

The Newsletter of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters

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Please note:

Part 4 of "Running an individual translator / interpreter business from home" by M. Eta Trabing, although originally planned for this issue of the *CATI Quarterly*, will appear in the next issue.

CATI is a chapter of the American Translators Association. For more information, see the ATA website: www.atanet.org

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From the CATI President

Specialize and reap the benefits of your CATI membership

By Jackie Metivier



Dear CATI Colleagues: Revitalized and full of new ideas after attending ATA's conference in Toronto, we bring you this Fall issue of the *CATI Quarterly*.

This is an exciting time of the year with both national and CATI elections just a few weeks away! Please refer to the website for the new candidates' statements and vote for the Directors who will serve one- or two-year terms on the CATI Board.

Whenever I have the opportunity to speak to students about entering the incredible world of translation and interpretation, I always recommend that they discover what they like to do, assess their personal abilities, learn everything that they can about that field and stick with it. Invariably, students who follow their desires and abilities become very good at their profession and will get paid to do what they love! It sounds simple, but it's the underlying message of specialization in a particular field.

This issue brings you **Ann Sherwin's** journey from generalist to

specialist and "The many ways of becoming a specialized translator" by **Frédéric Houbert**.

These articles remind me of the fact that regardless of where you perform your translation and/or interpretation skills—a social services agency, an attorney's office, a medical institution, a manufacturing plant, an advertising firm, or an international communications com-

"Whenever I have the opportunity to speak to students ... I always recommend that they discover what they like to do, assess their personal abilities, learn everything that they can about that field and stick with it."

pany—chances are the more knowledge and experience you acquire in that industry, the better you'll be equipped to meet the demands of your profession. Naturally, you'll be financially rewarded for high-quality work and your credibility and personal satisfaction will increase.

Now, in order to specialize, you must focus on yourself and what you do best. I encourage you to write a biographical paragraph of up to 100 words and submit it us-

Generalist to specialist: One translator's journey

By Ann C. Sherwin



Specialization is a hot topic for translators. Or so it seemed when I stumbled on a thread in a ProZ forum that begins with "I am working in all fields, OK?"

(www.proz.com/topic/8712).

The ensuing discussion is both sobering and heartening—check it out when you have a chance. Meanwhile, I would like to offer my own perspective in the ongoing debate over the merits of specialization.

Like many translators who majored in a foreign language, I

started out as a generalist. Armed with an ATA accreditation certificate and the false sense of confidence it gave me, I translated any material a client or agency would entrust to me. In pre-Internet days I spent countless unpaid hours at the NC State University library researching terminology not found in the expensive dictionaries I had invested in—and in rare idle moments I worried whether my client would be able to understand translated output that I myself could not really follow.

So what changed my thinking? As my workload increased and I could be more selective, I gave preference to assignments in fields where I felt comfortable. I discovered early on that I actually was an expert in one field, but it took me a while to

realize that I should capitalize on it rather than apologize for its not being a prestigious one. Reading old handwriting was fun and easy for me, I knew the market, and within a few years I had a national reputation as a translator in the field of genealogy. Encouraged, I tried to develop two other personal interests—music and religion—into translation specialties, but I found these markets to be both un lucrative and hard to crack, perhaps because they were often served by devotees as an avocation.

"Armed with an ATA accreditation certificate and the false sense of confidence it gave me, I translated any material a client or agency would entrust to me "

"I amassed relevant reference works and mined sample target-language documents for terminology and phraseology. Later I used and bookmarked Web sites for the same purpose"

resources were readily available, I settled on legal translation.

Of course law is a broad field, and I would never be an expert in it—I had no intention of going to law

school. But I set out to develop it as a limited specialty. I attended relevant ATA and CATI conference sessions and workshops and took continuing education classes at Meredith College and Duke University.

I amassed relevant reference works and mined sample target-language documents for terminology and phraseology. Later I used and bookmarked websites for the same

In casting about for another potential specialty area, one for which there was a demand and in which re-

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Generalist to specialist: One translator's journey *continued*

purpose. A decade later I still cannot claim legal expertise, but I

can point to significant experience in the translation of personal documents and contracts—experience that I could

never have gained if I had solicited work in “all fields.”

Granted, there are valid reasons for being a generalist. Translators who work in relatively rare languages may feel compelled to offer service in many fields

because there isn't enough demand in the fields they know best. Novice translators are

often eager for work of any kind, just to get started and to build their portfolio. Many seasoned translators pride themselves in being well-rounded and able to handle a wide variety of subject areas. Some enjoy the constant challenge of new material, of digging for terminology in unfamiliar fields.

The above reasons are understandable from the translator's

“To win jobs online, you need to stand out. The key is to specialize. Make yourself into—and market yourself as—an expert, and you will find that the online world can be lucrative”

Henry Dotterer

point of view. But decisions about specialization are also influenced by the market. “Clients rarely go looking for good all-around translators,” says **Henry Dotterer**, presi-

“How can one credibly claim to be a specialist in fashion catalogues, veterinary medicine, law, civil engineering and advertising?”

Chris Durban

dent and founder of ProZ.com. “They almost always search for translators whose skills match perfectly with the job they have in hand.” His message in a nutshell is this:

“To win jobs online, you need to

stand out. The key is to specialize. Make yourself into—and market yourself as—an expert, and you will find that the online world can be lucrative.” Dotterer then gives tips on how to become a specialist and how to use the ProZ site effectively for marketing. The article can be found at

www.proz.com/howto/1.

How many specialties can one reasonably claim and not come across as a generalist? Following ATA's example, CATI allows members to list up to six “preferred fields” in the directory. In an article entitled “Why Specialize?” (*ATA Chronicle*, June 1994), **Chris Durban** wrote “I am wary of translators who call themselves specialists in too many fields, because they are not credible. There are simply not enough hours in the day.” She goes on to explain:

I work in financial markets but know very little about bonds. To keep up on developments in equities alone, I spend about two hours a day reading newspapers

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From the CATI President *continued from page 1*

ing the online form provided in the members-only pages of the CATI website.

Emphasize your strengths and experience and state any facts about yourself that you consider relevant to prospective cli-

ents. See this Summer *CATI Quarterly's* suggestions on how to write this open paragraph. I also want to encourage you to visit the website often, in fact, bookmark it as one of

your favorites and you'll always have it handy. The more you interact with the site, the more you'll get

“I'm pleased to report that Durham Technical Community College has just signed on as our first Bronze-level sponsor! We also welcome your suggestions for additional sponsors.”

from your CATI membership. CATI has just introduced its new website sponsorship program with three levels: Gold, Silver, and Bronze. I'm pleased to report that Durham Technical Community College has just signed on as our first Bronze-level sponsor! We also wel-

come your suggestions for additional sponsors.

CATI will again this year have a display at the International Festival on November 6 and 7 at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. I would encourage you to join our group of volunteers to represent CATI at this great event.

In the next issue of the *CATI Quarterly*, you can expect some feedback and reports from the Toronto conference. I hope to see you soon.

Jackie Metivier
CATI President

The many ways of becoming a specialized translator

By Frédéric Houbert

"To be a specialist in everything is, in fact, to be a specialist in nothing."
(Insurance company advertisement)



In the era of globalization and concentration of the translation industry, specialization is the independent translator's main strength because it allows him to effectively compete in the marketplace. Linguistic specialization means proficiency in two or three source languages ("B" languages) and one target language ("A" language), while subject-matter specialization means a high degree of familiarity with a limited number of subjects. As an example, large international law firms and institutions such as the European Court of Justice require candidates for translation or interpretation jobs to have a law degree.

In the era of globalization, and with the growing number of educational routes available for becoming a translator, the question of translator specialization is becoming increasingly important. Geographic frontiers have, in effect, largely disappeared. With the internationalization of communication, translation has benefited from a definite renewal of interest and new translation credentials are appearing everywhere.

Translator migration, mainly from East to West, is currently causing a transformation in the marketplace that the professional translator will have to deal with if he wants to ensure the survival of his activity. Indeed, globalization affects all sectors of activity including translation, where we have seen mergers among the "heavyweights" during the past few years.

Does the independent translator still have a place in this world that is undergoing complete transformation? Yes, without a doubt, provided that he acquires a specialization and develops a level of knowledge that will convince a prospective client of the unique quality of his work.

The agencies, bureaus, and other translation companies have their own specific advantages (many

language combinations, a diversity of subject areas, important financial resources that enable, in particular, the investment in expensive equipment) but often they cannot maintain the special rapport with their clients that should be the basis of the relationship between the independent translator and his clients.

What strikes one the most in the translation agency promotional brochures or websites is the diversity of the subject areas covered: technical, legal, scientific, etc.

The independent translator cannot, alone, be competent in multiple subject areas. However, it is possible, even essential, for the independent translator to acquire specialization in a specific subject area, called "subject specialization" in the rest of this

article to distinguish it from language specialization, which is dis-

"What strikes one the most in the translation agency promotional brochures or websites is the diversity of the subject areas covered: technical, legal, scientific, etc."

cussed first.

When they talk about their "specialization," professional translators are usually referring to specific subject areas in which they feel particularly competent.

Before even considering the question of subject-matter specialization, the student will have to decide on his linguistic specialization. Although translation schools and spe-

"The independent translator cannot, alone, be competent in multiple subject areas. However, it is possible, even essential, for the independent translator to acquire specialization in a specific subject area ..."

cialized university courses usually

Generalist to specialist: One translator's journey *continued*

and monitoring news reports—and I work only from French to English. How can one credibly claim to be a specialist in “fashion catalogues, veterinary medicine, law, civil engineering and advertising”? —an example lifted from claims made by one SFT member in that body's directory.

A similar argument exists with regard to resources. With a limited budget for dictionaries and software you can maintain an excellent up-to-date library at your fingertips in one or two subject areas, or you

can invest money—and storage space if you still use hard copies—in a few resources for each of the many fields in which you accept work—resources that become outdated

“... my gradual move toward specialization has resulted in lower resource costs, less research time, higher output, higher income, shorter workdays, loyal clients, and, above all, the personal satisfaction and peace of mind of knowing I have delivered a good product.”

at an accelerating speed. Such dinosaurs still occupy shelf space in my office as silent reminders of forests

I've wandered through.

I have few regrets about the road I chose. I learned a lot during my years as a generalist, but my gradual move toward specialization has resulted in lower resource costs, less research time, higher output, higher income, shorter workdays, loyal clients, and, above all, the personal satisfaction and peace of mind of knowing I have delivered a good product.

Ann Sherwin is an ATA-certified translator from German to English based in Raleigh, NC. Her website is accessible at www.asherwin.com

Why they specialize

Translation and interpretation are not the only fields in which specialization is crucial. The following comments are by people in other fields who have recognized the important role that specialization plays in their success.

“We feel it is very important to really know the kayaks that we sell.”

From website of kayak dealer To-mandglo Ltd., www.acekayak.com

“Unless you understand the market you can't succeed in it.”

Rebecca Korach Woan, President of Chartwell Insurance Services, quoted at www.insurancejournal.com

“It's a recognized fact that in nearly any business, specialists can command higher fees and enjoy more satisfying clients.”

From website of a tax-service provider for real estate investors, www.realtax.com

“The field of IEP is so big and changing so fast, nobody could

maintain more than a superficial knowledge of it all.”

From description of a study program in international environmental policy, www.miis.edu/gsips-special-iep.html

“[In] a buyer's market, hiring managers are realizing that candidates with the exact skill sets they are looking for are available in the marketplace, and they are not willing to settle for anything less.”

Mohan Babu, software consultant, Colorado Springs www.expressitpeople.com/20030127/abroad1.shtml

“Writing on every topic under the sun can be a time- and labor-intensive process... Less time spent researching, more time

spent writing and selling. What's not to love?”

Betty Winslow, reviewing *Ready, Aim, Specialize! Create Your Own Writing Specialty and Make More Money*, by Kelly James-Enger, www.absolutewrite.com/novels/ready_aim.htm

“If you have or can develop expertise in a subject area that is in demand, you can earn better rates ... It takes time to build up your business in this way. Specialization is not a free lunch, it's a way to afford a more expensive lunch.”

Alex Eames, editor of the ezine *tranfree*, quoted at www.proz.com/topic/8049

require their students to choose two source languages (in other words, they require them to work in a trilingual context) it should be noted that professional translators do not always work this way.

The “ideal” is actually to work from two languages (often called “B languages” in the schools) and established translators often observe this rule.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that, in certain cases, the translator works from three or even four source languages. Note, however, that it is appropriate to question the competence of a translator who works from more than three “B” languages, except in certain cases, of

course. Knowing the difficulty of completely mastering one or even two languages, it is not hard to imagine the task faced by someone who tackles three, four, or five languages. Note also that translators with strong subject-matter specialization often work from only one source language.

Concerning the languages themselves, it is interesting to observe that some languages that were once considered “rare” are now considered much less so, owing to the opening of frontiers and translator migration. In this context, some French translation agencies now do not hesitate to recruit translators from East-European countries and bring them to France for 6 months or a year to work on important projects involving a Slavic language such as Czech, Bulgarian, or Hungarian, languages that used to command a very high price but have now lost much of their added value owing to strong competition.

Translation from the more common languages, such as English, are now frequently outsourced to low-income countries such as the Asian countries, often to the detriment of quality. The translator needs to be aware of this situation, and of the market evolution, in order to know where to position himself in the market and to understand the constraints that he will inevitably have to face.

Finally, note that becoming skilled in an extremely rare language, such as Japanese, is not as great an asset as you might imagine. Indeed, a rare language implies a limited mar-

ket, and the strong added value of such a language makes sense only if there are clients for it. Consequently, it may often be preferable to become competent in a widely spoken language provided that this is accompanied by an in-depth

“In an increasingly competitive market, the independent translator will survive only if he specializes in a very precise subject area in which the combination of his language and subject-matter skills makes him irreplaceable in the eyes of the client.”

knowledge of a specific subject area and a high level of skill in the target language.

Concerning this last point, the student forgets too often to master his native language first before tackling other languages, which is a serious error in a profession that, above all, requires the professional to express himself well in his own language. Indeed, experienced translators know well that translation difficulties are more often associated with re-expression [in the target language] rather than understanding the source text.

Now that we’ve discussed the question of language specialization, let’s look at subject-matter specialization, which was described as indispensable in the introduction to this article.

The question of specialization is in fact a double one because you have to decide two things: First, should you specialize? And if so, what subjects can you or must you specialize in? The first question has already been answered above:

In an increasingly competitive market, the independent translator will survive only if he specializes in a

The CATI Quarterly

The *CATI Quarterly* is a publication of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters, a nonprofit organization to promote the recognition of translating and interpreting as professions in the Carolinas. Opinions expressed herein are the author’s and not necessarily those of the Editor, the Association, or its Board of Directors.

Reader submissions are welcome. Suggested length limits are:

- Articles 1500 words
- Reviews 500 words
- Letters 300 words

Submissions become the property of the *CATI Quarterly* and are subject to editing. For details, see the “Submission Guidelines” at

www.catiweb.org/guidelines.htm

If you have questions or would like to submit an article, please contact the editor, G. David Heath, at

infoexact@mindspring.com

Please contact CATI at (919) 577-0840 for advertising information.

very precise subject area in which the combination of his language and subject-matter skills makes him irreplaceable in the eyes of the client.

As Chris Durban noted in her article "Transforming sows' ears: a growing niche market," published in *Language International* (June 1999), "There is no way to win a client's confidence and acceptance of the fine-tuning that will be needed unless the translator knows the field inside out."

The student often asks the following question: Is it preferable to produce "volume" at a low price in general subject areas, or should one aim for specialization and consequently higher rates by working only on specific texts in a precise subject area? The second choice is, of course, the right one, even if it's justifiable for a novice translator, owing to lack of experience and specialization, to work on varied texts and offer to translate them at "competitive" rates.

Consequently it is essential to specialize for at least two reasons: First, specialization enables the translator to acquire real credibility with his clients, even if they are difficult to win over at first. And second, it will provide an opportunity for professional development and intellectual satisfaction. It is, in fact, much more interesting to translate texts that one fully understands than to go continually from one subject area to another without ever acquiring more than a superficial understanding of any of them.

Now that we have answered the first question, let's address the second one: In what subject or subjects must you, or can you, specialize? This is a much harder question and it requires more than a purely categorical answer. Acquiring one or

several areas of specialization before even entering the profession presents a certain number of problems that the translation schools and universities have been trying to address for a long time.

Although some specialists (the term is perhaps badly chosen!) address this problem by advising novice

"Is it preferable to produce "volume" at a low price in general subject areas, or should one aim for specialization and consequently higher rates ..."

translators to supplement their language skills with a degree in, for example, law or economic science, or by a short technical education, it is nevertheless obvious that choosing a particular specialization without having any prior experience in the subject is a somewhat risky gamble. This is because of the changing requirements of a market in which even established translators have difficulty understanding the changes that are taking place.

For this reason it has proved relatively difficult to advise the student to specialize in a particular area without knowing what career he will choose and what direction it will take during his first years in the profession.

To judge by the number of academic programs that offer students "pre-specialization" in several subject areas rather than in-depth specialization in a particular subject, the schools and universities have understood this well. Educators have in fact realized that it is impossible to instill in students an in-depth knowledge of specialized

subject areas and also teach the rules of translation methodology that are assumed when teaching translation as such.

For this reason, the various types of education that currently exist simply provide the student with the minimum knowledge required to translate texts on different subjects under the best possible conditions. After completing the program, the student will be expected to know the basics of translation for specializations such as legal, economic, technical, etc.

Although, as we have seen, subject-matter specialization that is not based on prior experience is practically impossible, it is necessary to take into account everyone's aspi-

"Although ... subject-matter specialization that is not based on prior experience is practically impossible, it is necessary to take into account everyone's aspirations and interests."

rations and interests. Finance and insurance, in which there are strong demands, could well be future sectors *par excellence*, but that does not mean that they will be the most popular sectors among novice translators.

The choice of specialization is above all a matter of personal preference; in addition, it should not be forgotten that some translators prefer to remain generalists, even if that means having a lower income.

Concerning generalists, it could be interesting to list the different categories of translators classified according to their level of specialization. There are, in fact, three major categories of translator into which everyone, experienced or not, can be classified:

Durham Technical Community College becomes CATI Bronze Sponsor

A few years ago, Durham Technical Community College recognized the need to train translators and interpreters in the community, and to have a more systematic program that would train bilingual people and serve the American population as well.

Given the need in the community, confirmed predominantly by professionals in the field, and the constant demand of students, Durham Technical Community College requested and obtained approval from the Systems Office to start the Commu-

nity Spanish Facilitator Certificate Program at Durham Technical Community College in 2003. This program prepares students to act as paraprofessional Spanish interpreters in the community. Courses are taught within a cultural context and include relevant community service projects. This is a day and evening program. The required courses are offered during lunchtime and evening hours to accommodate working students.

For information about the pro-

gram, please visit the Durham Technical Community College's Web site at

www.durhamtech.edu/html/prospective/programsofstudy/spi.htm

For admissions information, contact Martin Nichols at 919-686-3627 or

nicholsm@durhamtech.edu

For additional information, contact Sandra Bonifacio at 919-686-3771 or bonifacios@durhamtech.edu

The many ways of becoming a specialized translator *continued*

1. The first category consists of “generalists” who have usually completed an education in translation without having specialized in a particular subject area. These translators work equally with legal, economic, or technical texts with the consequent risks. Novice translators usually fall into this category.

2. The second category consists of “specialized generalists” who, although not being truly specialized, nevertheless have an in-depth knowledge in certain specific subject areas—a knowledge that enables

them to perform, for example, regular translation work for a client who is active in a particular sector.

3. The third category consists of the “real” specialized translators who work only in their favorite area. It should be noted that these translators have rarely pursued translation studies as such (which does not mean, of course, that traditional study programs and specialization are incompatible). It is often by chance, because they have discovered a “taste for translation,” that these professionals become trans-

lators, sometimes after a university education in another discipline or an engineering degree, sometimes after a career in industry or another sector of activity. The skills of these translators are technical before being linguistic, which enables them to be the only specialized translators “worthy” of this name (at least if one accepts that spe-

“... a translator known as “technical” could very well have an in-depth knowledge of telecommunications and information technology while knowing nothing about construction, building, and civil engineering.”

cialization means “having an in-depth knowledge in a particular, limited area”).

Based on the observations made at the beginning of this article, the reader will have understood that the future belongs to translators in the second and, above all, the third category. These translators are the best equipped to defend themselves in a profession that is characterized by a total absence of

regulation, with the consequences that one can imagine for rates and working conditions.

Acquiring a specialization is not easy and maintaining it requires compliance with certain principles, such as systematically refusing texts that are not in one’s area of competence despite incentives to accept them (such as desires to produce “volume” or respond to client insistence, etc.). It is a process that requires time and a certain amount of effort on the part of the future “specialist” (in the form of self-education) but which proves to be profitable in the long term and is certainly more intellectually satisfying than a strategy that consists of translating anything and everything on the pretext of “responding to the needs of the client.”

Concerning the terminology used, it seems picky to make a distinction between “specialized” and “specialist” (is that even possible?); one could, perhaps—using as a model the aphorism “There are no cultivated people, only people who acquire culture”—imagine a statement like “There are no specialized

translators, only translators who specialize.” This takes into account the perpetual challenge faced by the translator who is required to stay informed about developments in his subject area and at the same time always provide quality translations under no matter what working conditions.

Also concerning the concept of “specialized/specialist,” one can question the relevance of certain quick classifications. In this respect, what exactly is meant by “specialist in technical translation”?

The very term “technical” covers, in fact, an infinite variety of subjects, and a translator known as “technical” could very well have an in-depth knowledge of telecommunications and information technology while knowing nothing about construction, building, and civil engineering.

In conclusion, and to convince oneself, if necessary, of the importance that recruiters attach to translators’ extra-linguistic education, it is interesting to say a word about the frequent advertisements by the large international law firms and by the European Court of Justice to fill posts for legal translators: 9 times

out of 10, for a candidate to even be considered, he must have a full legal education and possess a law degree (in other words, have a “legal background”).

Should we necessarily conclude that postgraduate and similar degrees in translation should be abolished? No, obviously not.

We should simply conclude that translation, far from being reserved for a small circle of elite, is a profession that brings together people of very diverse backgrounds, and that this very diversity constitutes one of its greatest riches.

About the author

After studying languages (English and Italian) at Rouen University, Frédéric Houbert started to take an interest in translation, which he studied at ESTICE, a school for translators based in Lille, Northern France.

He graduated in 1992 and later took a DESS, or post-graduate degree, in international trade and negotiation, thus securing the extra-linguistic skills which he felt were

required to successfully start a career as a freelance translator.

After serving in the French military in Bonn, Germany, where he acted essentially as a translator-interpreter in the “liaison organization” of the French Embassy, Frédéric finally became a freelance translator in August 1994 and has since been working for a large number of clients such as JP Morgan and Dun & Bradstreet, to name just two.

He recently started to teach legal and financial translation at Le Havre University and has just authored an English-French Dictionary of contract terms and phrases. Frédéric is a member of SFT, the French Translators’ Association, and an Associate of the Institute of Linguists.

Frédéric Houbert can be reached at f.houbert1@chello.fr

This article was translated into English by G. David Heath, an ATA-certified translator from French to English. His website is at www.infoexact.com and he can be reached at infoexact@mindspring.com

BREAKING NEWS CATI Seminar postponed

The Medical Interpreting Seminar that was planned for Saturday, November 13, 2004 at the Airport Campus of Midlands Technical College in Columbia, South Carolina has been postponed until the Spring of 2005.

The last Board Meeting of the year will be held in Charlotte on November 13.

For further details of both events, please watch the CATI website at www.catiweb.org.

Community radio station seeks Spanish-language broadcasters and translators

WCOM is a nonprofit community radio station serving Chapel Hill and Carrboro, North Carolina. It was created by a group of local citizens after the Federal Communications Commission made frequencies available for a new class of low-power FM stations to offset the increasing consolidation of the airwaves in the hands of a few large companies.

This summer, WCOM began broadcasting a 20-minute loop in Spanish and English that describes the mission of the station. Regular programming will begin sometime in October. The 100-watt signal can be heard at 103.5 FM within a 5-mile radius of the Chapel Hill transmitter.

Most of the programming on WCOM will be music and talk programs produced by local volunteers. Since the goal is to reflect the values and interests of the entire community, WCOM plans to dedicate as much as 40% of its airtime to Spanish-language programming. It also intends to make its website and printed materials available in both English and Spanish.

The station needs help in order to achieve these goals. Please get in touch with WCOM if you:

- ▶ Are willing to help translate its printed material or web pages into Spanish, or
- ▶ Are a Spanish-speaking community member with an idea for a

program you'd like to host on WCOM.

Both of these are volunteer activities. However, WCOM offers the following to its volunteer translators: a translation credit on the materials you translate, a listing (and link to your website, if you have one) on the WCOM website, and on-air underwriting credits once the station is up and running.

To volunteer your translation expertise, please contact Sally Robertson at sally.robertson@earthlink.net or call (919) 933-0252.

To propose a program, visit the WCOM website at www.communityradio.coop and click on **Programs**.

Obituary: Josef Schmid Jr

Our friend and colleague "Joe" died suddenly on August 19, 2004. All who knew him will miss his kindness and expertise. Josef Schmid, born April 19, 1934, was ever willing to help out based on his extensive knowledge of several languages and his vast library of reference materials, accumulated over a lifetime.

Joe was a long-time member of CATI and a 28-year resident of Charlotte. He was a man of Faith who served as a combat medic in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. As a translator, he had a stellar career: graduate of the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the Defense Language Institute in Monterey (in both German and French); Military Intelligence Translator in West Berlin and West Germany during the Cold War; then, later on, staff translator

for several local steel companies; and, finally, free-lance translator, specializing in technology, patents, medicine, and law.

Joe was self-effacing and quiet, with a unique sense of humor; he was widely traveled and had many friends all over the world. We in CATI will miss him.

Family members left to remember his courage, intelligence, and faithfulness to his ideals are his wife, Rosemary Krider Schmid, his daughters Katherine Schmid and Erika Schmid of Charlotte, and his sons Josef Schmid, III, M.D. and his wife Etsuko Taira Schmid, of Houston, Texas, and James Schmid and his wife Sonya Newcombe Schmid, of Concord, NC.

Joe will also be remembered by his sister Bette Anne / Sister Cyrille, a Little Sister of the Poor, of Dinan,

France; his brother Paul Schmid and his wife Jackie, of Oldsmar, FL; his brother Bob Schmid and his wife Marilyn, of Saint Louis, MO; and his sister Mary Schmid of Barnhardt, MO. Local in-laws: Kate Krider Satchwill and Bill Satchwill of Charlotte; and Kris Krider and Michele Koblinsky-Krider of Davidson: 50+ nieces, nephews, and grand-nieces and grand-nephews scattered across the United States; and many international exchange visitors who found a caring, temporary home with the Schmidts over the years.

Contributed by Reinhold K. Seizinger with additional information from the obituary published in the Charlotte Observer, August 22, 2004.



From the Editor's desk

Jumping into the specialization debate

By G. David Heath

When Ann Sherwin contacted me to offer an article on specialization she drew my attention to a recent ProZ thread on this topic ("I am working in all fields, OK?" at www.proz.com/topic/8712). She had identified a crucial topic for all translators and certainly for the CATI Quarterly. I was amazed by some of the appends on this thread. What struck me most of all was not so much the diversity of opinions—that's good—but rather the amount of disagreement about how much knowledge of a particular subject qualifies as "specialization." Clearly, this is a

very controversial topic.

Although I am reluctant to shed the cloak of impartiality that is traditionally associated with the editor's role, I have to admit that I cannot understand how any translator can seriously claim—as one did in this thread—to specialize in no fewer than 75 highly technical subjects including just about everything from

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cybernetics through information sciences, crystallography, biomed-

cal sciences, law, medicine, microbiology, botany, and zoology.

How could any one person acquire a sufficient level of knowledge in so many different subject areas? And even if that were possible, how could anyone keep aware of new developments in so many rapidly evolving fields? I spend a lot of my spare time trying to keep up with innovations in just one area of specialization. But if you don't have this knowledge, how can you produce a translation that will fully meet the requirements of its target users, most of whom *will* have specialized knowledge of the subject concerned and of its terminology?

continued on next page

Focus on members

A column about CATI members and their activities



Guillermo A. Cortés was a presenter at the 1st Annual Second Language and Minorities Symposium that took place at UNC Pembroke, on Tuesday, September 28.

The title of his presentation was "From Translation to Pedagogical Translation: First Language Use as a Tool in the Mainstream Classroom." The workshop highlighted the important role the student's native language plays in the classroom. Using the native language goes beyond the mere translation practice of the old-fashioned drills of the Grammar Translation Method. This presentation addressed different points of view for the student's heritage languages in the mainstream classroom that go from machine translation to additive bilingualism and its positive role in the transfer of academic knowledge from L1 to L2.

Martha Rubinstien is currently working with Babynet as an Interpreter and with the York County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs. She attended the Fall Seminar in Charlotte, NC and will soon complete a training class for interpreters and translators with DHEC in SC.

M. Eta Trabing is traveling on October 10 through 13 to Fayetteville, Arkansas, where the NW AHEC has asked her to train trainers who, in turn, will train hospital and community interpreters in that area of Arkansas.

On November 6 Eta will give a presentation for the Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA) of which she is now also a member since her move from Florida. The talk is on "Beyond Bilingualism: What you need to know to

be an interpreter and/or translator." It will take place on the Rice University campus. On November 13 she will be in Miami, to give a presentation on "How to Run a T/I Business from Home."

On November 20, Eta, in conjunction with Dr. Ricardo Unda, will present a class on medical translation and interpretation for MedVerse of Greenville, SC. The course will take place at Furman University. For further information, contact Alberto Picazo at 864-454-8660.

If you would like to let your colleagues know about some of your recent or upcoming activities, please send an e-mail to the *CATI Quarterly* editor at infoexact@mindspring.com

From the Editor's desk *continued*

It all depends, of course, on what you consider to be the level of knowledge required. For subjects such as those cited above, it will almost certainly consist of more than "background reading," as suggested by one append on this thread.

Well aware of this controversy and, as always, interested in the opinions of our own members, we bring you two articles on specialization in this issue of the *CATI Quarterly* and invite you to send us your opinions about any of the ideas expressed in them.

Ann Sherwin's account of her journey from generalist to specialist is,

"... we bring you two articles on specialization in this issue of the *CATI Quarterly* and invite you to express your opinions on any of the ideas expressed in them."

I think, inspirational because of the abilities that she discovered while searching for a specialization.

Frédéric Houbert's thought-provoking review of the different ways in which specialized translators can enter the profession underscores just how diverse we are,

and not just in a linguistic sense.

If you would like to express your opinion—either on these articles or on any aspect of specialized translation—the

CATI Quarterly would like to hear from you.

Please send your comments to infoexact@mindspring.com.

A selection of the comments received will be published in the Winter 2004/2005 issue.

If you enjoyed reading the President's message and the articles in this issue of *CATI Quarterly*, please consider contributing an article to a future issue. Like these articles, it could describe an interesting experience during your professional career or useful knowledge or skills that you would be willing to share with your colleagues.



CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF
TRANSLATORS & INTERPRETERS

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