousin at the time. Is this not so?" What is the accurate interpretation of "cousin?" In English, most nouns have no gender, and the word "cousin" alone may refer to either a man or a woman. The interpreter has three options:

1. Ask the question giving the witness the option of either gender ("...was with his male or female cousin (*su primo o su prima*) at the time?")
2. Construct the question with the plural ("...was with one of his cousins at the time?" Here, unlike in the singular, *primos* works well because the masculine plural may refer to both men and women.)
3. Interrupt the flow of the questioning and ask the questioner to specify the gender of the cousin.

Verb Tenses

Yet another feature of Spanish grammar is the use of two past tenses, preterite and imperfect. For example, the following question was posed to a woman who had been talking about how she used to go back and forth with her mother between the Dominican Republic and the U.S. The lawyer asked when the last time was that she came back from the Dominican Republic. The next question was "Did your father stay in the Dominican Republic?"

The verb tense in English doesn't specify whether the father stayed once in the Dominican Republic (the last time he went, which requires preterite tense) or whether he habitually used to stay longer (imperfect tense) every time the family went back.

Whenever a past tense is used in English, the interpreter has to make a judgment call. Do I use the preterite or the imperfect? To avoid confusion, lawyers would do well to distinguish between habitual action and one-time only action. Note the difference: "Did your father always stay in the Dominican Republic when you and your mother came to the U.S.?" or "Did your father stay behind the last time you came?"

Spanglish and other vocabulary issues

One of the main challenges in interpreting is when a word or concept in one language does not have an exact equivalent in the other. It is common for these problems to arise in discussing legal systems or

kinship. For example, a lawyer may use a single English word such as "indictment," which in Spanish would need several words to convey the same thing. Or a Spanish speaker may use a word with no exact equivalent in English, such as *comadre*, which refers to the relationship between two women, either one of whom may be godmother to the other one's child. Another example is *concuñado*, which describes the relationship between two people married to siblings. My sister-in-law's husband is my *concuñado*. My brother-in-law's wife would be my *concuñada*. Interpreters get around these difficulties by rendering the concept clearly, i.e. by saying "She is on my in-law's side of the family" or, if nothing else works, by leaving the word in Spanish for the record, so that the lawyers can ask follow-up questions, as in: "He was a practitioner of *santería*."

Another area that can create hilarious, nonsensical, or embarrassing moments for interpreters is "Spanglish," the English/Spanish mixture that Hispanics in the U.S. sometimes use. It comes in two forms: code switching (the insertion of a word from one language into another) and "Spanglish," words built out of an amalgam of the two languages. An example of code switching is when in the middle of a Spanish sentence the speaker inserts a word in English. The pronunciation, however, is in the Spanish manner, so that the interpreter does not recognize it as an English word. The interpreter hears something that makes no sense, but must interpret it. Here is an example of code switching:

Q: Miss Gálvez, can you tell us what's in the photograph to the right of the blood stain?

A: *A la par de la mancha de sangre hay una cuota.*

Interp: Next to the blood stain there is a quota.

The witness is pronouncing the word "quarter" as it sounds to a Spanish ear, and what emerges is *cuota*, which means "quota" in Spanish. The interpreter is not expecting a mispronounced English word; hence the confusion. A trained interpreter knows to stop and say something like, "Your Honor, may the interpreter clarify the word 'cuota' with the witness?"

People who use "Spanglish" typically either add Spanish endings and articles to English words (eg., *la roofa* for "the roof," *la bossa* for "the boss") or they use a Spanish word that sounds close or identical to the English but has a different meaning (eg., *la ganga* for "the gang" though the word exists in Spanish and means "bargain"). In West Roxbury District Court a defendant told her lawyer she was "*en la roofa con*"

la bossa de la ganga."

Here is a compound example of "Spanglish" together with an interpreter's lack of context. In a case of two homeless men accused of stealing an air conditioner in a Demoulas supermarket shopping cart, the defendants speak English to their attorneys, but once in court they request an interpreter. No one provides the interpreter with the details of the case. At one point, the D.A. examines one of the homeless men, asking him how he managed to carry the air conditioner away.

Defendant: *En un carro de mulas.*

Interpreter: In a mule car.

D.A.: A mule car?!!

The interpreter heard "*un carro de mulas*," which means a mule car, but in this case is a mispronunciation of Demoulas cart (*un carro Demoulas*). It takes several minutes to clear up the confusion, and it requires the interpreter to request that the witness explain what he has called *un carro de mulas*. When the man describes metal wheels and mimics with his hands the act of pulling a cart, it dawns on the interpreter that he must be talking about a shopping cart. If the interpreter had known the incident took place in a Demoulas supermarket she might have realized from the context what the witness was referring to.

Context is key

Context, context, and more context. To avoid linguistic difficulties, the interpreter needs a minimum of context. That includes the defendant's name; the defendant's street address and that of the crime scene; the charges; the names of the main players; the docket number (numbers require the involvement of a different part of the brain). Also the interpreter should be provided with the names of police officers (the main ones); in drug cases, beeper numbers, license plates, etc.; in trials, expert witness depositions and reports. Because it is difficult for lawyers to know exactly what an interpreter might need, it is best to ask, and let the interpreter know as much of the basic information as is possible. Interpreters are bound by the same rules of confidentiality as lawyers, and contrary to a popular misconception, context does not interfere with the interpreter's neutrality. In fact, all the professional literature underscores the need for the interpreter to have context in order to render testimony accurately.

Interpreting is more complex than most people imagine, and even the best interpreters will be challenged at one time or another by a linguistic or

cultural difficulty. In a court setting, it is in everyone's interest to keep interpreters well informed so that they can do their best. Attorneys are primarily concerned with the facts. The interpreter is on the lookout for linguistic pitfalls. The next time you work with an interpreter, remember: context is the key. A short briefing, before the interpreter goes into action, is the best insurance policy against error and misunderstanding.

Isabel Picado, Ph.D., was born in Costa Rica and currently works as a freelance certified interpreter in Massachusetts. She is also a translator (English-Spanish), and editor specializing in Spanish textbooks.

A shorter version of this article, entitled "Using Court Interpreters Takes Practice," was published in the Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyers Journal. 6.6. February 1999.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

(continued from page 2)

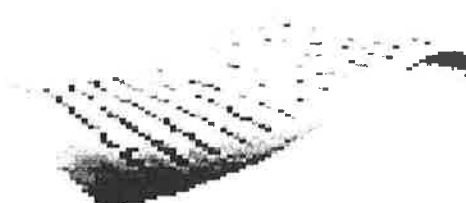
the FAQ section of the NAJIT website regarding the law on interpreters testifying about information received in the course of interpreting duties. Carried.

8. Castro/Mikkelson: Moved and seconded that NAJIT recognize members and jurisdictions that request and/or implement team interpreting, by publishing a list of their names in *Proteus* and the NAJIT website. Carried.

9. Mines/Castro: Moved and seconded that the contract with Dynamic Management be extended on a month-to-month basis pending discussion of contract renewal at the next board meeting. Carried.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 pm EST.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Mikkelson, Secretary



VIVA LA DIFERENCIA (6)

Richard Palmer

Viva la Diferencia is a compilation of Spanish-English false cognates which Proteus is publishing in installments.

noticia

Recibimos la noticia del accidente hace poco.

"We received the news of the accident a short while ago."

notorio

Es un hecho notorio que él fue quien asesinó al político.

"It is a well-known fact that he was the one who murdered the politician."

objetar

Me objetó que no había fondos para ese proyecto.

"He pointed out that there were no funds for that project."

obligación

Para pagar la deuda, se vio forzado a hacer efectivas ciertas obligaciones.

"In order to pay off the debt, he was forced to cash in certain securities."

obsequioso

El papá de Maria nos encantó por su modo de ser tan obsequioso.

"Maria's father delighted us with his obliging ways."

ocasión

Debes aprovechar esta ocasión para hablar con tu jefe.

"You should take advantage of this opportunity to speak with your boss."

ocurrencia

Sus ocurrencias lo han convertido en el alma de la fiesta.

"His witty remarks have made him the life of the party."

omisión

Su omisión de haber respondido a la citación le va a costar caro.

"He'll pay dearly for his failure to answer the subpoena."

oportunidad

La oportunidad de la recomendación fue obra del embajador francés.

"The timeliness of the recommendation was the work of the French ambassador."

notice

"Do not use the laboratory until further notice."

No usen el laboratorio hasta nuevo aviso.

notorious

"The police were well aware of his notorious conduct".

La policía estaba bien enterada de su conducta escandalosa.

object

"Do you object to my taking her to the party?"

¿Tienes inconveniente en que yo la lleve a la fiesta?

obligation

"You may use this product for one whole month without any obligation."

Vd. puede usar este producto durante un mes entero sin compromiso alguno.

obsequious

"He is so obsequious towards his superiors that no one can stand him."

Es tan servil ante sus superiores que nadie lo puede ver.

occasion

"This is a real occasion, so let's celebrate it with champagne."

Este es un verdadero acontecimiento, de modo que vamos a celebrarlo con champaña.

occurrence

"This is an everyday occurrence and you shouldn't let it bother you."

Ese es un suceso de todos los días y no debes preocuparte por eso.

omission

"Not having closed the door was merely an omission on my part."

El no haber cerrado la puerta fue sólo un descuido mío.

opportunity

"I wish to take this opportunity to thank you most heartily."

Desear aprovechar esta ocasión para darle mis más efusivas gracias.

oración

La primera oración es demasiado larga y complicada.

"The first sentence is too long and complicated."

parásito

No pudimos oír bien la voz del radioaficionado debido a los parásitos.

"We were unable to hear the radio ham's voice well because of the interference."

parientes

Nuestros parientes llegaron de todas partes para la boda de mi nieta.

"Our relatives came from all over to my granddaughter's wedding."

parsimonioso

Por ser tan parsimonioso en sus negociaciones, algunos lo creían poco inteligente.

"Since he was so unhurried in his dealings, some thought of him as unintelligent".

participar

Anoche mi suegra me participó la triste noticia del fallecimiento de mi ahijado.

"Last night my mother-in-law gave me the sad news of the death of my godchild."

particular

Desde que tengo mi teléfono particular, no tengo que usar el de la propietaria.

"Ever since I have had my private phone, I don't need to use the landlady's."

patrono

En la empresa donde trabajo todas las quejas las resuelve el patrono.

"At the company where I work, all complaints are handled by the employer."

peculiar

Esa tosecita que le da antes de enojarse le es muy peculiar.

"That little cough he has before getting angry is very characteristic of him."

ponderar

Me habían ponderado mucho esa película pero para mí fue una gran decepción.

"That film had been built up to me a great deal but it was a great disappointment to me."

percepción

La percepción de impuestos de parte del gobierno ha disminuido este año debido al aumento de evasores fiscales.

oration

"The ancient Athenians were fond of giving orations."

A los atenienses antiguos les gustaba pronunciar discursos.

parasite

"Since he was still living with his parents at the age of thirty, people thought of him as a parasite."

Puesto que seguía viviendo con sus padres a la edad de treinta años, la gente lo tenía por parásito.

parents

"Many people are wont to blame their parents for their failures in life."

Muchas personas suelen culpar a sus padres por sus fracasos en la vida.

parsimonious

"A parsimonious attitude toward money is often that of millionaires."

Una actitud prudente con respecto al dinero a menudo distingue a los millonarios.

participate

"He refused to participate in the race because his knee was still bothering him."

Se negó a tomar parte en la carrera porque le seguía molestando la rodilla.

particular

"He is a bit particular about the type of necktie he wears."

Es muy exigente con respecto al tipo de corbata que usa.

patron

"One of the patrons complained to a clerk about the quality of the merchandise."

Uno de los clientes se quejó con un dependiente acerca de la calidad de la mercancía.

peculiar

"The lady wearing an evening gown and tennis shoes struck me as very peculiar."

La dama del traje de gala y las zapatillas de tenis me pareció muy extraña.

ponder

"They pondered over the problem for hours and finally reached a solution."

Reflexionaron sobre el problema durante horas y finalmente llegaron a una solución.

perception

"He is now saddled with several incompetent employees because of his lack of perception."

"Tax collection by the government this year has decreased because of the increase in tax evaders."

perforar

Perforaron un pozo de petróleo en sus terrenos y se hizo rico.

"They drilled an oil well on his land and he became rich."

persecución

La escena de la persecución en la película "La Conexión Francesa" fue muy emocionante.

"The chase scene in the movie "The French Connection" was very exciting."

perspectiva

Yo me alegré con la perspectiva de pasar un año en Francia.

"I was delighted with the prospect of spending a year in France."

petición

El letrado interpuso una petición que fue denegada por el juez.

"The lawyer made a request which was denied by the judge."

pinchar

El nene lloró cuando el médico le pinchó el brazo con la aguja.

"The baby cried when the doctor pricked his arm with the needle."

político

Isabel es una tía política mía.

"Isabel is an aunt of mine by marriage."

portero

Los porteros en los edificios de lujo reciben muchas propinas.

"The doormen in luxury buildings receive many tips."

postura

El fiscal asumió una postura intransigente con respecto a la fianza.

"The government attorney assumed an uncompromising position regarding bail."

precioso

Se compraron una casa de verano preciosa cerca de un lago.

"They bought a lovely summer house near a lake."

precipitación

Si haces ese negocio con precipitación, te pesará luego.

"If you make that deal hastily, you will be sorry later."

precisión

Tenemos precisión de una nueva represa.

"We are in need of a new dam."

Ahora tiene que cargar con varios empleados incompetentes debido a su falta de perspicacia.

perforate

"His skull is so thick that nothing will ever perforate it."

Tiene el cráneo tan grueso que nada lo penetrará nunca.

persecution

"He suffers from a persecution complex, which explains his bizarre behavior."

Padece de una manía persecutoria, lo cual explica su conducta estrambótica.

perspective

"We are now able to put things in their proper perspective."

Ahora podemos apreciar debidamente las cosas.

petition

"God heard their petition and sent the rains which they so much needed."

Dios escuchó sus ruegos y mandó las lluvias que tanto necesitaban.

pinch

"Stop pinching your sister or you'll be sorry."

Deja de pellizcar a tu hermana o te va a pesar.

political

"He managed to get a good position through political finagling."

Logró obtener un buen puesto por politiquero.

porter

"When we arrived at the airport, the porter immediately took my bags."

Cuando llegamos al aeropuerto, el maletero tomó mi equipaje inmediatamente.

posture

The figure in the picture was in a sitting posture."

La figura del cuadro estaba en posición sentada.

precious

"He has precious few friends at this time."

Actualmente, tiene muy pocos amigos.

precipitation

"There has been very little precipitation lately."

Ha llovido muy poco últimamente.

precision

"The precision of his details astounded us."

La exactitud de sus detalles nos asombró.

precoz

A los dieciocho años ya era víctima de una calvicie precoz.
 "At eighteen, he was already a victim of premature baldness."

predicamento

El juez Pérez goza de gran predicamento en la comunidad.
 "Judge Perez is very highly thought of in the community."

preocupado

Lo que nos tiene preocupados es la falta de noticias.
 "What worries us is the lack of news."

proceder

Estas uvas proceden de Chile.
 "These grapes come from Chile."

precocious

"He was such a precocious child that he could play the piano well at the age of three."
Era un niño tan adelantado para su edad que sabía tocar bien el piano a la edad de tres años.

predicament

"We got into a fine predicament when we ran out of gas in the middle of the desert."
En bonito lío nos metimos cuando se nos acabó la gasolina en medio del desierto.

preoccupied

"He is always too preoccupied with his hobby to pay attention to the children."
Siempre está demasiado distraído con su pasatiempo para prestarles atención a los niños.

proceed

"Proceed with your explanation, please."
Prosiga con su explicación, por favor.

A Job No One Had Ever Done Before

Holly Mikkelson

The Origins of Simultaneous Interpretation: The Nuremburg Trial

by Francesca Gaiba
 Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1998
 ISBN 07766-0457-0

Throughout my professional life, I've heard interpreters describe the Nuremburg Trial as the cradle of modern conference interpreting, the first instance of simultaneous interpreting with electronic equipment. Apart from a few isolated articles in the occasional translator/interpreter publication, very little has been written about these pioneer interpreters and the system that was devised to make a four-language trial possible. Francesca Gaiba's work puts an end to this relative obscurity, shedding new light on a historic event that would otherwise have receded into the darkness of the forgotten past as the key players died, one by one.

The book begins with a telling quote from one of the

most infamous participants in the trial, Reich Marshal Hermann Göring: "Of course I want counsel. But it is even more important to have a good interpreter." The wily Göring was one of the few people who really understood the nature of interpreting and the ways in which it could be exploited to distort the process. Throughout the book, the reader is reminded of the peculiar role played by interpreters, who made it possible for the court to hear testimony about the horrifying deeds that had been committed by the Nazis, and yet also ensured the defendants of a fair trial. In addition to combing the official records and transcripts of the trial and numerous other documents, Gaiba interviewed and corresponded with dozens of individuals who served as translators and interpreters during the lengthy trial, many of whom were young and inexperienced at the time and are now retired. Their recollections reveal the odd relationship they developed with some of the defendants, well-educated

polyglots who appreciated the difficulty of the interpreters' work, and of course wanted the interpretation to work to their benefit. One defendant even made a list of "Suggestions for Speakers" to facilitate the interpreters' task.

Chapter 1 discusses the preparations leading up to the trial, and the difficulties of staging a major international event amid the rubble of war-torn Germany. Gaiba describes the recruitment, screening, and training of interpreters for a job no one had ever done before, and the development of the equipment by IBM. I was particularly interested in reading about the recruitment and screening, which was made even more complicated by the fact that the war was just coming to an end and the United States was the only country with an intact communications infrastructure. As a result, most of the interpreters were contributed (and paid) by the U.S., although several came from the new school of interpreting in Geneva. In the initial screening, candidates were asked to name 10 trees, 10 automobile parts, 10 agricultural implements, etc., in two languages (how many of us would pass that test?). Many city slickers who were otherwise very fluent couldn't name a single farm implement in any language.

Those who demonstrated the prerequisite language skills were sent to Nuremburg, where the new equipment was being installed, so that they could be tested in simultaneous interpretation. Mock trials were staged, with everyone chipping in to play different roles, and many candidates--including some Geneva graduates, who had been trained only in consecutive interpreting--were eliminated because they couldn't handle the stress of simultaneous interpreting. Their talents were not wasted, however, as they were assigned to the translation office or other related duties. There was also a high turnover during the trial, which lasted from November 1945 to August 1946. New recruits were constantly being sought to replace interpreters who were burned out or had to return to their regular jobs.

Chapter 2 describes the interpreting system in detail, including the equipment itself, the team interpreting schedule, and the monitoring function. Chapter 3 looks at the reliability of the interpreting and its impact on the proceedings. Particularly interesting is the section on language issues, which describes the strategies employed by interpreters to cope with their languages' different syntax (especially the notorious German compound sentences), ambiguities, speed, and cultural differences. Many of the participants were awed by the

phenomenon of simultaneous interpretation, which received positive press coverage at the time, although there were also critics. Most prominent among these were the defense attorneys and judges (who else?); one attorney even went so far as to claim that his client had been convicted "purely as a result of a mistranslation of one document." Gaiba points out that many of the critics were not comparing simultaneous interpretation with consecutive, but an interpreted trial with a non-interpreted, monolingual trial, which was not an option.

Chapter 4 details the interpreters' life outside the courtroom, which was rather bleak in the aftermath of war. It will come as no surprise to *Proteus* readers that politics entered into every aspect of the trial, including interpreters' pay. Basically, there were no standards for pay. France, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, which had initially agreed to supply equal numbers of interpreters, had trouble recruiting them and could not pay those they recruited. Interpreters hired by the U.S., many of whom already worked for government agencies, were paid at whatever their normal salary was from their previous job, which led to tremendous disparity. Americans were paid in "occupation dollars," which entitled them to buy American goods that were not available to others, but it was difficult for the interpreters to enjoy their wealth when surrounded by deprivation and suffering. The interpreters tried to forget the horrors of the trial during their off-hours, and many established lifelong friendships. The Russian interpreters, however, were under constant surveillance and were discouraged from fraternizing with their colleagues.

Chapter 5 focuses on the individual interpreters, presenting profiles of those Gaiba was able to contact or read about. They came from all walks of life, and all were profoundly affected by their experience in Nuremburg. Many of them later became prominent interpreters in international organizations and teachers at interpreting schools. In the epilogue, Gaiba describes the skepticism with which "old guard" interpreters greeted the advent of simultaneous interpretation in the United Nations and other organizations. They scornfully called these new interpreters "les téléphonistes" and claimed that interpreting under these conditions was impossible. Their fierce resistance was finally overcome, and simultaneous interpretation has become the norm in international meetings.

Gaiba concludes her remarkable history with a

statement that is worth quoting here: "Undoubtedly, despite the unpleasantness of the Nuremburg situation, the achievements of the Nuremburg interpreters are impressive: they made possible one of the most crucial trials of the century, contributing to its conduct and promptness; they created a new profession, and went on to introduce it and teach it around the world, thus facilitating the creation of international organizations and the understanding among delegates of all countries."

I highly recommend this fascinating book by an interpreter about interpreters as a must-read for anyone interested in the court interpreting profession.

The author is Director of the International Interpretation Resource Center at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. She is a state and federally certified court interpreter, and currently a member of NAJIT's Board of Directors.

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UN DELICADO JUEGO DE MALABARISMOS

Daniel Sherr

Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business

by Thomas L. West, III

Atlanta: Protea Publishers, 1999

ISBN 1883707374

Le dan a traducir un artículo sobre Pinochet. En la primera línea, usted lee, "La negativa del general Augusto Pinochet... a contestar el exhorto con las 75 preguntas... fue interpretada por fuentes judiciales y parlamentarias como el rechazo de éste a colaborar con la justicia chilena. Tras recibir la respuesta de Pinochet, el juez declaró que estudia pedir el desafuero del general, por considerar que ya se le ha dado la oportunidad de efectuar sus descargos".

El "Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business" de Thomas L. West III, que salió a la luz el año pasado, le confirmará lo que ya barruntaba -- que *exhorto* se traduce al inglés como *letters rogatory*. Traduce "desafuero" como *withdrawal of privileges*, lo cual le ayuda. Pero usted sigue leyendo.

Pinochet sostiene que "la situación procesal a que me encuentro sometido hace del todo improcedente que, privado de libertad por una jurisdicción que no reconozco, declare ante Su Señoría por la vía de una carta rogatoria". ¿En qué se diferencia una carta rogatoria de un exhorto? De nuevo, vuelve al West: "'Exhorto.' Letters rogatory [formal request from one court to another of equivalent status -- Traditionally the word was used when the letters rogatory were sent to another judge in the same country, while "carta rogatoria" was used for judges in another country. However, the two terms are used interchangeably in the Spanish version of the Inter-American Convention on Letters Rogatory.]"

En su diccionario, West se propone un delicado número de malabarismos: por un lado, intenta dar equivalentes escuetos cuando es posible; por otro lado, procura dar una explicación donde hace falta. Para la traducción de documentos jurídicos de España y Sudamérica, el diccionario representa un adelanto importante. En su prefacio, West declara: "My

primary goal in writing this dictionary has been to give lawyers and translators access to the meaning of legal and commercial terms that are not used in the two countries (Spain and Argentina) where most of the legal dictionaries available in the United States are produced." West, que es abogado y que ha enseñado muchos cursillos y seminarios de traducción jurídica, consigue muchas veces navegar por el mar de escollos que separa el sistema del common law y el derecho continental. Por ejemplo, el que busque "sumario" encontrará lo siguiente:

1. investigation stage of a criminal proceeding [The 'fase de sumario' is also known as the 'fase de instrucción'. It is followed by the 'fase de plenario' (the trial, if the investigation reveals that there are grounds for prosecution).
2. summary [one-line summary of the nature of the document being filed -- referred to as a 'sumilla' in Peru].

En cambio, el que busque "averiguación previa" encontrará: "(Mex) preliminary investigation, pretrial investigation", y el que busque "juicio oral" verá "(Spa) trial..." El término "sentencia" lleva la definición "judgment, ruling, decision" y luego la aclaración:

Note that 'sentence' in English is *condena* in Spanish. A *sentencia* in Spanish is usually made up of four parts: (1) the *encabezamiento*, stating the date and identifying the court, parties, attorneys, and cause of action; (2) the *resultandos* o *fundamentos de hecho*, i.e., a statement of the facts; (3) the *considerandos* o *fundamentos de derecho*, which set forth the legal grounds on which the judgment is based; and (4) the *fallo* or *resolutoria*, i.e., the holding.

El mismo tratamiento se aplica a los vocablos del mundo de las finanzas, que están recogidos en abundancia. La entrada de "capital contable" nos informa: "(Mex) 'shareholders' equity' [Also called *capital en giro*. This is called *patrimonio neto* in Latin America and *fondos propios* in Spain.]"

West hace un especial esfuerzo por incluir ciertas frases hechas, algunas de las cuales son privativas de un país u otro: "Es justicia" (Venezuela), "Fallo, haciendo lugar a lo pedido ...", "Dos ejemplares de un mismo tenor a un solo efecto", "Proveer de

conformidad será justicia" (Argentina), "Sufragio efectivo, no reelección" (México).

El autor argumenta que el traductor que deja el molesto "latinajo" sin tocar incurre en un error de negligencia, pues las frases latinas del derecho romano y del angloamericano no son las mismas. De ahí que *subpoena duces tecum* se traduzca como "citación para aportar pruebas" (y no, como en otro diccionario, "cédula de citación de testigos *duces tecum* [debe comparecer y producir los documentos requeridos en la misma])" y *res judicata* como "cosa juzgada". Otro ejemplo, también del lado inglés, es *prima facie evidence*. West propone "pruebas suficientes a primera vista". (Otro diccionario define *prima facie case* de la forma siguiente: "caso en el cual el juez hará lugar a la pretensión de una de la partes a menos que la otra presentare prueba en su contra -- causa fundamentada con prueba suficiente y válida a menos que se pruebe lo contrario".) No sin ironía, West incluye en la parte española la sentencia *in claris no fit interpretatio* ("There is no need to interpret that which is clear").

¿No sabe cómo se llama el máximo órgano de justicia en un país determinado? Tranquilo. West se lo pone en bandeja. Bajo Corte Suprema de Justicia, leemos: "Arg, Col, Ecu, Gua, Hon, Pan, Per, Ven) Supreme Court [in most other Latin American countries, the Supreme Court is called 'Suprema Corte de Justicia.' In Spain and Cuba it is called the 'Tribunal Supremo.]"

Los apéndices del diccionario obedecen a este mismo afán de especificar y desmenuzar. El primero consta de abreviaturas y siglas en español, el segundo, de abreviaturas y siglas estadounidenses y el cuarto desglosa los países que utilizan el punto o la coma para indicar los miles (1.010 vs. 1,010).

Evidentemente, en un diccionario tan ambicioso, no todo el monte es orégano. En el primer ejemplo citado en esta reseña, uno podría preguntarse cuál es la diferencia entre una carta rogatoria y una comisión rogatoria. La entrada "comisión rogatoria" sí figura, con el significado de *letter rogatory*. El lector se pregunta por qué West no lo menciona al comparar carta rogatoria y exhorto.

En otro orden de cosas, sabemos que tanto "resolución" como "extinción" pueden referirse a la finalización de un contrato (*termination*), pero echamos en falta una diferenciación de los dos.

Como a muchas de las entradas las sigue un paréntesis con el lugar de origen de la expresión,

uno podría pensar que si la expresión no lleva ninguna "denominación de origen", su uso se da en todas partes. No es así. Como botín de muestra, West incluye la palabra cuentapropista (*self-employed person, freelancer*), expresión que probablemente se entienda en todo el mundo hispanohablante, pero que no es de uso corriente en muchos países. West define "protestar" como "1. to raise an objection; 2. to affirm". Efectivamente, he visto la expresión en su segunda acepción usada en México en el sentido de "jurar", pero nunca he escuchado el verbo utilizado en ese sentido en España. Asimismo, West traduce plagiar como "1. plagiarize; 2. kidnap". El verbo sí se usa así en México, pero uno se pregunta: si un argentino oyese hablar de un plagio, ¿se le cruzaría por la cabeza que podría tratarse de un secuestro?

Otros colegas ya han señalado otras discrepancias. Tony Rivas disputa la entrada "jurado de instrucción (Col) grand jury", afirmando que no existe este término y añadiendo que de todos modos, "there are no grand juries in Colombia." Rivas también sugiere que West incluya términos como el mexicano "libertad preparatoria" (*parole*) y el puertorriqueño "libertad a prueba" (*probation*). Cuestiona el uso de la preposición a después del verbo acatar, señalando -- correctamente, a mi juicio -- que no se debe decir "acatar a una decisión judicial", sino "acatar una decisión judicial". Por la misma regla de tres, es discutible el uso de la preposición en la entrada "intervenir en un banco" en vez de "intervenir un banco".

Ricardo Chiesa, abogado, profesor universitario y traductor público en la Argentina, observa que el derecho continental distingue entre la obligación de medios y la obligación de resultados. En la obligación de resultados, el que realiza el servicio se compromete a obtener un resultado y si no cumple, tiene que atenerse a las consecuencias. Un contrato de traducción supone la asunción de una obligación de resultados. En la obligación de medios, el prestatario del servicio pone a disposición sus conocimientos, pero no garantiza los resultados. Un médico no puede garantizar la cura del paciente; la suya es una obligación de medios. Chiesa felicita a West por haber incluido una innovadora traducción de "obligación de medios" -- "best efforts obligation [obligation to use one's best efforts to achieve the purpose of the contract]", pero insta a West a incluir un equivalente para obligación de resultados.

Lo bueno es que West está encantado de hacerlo. De

hecho, en el prefacio declara "I would appreciate suggestions from readers as to words that should be included in the next edition, and can be reached via e-mail at translation@mindspring.com."

El diccionario de West es caro. El precio de venta al público de \$75 no es grano de anís. Pero este diccionario indudablemente contiene novedades. Y la resolución de una sola duda en una sola traducción puede representar el ahorro de un tiempo incalculable.

En una palabra, es una inversión fácilmente amortizable.

You Must Remember This

(*Memoirs of an Interpreter*)

Historias de la Interpretación Simultánea

by Isidoro Calín de Briones

Author's publication, Madrid, 1999. 166 pp.

When Isidoro Calín first spoke to a group of interpreters two years ago in New York, he said, "Napoleon once remarked, 'Du haut de ces pyramides, 40 siècles d'histoire vous contemplant'" [From the elevations of these pyramids, 40 centuries of history gaze upon you.] I can't speak about 40 centuries, but I can bear witness to 40 years in the interpreting profession."

It's no understatement.

Calín was trained by State Department interpreters who, he says, "devised the simultaneous interpreting system that was used in Nuremburg." In the late 50's and early 60's, he worked for the State Department as what would today be called a seminar interpreter. He worked as a translator for the World Health Organization in Geneva. He worked as a court interpreter in Washington D.C. He set up an interpreting agency that in its heyday in the 80's and early 90's, provided approximately 25% of the interpreting services required by the Madrid market. Over the years, more than 100 students took his three-month course on conference interpreting, and more than 40 are now working as interpreters in the European market. Some even work in the United States courts.

Calín's memoir, "Historias de la interpretación simultánea" (Stories about Simultaneous Interpreting)

is a potpourri of anecdotes culled from his many years of experience on both sides of the Atlantic. A large part of the 166-page paperback is devoted to Calín's interpreting adventures in the rural and the Western U.S. -- Idaho, Salt Lake City, New Mexico, and elsewhere -- and should be of great interest to U.S.-based readers.

For the benefit of our non-Spanish-speaking members, the following extract is included with an English translation.

Al llegar al hotel de Wilkinsburg donde se celebraban los cursos, me encontré con Maeztu, que de forma autoritaria (era militar) me dijo:

-- Calín, como quiero que esto salga bien y a mí no me cansa interpretar, voy a traducir yo todo el tiempo. Tú, estate sentado a mi lado por si te necesito para algo.

Probablemente se acordaba de mi actuación en la escuela del Departamento de Estado. Dudé entre protestar, darme por ofendido o encogerme de hombros; opté por lo último. "Como quieras", dije. "Pero ya te estrellarás, majo", pensé para mis adentros. El curso iba a durar cinco semanas a base de seis horas diarias de clase con traducción simultánea continua. Muy duro tenía que ser Juan Maeztu para poder realizar semejante machada.

Maeztu aguantó bastante bien el primer día, y aunque al final se le veía cansado, aún le quedaron fuerzas para venir a cenar conmigo y los intérpretes del otro grupo. El segundo día fue un martirio para Juan. Yo hacía crucigramas, leía el "Times Magazine", apuntaba los términos que pronunciaba el profesor y comparaba las traducciones de Maeztu con la que yo hubiera realizado. Mientras tanto mi colega, visiblemente cansado, daba una traducción muy inferior a la del primer día. Esa noche ya no vino a cenar con nosotros. Al tercer día estaba demacrado; sin embargo no me ofrecí a echarle una mano. ¡Que fuera consecuente! Si quería ayuda, no tenía más que pedirla. A media mañana me dijo: "Coge el micrófono un rato, ya no puedo más". Me puse a traducir y, al terminar la clase, me dice Maeztu: "¿Sabes que lo haces muy bien? A partir de ahora lo haremos mitad mitad. No veo por qué tengo yo que hacer todo el trabajo, cuando nos pagan lo mismo". Pensé que mi compañero tenía mucha cara.

"When I reached the Wilkinsburg hotel, where the courses were held, I ran into Maeztu, who in

authoritarian fashion (he was a military man) said: 'Calín, since I want this to go well and I don't get tired interpreting, I'm going to do all the interpreting. You just sit here in case I need you for something.'

He probably remembered my performance in the State Department training program.

I hesitated between objecting, being offended or shrugging my shoulders; I opted for the latter.

'Whatever you say,' I said. 'But sooner or later you'll crash,' I said to myself. The five-week course was going to use simultaneous interpreting six hours a day. Juan Maeztu was going to have to be very tough to pull off a stunt like that.

Maeztu held up pretty well the first day, and although he looked tired by the end, he still was up to joining me and the interpreters from the other group for dinner. The second day was absolute torment for Juan. I was doing crossword puzzles, reading the Times Magazine, writing down the terms the teacher used and comparing Maeztu's translations with those I would have offered. Meanwhile, my colleague, visibly tired, was providing interpretation well below the level of the first day. That night he failed to come to dinner with us. By the third day he was drawn; nevertheless, I didn't offer to lend a helping hand. Let him stick to his principles! If he wanted help, he had but to ask. Halfway through the morning, he said, 'You take the mike a while. I can't go on any longer.' I started to interpret and when the class ended, Maeztu said, 'You know, you do a really good job. From now on, we'll do it half and half. I don't see why I should have to do all the work myself when we're getting paid equally.' I thought my colleague had a lot ofchutzpah."

Reading about the experiences of a Spanish interpreter in the United States in the late 50's and early 60's makes for fascinating reading. Oftentimes, the perspective of the outsider is rich in insights that escape the native. The reader is treated to Calín's encounter with Basque shepherds in Idaho, Mormons in Utah, or a hotel manager in Arkansas who threatened to shoot Calín and his delegation from Francophone Africa.

On the other hand, Calín's attempts to make inroads in a closed, monopolistic Madrid interpretation market that tried to blacklist him will also strike a chord with interpreters or translators who are trying to make a name for themselves in a new business environment.

Being a collection of personal experiences and anecdotes spanning 40 years, *Historias de la interpretación simultánea* defies easy categorization. One thing is certain, though--it is very entertaining.

Both Tom West's *Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business* and *Historias de la interpretación simultánea*, by Isidoro Calín, are available at special rates to the readers of Proteus. For more information, e-mail SAKCO@juno.com or send a fax to 1-856-489-1712.

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FRIDAY, MAY 19

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.: CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION AND EXHIBITS

Pre-Conference Workshops

8:30-2:00: Pre-Conference Workshop Registration.

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tape, Transcript and Linguistic Evaluation Techniques. Alexander Rainof, Ph.D., and Gladys Segal. Spanish-specific

9:00 a.m.- 12 noon

Traducción de Terminología de Violencia Intrafamiliar y Delitos Sexuales. Rogelio Camacho. Spanish-specific.

Overcoming the Fear of Long Consecutive. Janis Palma. Language neutral.

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Use of Interpreters in Forensic Assessments. Victoria F. Vásquez, J.D. Language neutral.

6:00 -9:00 p.m.: OPENING RECEPTION

SATURDAY, MAY 20

7:30 a.m.: Late Registration and Breakfast. Exhibits open.

8:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Divine Words: How to Improve Precision in Translating and Interpreting by Developing a Mind-set Toward Vocabulary-Building. Sandra S. Jenkins, Ph.D. Language neutral.

Interpreters and the Judicial System: Room for Improvement? Ana Gómez-Mallada, Esq. Language neutral.

The Writing of a Spanish-English Law Dictionary: A Personal Account. Thomas L. West III, Esq. Language neutral.

10:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Cross-Cultural Issues in Translation: Contrast of Culture-Specific Items vs. Semantic or Syntactic Difficulties. Dr. Asalet Erten. Language neutral.

Lessons from the Past: The Laws Governing the Practice of Legal and Administrative Interpreting in the Spanish Colonies in the New World in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Cynthia Miguelez. Language neutral.

Interpreter Training Challenges in the 21st Century. Inge M. Urbancic. Language neutral.

12:30-3:00: LUNCHEON AND ANNUAL MEETING

3:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Appellate Review of Interpreter-Related Issues: What Interpreters Need to Know. Virginia Benmaman, Ph.D. Language neutral.

Working with the Limited-English, Non-English-Speaking Client: A Manual. Joseph Agostini and Alina Giasi. Language neutral.

Assessing Collocational Knowledge Among EFL Learners: Implications for Translators. Riyad F. Hussein. Language neutral.

4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Staff Round Table. Joyce Y. García, Teresa C. Salazar, and Irene B. Tomassini. Language neutral.

Cultural, Linguistic and Legal Adaptations in Judiciary Translation Pedagogy. Georganne Weller, Ph.D. Spanish-specific.

Judicial Apples and Oranges: Interpreting Legal Terms from Two Different Judicial Systems. Agustín Servín de la Mora. Spanish-specific.

SUNDAY, MAY 21

8:00 a.m.: BREAKFAST. EXHIBITS OPEN.

9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Toward the Professionalism of Court Interpreting. Aleé A. Alger-Robbins. Language neutral.

The Independent Contractor: A Look at the Law. Steven Mines, Esq. Language neutral.

Mysteries and Enigmas of Cuban Spanish.

Anthony T. Rivas. Spanish-specific.

10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Clothing and Insults: Research and Dialectal Problems-Dialectal Variations in Spanish. Alexander Rainof, Ph.D. Spanish-specific.

In Court with Dell Hymes: Some Situational Parameters that Influence the Court Interpreter's Communicative Competence. Rosemary Moeketsi. Language neutral.

HOTEL INFORMATION

RESERVATIONS: Call the Wyndham Miami Beach Resort direct toll free at 800-20-EVENT, or fax 305-532-2334. Please note: You must identify yourself as being with the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators AND request the group rate.

RATE: \$145 single or double occupancy, \$165 triple occupancy, \$185 quad occupancy, plus 12.5% state and local taxes per room per night.

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