

CHICATA NEWS

A Publication of the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association

Spring, March 2003

By Henry Phillips

What the theory and practice of marketing can mean to you

The formula for making money is buy low and sell high. Successful application of that formula involves marketing—a term few people bother to define. The most useful definition yet was provided by UT marketing Professor Raj Srivastava, and it boils down to the distorting of markets.

Commoditization v: Differentiation:

The closest thing we have to a theoretically perfect and efficient market is the Chicago Commodities Exchange, what our grandparents called The Pit. There goods are sorted into specific categories to exact specifications, with standard contracts for the various modes of purchase and sale. Traders anywhere in the world can instantly find out the current price of No. 2 yellow dent corn and plan their investments accordingly. Entire nations depend upon this commoditization process, which sorts or differentiates the various grains, meats and other foodstuffs into manageable categories. Immediate response to supply and demand makes this type of market the best defense against mass starvation. It turns out that the commoditization used for objective trading in mass markets is the opposite of the differentiation we use in marketing products and services. Here the idea is to persuade people to pay more money for the product, usually through some subjective emotional notion associated with the product. Whether you call it branding, advertising, adding value or just plain lying through your teeth, the activity is successful every time Mom pays a higher price for a 3-oz package

of Green Giant Niblets than what Pop gets for a bushel of No. 2 yellow dent corn. Integrating goods into broad useful categories in which the specifications speak for themselves is commodities-type trading. Convincing people to pay extra for this or that specific item—steering them away from an efficient commodities market—that is the essence of marketing.

Marketing Theory

Experienced bargainers have a knack for being almost out of whatever it is you want to buy from them, yet stocked to overflowing with whatever it is you want to sell them. Understanding the difference between commodities trading and better marketing through distortions makes it easy to understand bargaining strategy on both sides of the translation market. In order to buy low, you seek to make your purchases in something more closely resembling a commodities market; to sell high you need to distort the market so that it puts a premium on your particular product. The thing to remember is that this is a two-way street. Marketing is every bit as important in buying as in selling—what changes is the position you adopt. We are surrounded by examples of both strategies in practice.

The Buying End

If I want to buy at the lowest price from a translator, I will try to put that translator into a commoditized bargaining position by asking “what is your rate?” A youngster inexperienced enough to blurt out some figure without having seen the document is that easily tricked into working below minimum wage. To put the interpreter at a disadvantage I might ask “how much an hour do you charge for interpreting?” The simpler the dunce, the better my chances of establishing a low rate before the victim learns that the assignment is in northern Alaska in January, the last 200 miles traversed by dogsled, and that I do not intend to make payment or reimburse any expenses until a month or two after the two-hour event. Notice that in both examples the seller is maneuvered into the position of a fungible commodity—insert a given coin and out pops a word. The buyer also maneuvers the seller into financing the entire operation—giving a total stranger an interest-free loan unsecured by any collateral. Finally, there are even outfits that expect interpreters to give up their names and answer by number—the ultimate in commoditization.

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CHICATA NEWS

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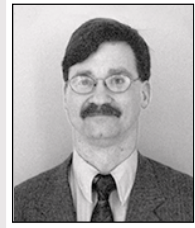
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Message From the President

I am pleased to report that as CHICATA celebrates the 16th anniversary of its founding (as of February 14), the Association is in very good shape. While other organizations of translators and interpreters are experiencing great difficulties, CHICATA continues to be strong. Our membership exceeds 180, and the Association is on a sound financial footing.



We draw our strength from the fact that our Association is of, by, and for the translators and interpreters. We cherish our independence. Our programs and services are geared to the practical needs of professional translators and interpreters, and our officers and committee members work on a volunteer basis to improve the organization. It is because of all the volunteer efforts behind the scenes that we are able to keep our annual dues to a modest \$35.

We have our challenges, to be sure. There are many areas the need improvement, and I can assure you that the Executive Committee is committed to making CHICATA a better and more useful organization. Please keep in mind that a volunteer organization is only as good as its members make it. The officers cannot do everything themselves. Volunteers are always needed, and most welcome.

One very bright star in the constellation of CHICATA activities is the Spanish Language Group. The group recently held its first meeting, and the participants discussed the possibility of working on a series of glossaries. This is precisely the type of activity that is needed. Many thanks to Andrea Friedmann for all of her hard work in organizing the Spanish Language Group. I would encourage other language groups to meet on an informal basis to discuss professional issues.

Another bright star on the CHICATA horizon is the web site. Our webmaster, Marie-France Schreiber, has done a fantastic job of enhancing and updating the CHICATA web site. Maintaining a web site is a tremendous undertaking, and requires a significant dedication of time and technical skill.

In conclusion, I would like to remind members that now is renewal time! Please be sure to send the renewal forms, with any changes, along with your dues check, to our Vice President for Membership, Patricia Jacobs. Patricia is working on a new and improved Membership Directory. ●

Sincerely,

John F. Bukacek

What the theory and practice of marketing can mean to you.

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The Selling End

When I am selling for what the market will bear, everything changes. Interpreters, I explain, charge by days or half-days, depending on logistics and travel (which must be paid in advance, with lodging charged to their credit card, not mine). I am willing to translate different types of material, I tell them, for different amounts of money—amounts which vary sharply depending on level of difficulty, subject matter, target language and how long it will take me to get paid. Some folks need to be reminded that out of three possible service variables (good, fast, cheap) they may only pick two. People forget that there are trade-offs in translation just as there are in construction, power generation or municipal planning. Translation agency web sites never contain “our rate.” Instead they post a form asking how much material, what languages and formats, how fast do you want it, and demanding a sample of the actual text. That’s the safe, simple, professional approach all translators master on their way to success.

Cash or Credit Card?

Many would-be clients fail to understand the difference between a bank—a lender in the liabilities business—and a professional linguist interested only in assets. “Yes I’ll accept your credit card, but no I will not finance your operation” puts credit where credit is due. Internet services such as PayPal allow you to accept credit cards at minimal cost and effort without ever seeing the client’s plastic or learning the magic number. Setting yourself up as a merchant enables you to accept credit card numbers as surety before beginning the translation. This way you deal as equals, by mutual consent and to mutual advantage. When you eliminate billing you can charge less yet earn the same rate.

Professional Associations and Marketing:

Differing economic and marketing interests are also reflected in the way professional associations function. An association organized by and for translators and interpreters is likely to have a searchable online member list, advertised in the Yellow Pages, through which the public can gain direct access to those offering the services it seeks. Database search criteria are broad enough to be useful to the general public (trading market), and can be narrowed if need be by looking at individual translators’ specializations. A free press edited and published by volunteers and simple, mail-in ballots keep associations accountable to their membership. An association organized by and for staffing or manpower agencies, diploma mills or “experts” who sell software, licenses, books or equipment will of course be set up differently. Eternal vigilance and active involvement—including voting and running for office—are what it takes to keep translators associations from turning into something else, or reclaiming them if they already have. The rewards, however, are worth the effort. Through trade associations linguists can now advertise searchable web sites in telephone directories. The dues you pay are leveraged into highly effective advertising, and the benefits are commensurate with those enjoyed by traders listed on the exchanges.

The Technology Card:

Technology—itself a product of freedom—is enabling individuals and companies to search out linguists directly. Middlemen are becoming more superfluous and web sites more of a necessity. For less than \$50 per year any translator can display goods and services in a global market. Résumés can be downloaded night and day in the customers’ choice of formats and all doubt eliminated as to credentials, references and qualifications. It will be interesting to see whether translators and

interpreters will use this new technology to preserve and broaden their opportunities by keeping translators’ associations working to preserve and broaden their rights. Little things, like casting your vote intelligently, will determine the choices you will have available to use as bargaining chips. ●

J Henry Phillips is Caribbean-born and raised 18 years in Central and South America; ATA-accredited, BA in Portuguese/Spanish from UT Austin. He edited the Portuguese Language Division newsletter for 4 years, and was Portuguese and English Language Chair and grader, for the ATA accreditation program for 8 years.

Transposing Cultures: Adventures in Literary Translation.

By Deborah Joyce

On Saturday, November 16, 2002, members of CHICATA were invited to the Annual Literary Translation Seminar featuring Dr. Evelyne Accad, professor of French, writer and translator, poet and songwriter, invited by her former student and the English translator of one of her French language works, our own Dr. Cynthia Hahn.

Dr. Accad spoke to us of her inspiration for her numerous literary works: the political turmoil of her region, her views on the treatment of women in North African culture, her confrontation with breast cancer, her Arabic tradition of “zajal”, which is a mixture of poetry and prose. Dr. Accad’s multicultural background and her life experiences provide a richness of material for her works, which she confesses are sometimes based on her own personal journals. As a result, Dr. Accad’s multilingual background makes her particularly aware of the issues of literary translation, since in the very process of her writing, she is translating herself. She spoke to us of issues with editors who had difficulty understanding certain stylistic elements inherent to Arabic, for

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Spanish Language Division's Group Kicks Off

By Andrea Friedmann and Kevin J. Drever

The CHICATA Spanish Language group held its first meeting on February 8th. Kevin Drever, Adrienne Allen, David Medrano, Victor and Victoria Díaz, and Andrea Friedmann attended. They determined that the purpose of the group is to encourage interaction among colleagues who work in interpretation and translation of the Spanish language; to expand members' network of contacts; to facilitate continuing education; and to share information about the business as such. The members agreed to conduct brief presentations about their fields of expertise, highlighting specific terminology as a way to enhance each member's linguistic knowledge base.

At the next meeting the group will start a glossary of terms that differ by region of origin and are frequently used in Chicago another of words. The members will begin to compile a

second glossary of words and phrases that do not have exact translations. With the hope of regularly building these glossaries, a portion of every meeting will be dedicated to the discussion of language.

Adrienne Allen generously agreed to facilitate a discussion about marketing during the upcoming meeting. With her know-how, members will learn to strategize and produce materials that will increase their client base. Future topics on the business of translating and interpreting include comparing sample contracts and discussing the use of computer software to keep personal glossaries. The group also intends to produce materials for client education about translating and interpreting specifically for Spanish.

The results of the survey that was printed in the Winter 2002 newsletter

demonstrated that the majority of the respondents preferred to meet quarterly, but did not express favored locations. With respect to subject of interest, the area of specialization was most frequently listed as first place.

The meetings will be held approximately every two months. The next one will be March 29th at 2:30, at a location that is still to be announced. For further information, please contact Andrea Friedmann at 773/338/7890 or comunica@earthlink.net. ●

Andrea Friedmann was born in Colombia and has translated/interpreted for over six years primarily with nonprofit organizations. She is presently the director of the Spanish Language Group. Kevin Drever has worked as a judicial interpreter in the Circuit Court of Cook County. Today he works primarily for an investment company leveraging his bilingual skills while conducting investment workshops.

CHICATA's Holiday Party Was More Than Shear Fun

By Marianna Buchwald

On a cold winter evening, Dec. 7. in Chicago, I emerged from the vast dimly lit garage on the east corner of Monroe Garage. Ice cold wind hit my face, as I walked down Randolph Street towards the lake. The night was young and the city was costumed with special Christmas decorations, illuminated with hundreds of sparkling lights. Lake Point Tower, the address for the party grew tall in front of me with lighted windows, a black sky-scraper on the edge of the ice covered Michigan Lake. As I

entered the lobby, two young men at the reception desk scanned a list and found my name. They pointed me towards a group of people in an adjoining room. Arnoldo a highly spirited man from Panama welcomed me and introduced me to several of his longtime friends; a tall Russian woman, Sofia, and a small dark short haired lady from Panama. The Christmas spirit was reflected in joyful faces and everybody welcomed the sharing of exotic dishes; sushi, Peruvian and east European as well as Italian dishes. I enjoyed a conversation

with John Bukacek and told him about my work as interpreter for German for Online Interpreter, an international call center in Skokie, servicing a wide range of clients and industries. The crowd at the party dwindled and became smaller and smaller. Luisa, a lady from Italy, her husband, Arnoldo, Sofia, John and I were finally the last ones left. Arnoldo and John were great entertainers, sharing anecdotes from their lives as translators, keeping the ladies charmed and the atmosphere charged with the anticipation of new plans for CHICATA. It was a great social event for me, family like and warm, keeping my spirits filled with laughter and excitement. Transformed, I hardly felt the cold wind, when I entered the night. ●

Marianna Buchwald is an interpreter for German, an artist, and a language teacher. She invites interested members to participate in an international music group, to sing songs and chansons. If interested, please call her at (773) 764 - 1201.



Photographs of Christmass party submitted by Luisa Ranieri Brantingham

A Discussion on Computer Aided Translation Tools

By Diane M. Van Hoof-Sisodia

On September 21, 2002 about 20 translators attended a CHICATA workshop on CAT-tools at Lincoln Belmont Branch of the Chicago Public Library. The members of the panel, Dov Prombaum (translator English to Italian), Karin Bauchowitz (translator/interpreter German to English to German) and Marie-France Schreiber (translator/interpreter French to English to French), talked about the CAT-tools with which they were familiar or had prior experience with.

CAT-tools is an acronym for Computer Aided Translation tools. All CAT-tools consider a document to be a series of meaningful units that are called segments. These tools store a matching source and target translation segment in a database called translation memory™ that can be accessed later when a similar segment needs to be translated.

Dov talked about Wordfast, a CAT-tool that can be downloaded from www.wordfast.org (Logos Spa) for free. Wordfast is compatible with Trados and can handle a variety of files. Wordfast

itself is a Word template and requires Word to operate, but the Wordfast data base can be opened with any software. The system only uses 1MB of memory and is simple to use. Dov switched to Déjà Vu, because at the time he was using Wordfast, it was still outgrowing some bugs. He finds it easy to translate in Déjà Vu because source and target text are presented in two parallel columns. An additional advantage is that Déjà Vu works with smaller segments than many other CAT-tools, which increases the quality of the fuzzy matches.

Karin started using Trados shortly taking a seminar at the ATA meeting in St. Louis in 1999. She translates everything in Trados now and says it has increased her speed and accuracy tremendously. Trados, like Déjà Vu, is not just a translation memory tool but also an integrated environment that offers many additional features. The most important modules Trados offers are Workbench, Multiterm and WinAlign. Workbench handles the translation memory and allows you to analyze, segment, and

clean up your translation. Multiterm is a type of glossary that allows you to insert a term, its translation, and a definition in various languages. WinAlign helps you build a translation memory from previously (non-Trados) translated documents.

Even though Karen feels very comfortable using Trados, she agrees there are some drawbacks. First, it takes slightly longer to work in Trados because you translate one segment, close it and open the next segment and the segment-by-segment translation may interrupt the flow of your translation.

Marie France showed us a series of CAT-tool samples such as WordMagic, TMX, Transit, Translation Manager, SDLX. Like the two other panel members, she agreed that using CAT-tools is an excellent investment that pays for itself in no time. ●

Diane Van Hoof-Sisodia has been a free-lance translator/interpreter English to Dutch/Flemish to English since 1994 and lives in Chicago. She specializes in technical and medical translations.



Stuart Brent Children's Book Club

www.stuartbrent.com 847-441-9688

By Miranda Kowalczyk

Children reap innumerable rewards when exposed to more than one language. An opportunity for children to read foreign language books is offered at Stuart Brent Club. Most children's literature classics are published in several languages. Requests can be made for Spanish versions of *Make Way for Ducklings*, *The Little Engine That Could*, *Bugs for Lunch*, the original *Le Petit Prince*, to informational books about other languages and cultures. International selections in the club are tailored to the child's reading level, age, subject and language interests. Children from around the world can participate in their newsletter and exchange ideas. ●

Literary Translation

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instance. Dr. Accad also related to us some examples of how the literary translator must be a literary creator in his/her own right, so that once the meaning of the original book is fully grasped by the translator, the translator then must make his/her own work of art out of the translation, obliging the translator to know when it is appropriate to stay very close to the original text and when the translation is better served by taking a broader vision of the author's meaning. We heard of Dr. Accad's frustration with editors who wanted her to adapt her ideas to their concept of the market. Her steadfast insistence on a cover showing her postoperative scars for "Wounded Breast: A Journey Through Cancer", for instance, lead Dr. Accad to publish that work through an Australian publisher with an "open mind".

Dr. Accad brought her books for us to peruse, and Dr. Hahn supplied our guest with a guitar so that we could hear a translation being sung, a unique experience. The setting of the seminar allowed us ample opportunity to ask as many questions as we liked of this experienced and knowledgeable author. ●

Deborah Joyce is a French-English translator and interpreter, who, like many translators, has an unpublished novel in the bottom drawer of her desk...

CallingVolunteers

Several proof readers for the newsletter are needed. Adrienne Allen has stepped up to the plate, and another person's assistance would be greatly appreciated.



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CHICATA's CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 16, 2002: Literary Translation Seminar.

December 7, 2002: CHICATA Annual Holiday Potluck Party.

January 18, 2003: Annual Shop Talk at Sulzer Library.

February 8, 2003: Gathering of the Spanish Language Group.

February 15, 2003: Panel on ethics, business, and contracts.

March 15, 2003: Panel on Interpreters Etiquette.

March 29, 2003: Second gathering of the Spanish Language Group.

April 12, 2003: Research tools for translators. Tentative topic.

*Mark
Your Calendars!
Saturday May 3, 2003
Annual Conference and
Annual Membership
Meeting.*

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The officers of the association, namely the President, Vice-President for Programs, Vice-President for Membership, Secretary, and Treasurer are elected by members in good standing. The term of office is for one year. The nominating committee prepares the official secret ballots and mails them out to members in good standing no later than 60 days prior to the Annual Conference that will be held in May 3 of this year. The term of office begins at the conclusion of this Annual General Membership Meeting. Keep your eyes posted to your mailboxes for the ballots.

The Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association

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