Yes, I Already Speak Spanish

by Patrick Moseley

Patrick Moseley, who is from Springfield, Illinois, is a first-year student in the MA program focusing on Translation for the Professions. He expects to graduate in the spring of 2017.

When I started telling friends and relatives that I was going back to school to study translation, I noticed the same conversation surfaced again and again. It started with this question: “Don’t you speak Spanish already?” Nearly everyone I spoke to thought that training in translation was redundant to proficiency in another language. I didn’t have a great sense of where to take the conversation. We were coming from such different places of understanding that I didn’t know how to begin conveying that a bilingual or a polyglot is not the same as a translator. After some time, I understood the the common blunder.

Translators work hard to ensure that most of the work they do is invisible. The less we notice of the translator’s identity or voice, the more time and energy we have to focus on the message. So, here I will take some time to look into the world of a translator, to examine some of the invisible machinery that breaks down language barriers and explain why becoming a translator meant, for me, a return to school.

To begin with, I didn’t know how to use a translator’s tools. Don’t get me wrong; I’m a wizard with a bilingual dictionary, and my web browser autofills to “WordReference” before I even have a chance to type “w” in the address bar. However, dictionaries only account for a small corner of a translator’s tool kit and, in many cases, even electronic dictionaries are not large or current enough to meet a translator’s demands. Translators have myriad options when it comes to computer software to support their work. A translator needs to be well-versed in how to use these technologies as well as how to choose a program to match his or her needs.

Translation memories (TMs) are stores of translated texts that allow translators to quickly reference choices that he or she—or other translators—have made in the past, so that they save time by applying work that has already been done to a new text. Translators create TMs using special alignment programs that match the phrasal units in one text to the corresponding segments in the translated texts. These tools promote consistency and efficiency. These are just some of the tools I needed to learn to start translating at a professional level.

Some of the skills were methodological as well as technical. For instance, in order to effectively use a terminology database, I needed to understand the discipline of terminology and how to use software like SDL MultiTerm. Terminology is a semiotic discipline that deals with matching terms with concepts. This approach to words and their

(continued on page 2)
meanings is faster and more focused than lexicography and is essential to the activity of translation, especially in emergent or highly specialized fields. Comparative terminology aims to find equivalence across languages and then store this information in large and comprehensive databases. As a translator, I would need to know how to create and maintain these databases using complicated programs. Unsurprisingly, none of this ever came up in my Spanish Literature of the 21st Century seminar.

When I was training in my second language I never learned how to use these tools, and worse still, I never learned how to choose among them. Companies such as SDL Trados, MemoQ, and Wordfast make software that integrate multiple translation tools. These companies put translation memory, terminology databases, and other programs into a single “translation environment” to create Translation Environment Tools (TEnTs) or Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools. The market is able to support so many different kinds of CAT programs because each has unique strengths that suit the highly specialized needs of different translators. For instance, MemoQ features more languages than SDL Trados. Depending on the translator’s operating pair, that distinction could be a non-issue or a deal-breaker. Also, SDL Trados is a little more difficult to use, but it provides the user more control. For these reasons, it is very important for me as an emerging professional to know what products will best serve my needs.

I also wanted to know how to support myself as a translator. I could possess all of the linguistic and technical skills in the world and still fail to make a living if I don’t have a healthy awareness of the field. As with any profession, translation has its own set of unspoken rules, best practices, and development strategies that distinguish a professional from a layperson. Before translators went to school for translation, those sorts of things were learned on the job, but now it is possible to have a good sense of the field before getting started. Some of this professional knowledge is about building and growing a business. Translators need to know how to advocate for themselves in an environment that is always trying to drive down costs. Also, I need to know how to distinguish myself from other professionals. For instance, since there are many English/Spanish translators, it is helpful to have other specializations in order to be most competitive in the market. All translators need to be prepared to invest in their tools and their continued education. The business of translation has nothing to do with being bilingual. But it is an essential skill, nonetheless.

So, yes, I speak Spanish. But that is more of a baseline than a finish line when it comes to being a translator. There is a secret menagerie of skills and tools that make translation possible. Translators tend to push forward the end product while keeping the procedure more or less hidden. As the adage goes, it’s better not to know how the sausage is made. For a non-translator, is that really true? Anyone who eats sausage might feel differently. Everyone consumes translation. If we take the time to learn what contemporary translation is really like, it will be easier to understand the texts that come to us, where they originated, and what they went through. In order to be an informed consumer, it seems necessary to stare down the proverbial sausage grinder to develop an understanding of how translation works. That starts with knowing that translation is far more complicated than speaking another language.
CTS’s activities and connections, both national and international, continue to diversify. From strengthening its ties to leaders in the technical translation and interpretation industry in the U.S. to co-sponsoring lectures by literary scholars and translators of world renown to expanding its network of international partner institutions, CTS continues to enrich, and be enriched by, the vibrant academic life of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

This spring, CTS hosted a lecture by Peter Argondizzo, founder and president of Argo Translation, a leading translation and interpretation firm in the Chicago area. Mr. Argondizzo established Argo Translation in 1995 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, later moving to Chicago. He now employs in his firm several CTS alumni whom he praises for their excellent training and outstanding performance. In his lecture, “From University to Agency: Transitioning into a Career in the Language Industry,” Mr. Argondizzo described the current state of the industry and the kinds of things aspiring translators should do to prepare themselves for a career.

Also in our lecture series, CTS recently featured Professor Brian Walters of the Department of Classics, who spoke about his recent translation from Latin of Lucan’s epic poem, Civil War, an excerpt of which appears in this newsletter. Professor Walters’s lecture, entitled “Lucan’s Lists,” focused on the function of the various catalogs and lists included in the epic.

CTS also co-sponsored a lecture by Dick Davis, who is emeritus professor of Persian at Ohio State University and the George A. Miller Endowment visiting professor at the University of Illinois Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Professor Davis is the foremost translator and scholar of classical Persian poetry as well as a distinguished English poet in his own right. His lecture entitled “A Translator’s Poetry, a Poet’s Translation” drew on the interconnections among his three vocations as scholar, translator, and poet.

Finally, CTS signed a new cooperation agreement with Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, located in Guangzhou, China. This agreement provides a framework for a wide variety of collaborative activities with one of China’s leading institutions in the field of translation and interpreting, activities that may include opportunities for faculty and student exchanges, joint conferences, and research initiatives. CTS is in conversation with other universities in Europe and Latin America about strengthening existing ties and establishing new ones.

The translator liberates the language imprisoned in a work.
- Walter Benjamin

Director’s Corner
by Waïl Hassan
Meet a CTS Student

**Lindsay Anderson** of Hanover Park, Illinois, will graduate this month with an MA in Literary and Applied Literary Translation. She is an avid reader whose interest in literature serendipitously led to earning two degrees and a certificate in translation studies from the University of Illinois. (Her first degree was a BA in East Asian Languages and Cultures.)

“I was walking home from the library the summer before beginning high school when I happened to pick up a book lying on the sidewalk,” said Anderson. “It was Japanese manga. I thought the graphic novel told an interesting story, and I decided to walk right back to the library and check out all the other books in that series! Shortly after, when I needed to make a decision about what language to study in high school, I chose Japanese.”

Anderson attended a public high school in Streamwood, Illinois, that featured a world languages program. All her Japanese courses in high school were taught by a native speaker, and Johnson sought continued high-level language instruction when she chose the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a campus Johnson describes as an anomaly in the Midwest in terms of its linguistic diversity.

She touted the numerous cross-campus resources available through language and cultural programs that enable CTS students to continually assess and improve their language skills.

When she was a junior, Anderson studied abroad in Japan. “I felt it was time to be immersed in the language,” she said. Once back in the United States, she felt firm in her commitment to pursue work in literary translation—from Japanese to English—and decided to apply to the CTS graduate program.

“CTS has provided me with a really good overview of different areas in which I could work in translation, as well as the field’s ethics,” said Anderson. “I have been really lucky to work with people with such lengthy experience in the translation industry.”

This summer, Anderson will be working for the Institute of Reading Development throughout the Chicagoland area, and she is seeking subsequent employment through a professional translation agency. Anderson says she is ready to “transition from the safe bubble of academia to the ‘real world’ of the translation profession” but admits she is also eager to pick up a book for the pure pleasure of reading!
Robert Jenkins, Assistant Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures as well as affiliate faculty member in the European Union Center at the University of Illinois since 2007, has developed an intriguing special topics elective course for MA students in the Center for Translation Studies: Audiovisual Translation—Subtitling (TRST 580). The course covers closed-captioning and subtitling. Jenkins first taught the course in 2015, and twice as many students enrolled in it this semester.

For most of the students, said Jenkins, the course requires a look at a totally new side of translation. “The students have to learn ‘strategies of omission and condensation,’ as they will be forced to omit more in audiovisual translation than they’ve probably ever done in other translations,” he said. “While some theorists feel that this is ‘defective translation,’ subtitlers must learn to make pragmatic [subtitling] decisions that minimize distraction to viewers.”

Jenkins has been impressed thus far with the language sophistication of many of his students. “These students have seen a lot of subtitled films, and they have significant interest in second, third, and even fourth cultures,” he said. “They bring a lot to class and discussions.”

There are not many similar courses at other universities offering translation studies programs, said Jenkins. TRST 580 is open only to University of Illinois students pursuing an on-campus master’s degree at this time, but Jenkins is creating an online version that will allow for expanded online enrollment. While students currently concentrate on multi-modal or transmodal (i.e. from audiovisual to text) translation in feature film and documentary, refinement of the course structure will extend the focus to translation of various online media including streaming television and internet video.
Faculty News

Associate professor David Cooper gave the keynote address at the 13th annual St. Jerome’s Day Conference at the University of Alberta on September 30. His talk was called “Translation, Mystification, and Memory: The Case of the Czech Forged Manuscripts.”

CTS Director Wail S. Hassan delivered a lecture on “Literary History and the Arabic Novel” at the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore last November. In December, he delivered a keynote lecture entitled “Translational Literature and the Pleasures of Exile” at an international conference held in Brussels, Belgium, on the theme of “Translation in Exile.” The conference was organized by the Research Centre for Literature in Translation at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Ghent University, in cooperation with the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) and the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Brazil). In January, at the Modern Language Association annual convention in Austin, Texas, Hassan presented another paper entitled “The Arabic Novel, Globality, and Diaspora.”

“Translation as Innovation: Bridging the Sciences and the Humanities” was the theme of the second biennial conference coordinated through a partnership between the Center for Translation Studies at the University of Illinois and the Centre d’Études sur la Traduction at the University of Paris Denis-Diderot. The proceedings of that conference, collected in a volume by the same title and edited by lecturer Patricia Phillips-Batoma (CTS) and Florence Zhang (Paris-Diderot), examine the role of translation in the transmission of knowledge, particularly in the sciences, recognizing translation as a non-neutral activity and instead as an act that may enhance topic awareness or even generate debate. Translation as Innovation: Bridging the Sciences and the Humanities, edited by Patricia Phillips-Batoma and Florence Zhang, was just published by Dalkey Archive Press.
Capstone Project Compendium

A capstone project is required of all CTS students before graduating from either the certificate or MA program. This practicum is a sample of work students may experience as professionals and is intended to help students compose a portfolio of skills developed in the program. Three faculty members—Patricia Phillips-Batoma, Laura Ramirez Polo, and Elias Shakkour—advised the following students on the diverse projects described here:

**Certificate Students**

**Mor Gueye:** Mor translated from French to English a large portion of the Senegalese “Code de la famille,” which currently does not have an English language translation. In addition, although the Senegalese legal system is largely based on the French system, Muslim traditional law has also influenced this text, an effect that poses particular challenges to translation.

**Laura LoVetere:** Laura translated a selection of business documents produced by the French company Ales Groupe from French to English. These include portions of the annual report, the balance sheet, the financial statements, and product descriptions.

**Gabriela Repala:** Gabi translated a computer graphics manual from Polish to English. This is a college-level course manual.

**Miranda Schlehuber:** Andi translated from Dutch to English the website of a German NGO, Klima ohne Grenze, a group that studies the effects of human activity on the environment and seeks to build awareness. This project goes beyond translation and into globalization.

**MA Students**

**Lindsay Anderson:** Lindsay completed a full Japanese-to-English translation of a collection of 17 poems from “Milk Mountain” by Setsuko Miyao.

**Ruth Curley:** Ruth translated a Database Handbook entitled “Introducción al diseño de bases de datos” by Dolors Costal Costa. The text was produced and published by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya for use by professors in a course on databases.

**Jillian Droste:** Jillian translated a sports nutrition-themed research article originally printed in a nutrition and dietetics journal in Spain entitled “Evaluación de la ingesta de líquido, pérdida de peso y tasa de sudoración en jóvenes triatletas,” or “Assessment of Fluid Intake, Weight Loss, and Sweat Rate in Young Triathletes.”

**Megan Goyt:** Megan carried out a research study to reveal what percentage of literary translators currently use CAT tools and MT in their literary translation process and learn the reasons those who do not use translation technology have for avoiding it.

(continued on page 8)
(continued from page 7)

Audrey Irias: Audrey translated a legal judgment for infraction due to possession, traffic, and commercialization of narcotics given to a defendant as a result of his infraction from the Supreme Court of Honduras.


Esther Puig: Esther translated a document provided by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Ecuador. It is a report about the human rights situation in Ecuador. The document will be published on the website of the Ministry.

Benjamin Steel: Benjamin translated an informational brochure produced by the Bundeswehr’s Einsatzführungskommando - Germany’s Joint Forces Operations Command. This is the German command that has responsibility for coordinating and leading all of Germany’s forward-deployed foreign operations.

Abigail Wright: Abigail translated a complaint filed by a Chilean doctor against two doctors of the Clínica Alemana in Santiago, Chile, accusing them of criminal negligence resulting in the death of his daughter. She also translated the text of an open letter penned by the Chilean doctor in the aftermath of his daughter’s death.

Katalin Young: Katalin conducted a survey among practicing interpreters in the United States, asking about various aspects of their working conditions. She analyzed the results to identify correlations between working conditions and region, training, and experience.
Lucan’s epic poem, *Civil War* (7.197-213 [210-226]). His complete translation was published by Hackett in the autumn of 2015.

Maybe he noted Jupiter’s thunder and ominous lightning. Or saw heaven struggling in the discordant air. Or maybe the celestial gods, in a dark mood, Etched battle in the sun’s wan gloom, but this is sure— That Nature unfolded a day in Thessaly like no other. And if all could mark such signs with an augur’s skill, The whole world could have seen Pharsalia’s spectacle.

O greatest men—whose fates Fortune broadcasts In the sky, and on whose deaths all heaven swooned— These struggles of yours, even among later ages, Will always stir hopes and fears and empty prayers When they’re read. Whether their fame alone Will make them immortal, or my long efforts Can ever aid mighty names, all men will stand rapt While reading your destinies—as if still unrolling— And everyone, Magnus, will side with you.
What We’re Reading

In Other Words by Jhumpa Lahiri and translated into English by Ann Goldstein (Alfred A. Knopf, 2016):

Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Lahiri outlines her foray into the Italian language, documenting her feelings and processes as she integrates a new language into thought, speech, and writing. “She wanted to produce another version of herself, in the same way that she could transform a text from one language into another,” wrote Lahiri in one of two brief, autobiographical works of fiction included in this collection of essays presented side-by-side in Italian by Lahiri and English by Goldstein. Lahiri compares the particular experiences of writing in one’s native language and in an adopted language, noting constraints as well as freedoms in trying on new voices through another culture’s expressions.

It’s Time to Register for Fall Semester Courses!

FALL 2016

TRST 403: Translation, Theory & Practice
TRST 406: Translation for Professions
TRST 407: Terminology and CAT
TRST 408: Translation Tools & Practice
TRST 412: Spanish/English Translation
TRST 431: History of Translation
TRST 500: Translation Methods and Ethics
TRST 542: Conference Interpreting
TRST 580: Special Topics in Translation (Audiovisual Communication on campus; Intercultural Communications online)

To submit content, contact:
Sheila Lammers, Editor
lammers@illinois.edu

This newsletter is produced by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Office of Communications and Marketing.