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Writing Wrongs:  
Losing it in the translation

Part 4 –  
How to teach  
the writing  
trades

Short title:  
Losing It: Teaching

by  
David Grossman

Printed Fall 2007

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## The writing trades: Teaching

This book is

A resource for teaching translation and the other writing trades.

These selected topics

reflect a personal and Jewish approach.

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## About

*Le mot juste* [French]  
The exact word  
or The precise expression

There are many approaches to translation. This section will explain the author's method.

Why would you care about somebody's method of translation? Wouldn't you want to develop your own independent style as a translator?

After all, you've probably been translating your own way for some time, and you may have become attached to your own method. Even more important – your method works – at least for you. Why be corrupted by the ideas and suggestions of others?

The answers are simple.

- Nobody is forcing you to read this article. Feel free to continue translating your own way
- No harm will be done by reading about other people's styles
  - You may learn something
    - If you don't like it, then continue using your own method. Nobody will be offended

If you would like to share your own method with others, please contact the author<sup>1</sup>. Your ideas will be included in a future edition of this book, and you will receive credit for your suggestions and ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Tzafun | Contact | Author

You may also want to share your method with the subscribers to the Hebrew Translating<sup>2</sup> Forum.

## Background

Many articles have been published about translating. Some articles assume that their audience already knows how to translate, and they offer generic suggestions for specific procedures, genres or types of material, circumstances, or situations.

However, you're not a generic translator, and neither am I. This is a problem for various reasons:

- Beginning translators need guidelines in order to approach the material successfully
- More established translators need confirmation that their method matches that of other established translators
- Still others want to understand the most efficient or best way to translate

This article may help. It is based on several decades of experience in translating and teaching translation skills<sup>3</sup>.

Of course, each translator is independent and different, with differing needs. He may work in a way that is equally satisfactory.

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<sup>2</sup> Jewish Unity Forums: Hebrew Translating

<sup>3</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing it | Part 1 – General issues | Forums | Teaching Translation

That is why it is important to keep in mind that this section presents recommendations for good translating – but not requirements. Furthermore, the method is not guaranteed to work equally well for everybody.

This method aims to help translators accomplish the greatest amount in the shortest period of time. However, translators who work with scientific material may decide that speed is less of an issue. They may prefer a more cautious word-for-word method.

This method is only applicable to written translation. For this reason, simultaneous translation is usually excluded from this analysis.

You might want to adapt this method to your own situation. For example, your translation can be dictated into a recorder, to be transcribed<sup>4</sup> later, rather than using the initial first steps. This step would certainly speed up the process.

And, of course, the best way to have peace of mind while translating is to make sure that you have a spare computer<sup>5</sup>.

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Keywords: About, Counseling, Mentor, Method, Persuade



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<sup>4</sup> Writing Wrongs | Transcribing | Transcription

<sup>5</sup> Computers | Spare

## Teaching Translation

### *Introduction*

There are good ways to teach Translation Skills:

- About<sup>6</sup>
- Age<sup>7</sup>
- Benefits<sup>8</sup>
- Bibliography<sup>9</sup>
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- Topics<sup>18</sup>
- EFL<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | About

<sup>7</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Age

<sup>8</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Benefits

<sup>9</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Bibliog

<sup>10</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | ConfAbst

<sup>11</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Definition

<sup>12</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Ductive

<sup>13</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | CourseGoal

<sup>14</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Curriculum

<sup>15</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Untranslatables

<sup>16</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Guest

<sup>17</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Resources

<sup>18</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Topics

- Goals<sup>20</sup> of using translation to teach TESOL

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Keywords: [teaching](#), [translation](#)



### **About**

This section is about one teacher's methods and experiences in teaching translation.

### **Goals**

The student of translation skills should have obtained several results by the end of his studies:

- He should be able to feel comfortable about translating
- He should feel that the material flows
- He should feel capable of producing a good product
- He should not have to struggle or fight over each word or expression

The section will discuss how to achieve these goals.

A different part of this series<sup>21</sup> includes actual lesson plans.

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<sup>19</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | EFL

<sup>20</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | TT | Goal

<sup>21</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 5 – Lesson plans

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Keyword: [teaching](#)



### *Age*

A course of study in translation skills will be more successful with older students. Indeed, the older the student, the more successful the study.

The reason is *not* the fact that older students may know more of both languages.

### **The issue of relevance**

It is because Translation involves more than merely rewriting a selection from one language into another language. Students of a Translation Skills course must feel that their efforts are worthy of carrying out as a profession. They must feel the *tachlis* of doing the work. This feeling does not come about until a person has had to support himself or a family.

For this reason, older, self-sufficient and self-supporting people often do very well in translation studies, as they see this skill as a way to contribute to their family.

Thus, a young bilingual child may be willing and able to translate. Beyond the age of bar or bat mitzvah, the child is

more likely to have other interests. Those interests temporarily replace his potential ability for translating.

A teenage student, who is pressured to take a translation course, may reject his studies because of those other interests. This is an even more likely scenario if that young student has been unsuccessful in his studies.

The child's premature rejection undermines his subsequent ability to overcome the failure and bring himself to translate. It could also destroy his future interest in translation.

We can thus postulate two results of premature formal translation study:

- We lose good translators by teaching them before they are ready for these studies.
- In case it is not clear: This is a strong argument against the Bagrut in translation.

Of course, there are exceptions. Some mature, upper high school students may begin thinking about their future and their employment. This ability is less likely if they are involved in any form of national service following high school, and the ability does not return until their last two years in college. At that time, they will see translation as a potential supplement to their income.

In summary, a person must see their translation skills as being directly relevant to their ability to supplement the livelihood of their family.

On the other hand, a translation course which is perceived as being theoretical, or as something that may be good for them

"for their future" or "in the long run" will not be sufficiently relevant for students.

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Keywords: [Age](#), [future](#), [goals](#), [profession](#), [rebels](#)



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### ***Benefits***

What academic studies can be beneficial to a budding translator?

### **Computer courses**

Computer courses do not necessarily create better translators. The value of the courses depends upon various factors:

- The student's determination to succeed and gain the most from the course
- The design and presentation of the course itself
- The student's ability to interact positively during the course

There is a benefit to having an expert translator review student work. However, this does not necessarily require a formal course.

Why, then, is translation offered as an academic program? Is there any value to the course?

Yes, students may expect to receive the following advantages and benefits from a translation course:

- A certificate or letter of completion. It may be valuable for the student to be certified by a reputable institution.
- A good translation teacher may be able to offer students the following benefits:
  - They will know how to translate better
  - They will be able to find their own niche
  - They will be able to improve their existing skills
  - They will learn how to develop additional skills

Granted, students can study that information by themselves. The translation school might, however, offer localized information.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: [computers](#), [courses](#), [introspection](#)



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## ***Conference Abstract***

### BRIDGING THE LANGUAGE GAP: A COURSE IN TRANSLATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO TEFL

Paper presented at the Jerusalem Conference on TEFL-  
TESOL "Looking Ahead" Israel, July 14-18, 1985. Host  
Institution: School of Education, Hebrew University of  
Jerusalem.

Case 1: TEFL students often have difficulties conceptualizing in  $L_2$ . All too often, foreign language students use "almost" the right words in the second language. However, they do retain certain characteristics, including sentence structure, use of idioms, and construction of phrases and sentences from  $L_1$ .

Case 2: Foreign language (i.e.,  $L_2$ ) speakers have a better grasp of the problems felt by learners of  $L_2$ . They have experienced, and to some degree resolved, their blurred conceptualizations. (Successful students are thus sometimes encouraged to teach EFL).

How can we help sharpen and refine the differences between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  for the EFL student or the future non-native EFL teacher?

This question was evaluated during a college course in translation.

Course requirements included locating unusual, poor, or humorous translations, as well as untranslatable words in either  $L_1$  or  $L_2$ , as real examples of potential sources of confusion or language "block"<sup>22</sup>. Once presented, the students could discern the conceptual distinction between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ .

The relationship and contrast between the two languages, in their natural setting, was more tangible than, and lacked the stigma of, a red mark on a paper. Students did not feel that they were sitting in a composition or editing class. The lively response and relaxed atmosphere gave evidence that students enjoyed expanding their knowledge of  $L_2$  by contrasting it with  $L_1$ . They also felt that it helped deepen their understanding of  $L_1$ .

This led some students to study the sources of the differences, by analyzing the cultural, historical, local, and specialized differences in languages; levels of language, word forms, and etymology.

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Keywords: [TESOL](#), [translation](#)



### *Course goal*

A beginners' translation course should help students see the world as composed of two languages simultaneously. If students think about both words simultaneously, then they

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<sup>22</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 4 – Languages | Blocking.

will be able to translate quickly. This simplifies the experience in subsequent translation courses.

By the end of the first course, students should be able to think translationally<sup>23</sup>. Everything that they see in the world should be internalized in terms of both languages. This is especially important when considering the fact that many things cannot be translated directly into both languages. This will lead to concepts about the different ways that different languages are formed and modified.

Thus, translation will be seen as more than thinking and writing in two languages. It will now be perceived as understanding the thought procedures in two linguistics structures and in two cultures. Seeing, smelling, hearing, and sensing things as they are experienced in two separate languages is no small feat. The exercises and the explanations in this book will demonstrate how this has been done Hebrew and English. However, the concepts could reflect any translation course in any language.

Some students may argue that they do not think in both languages at the same time. This may indeed be the case before starting the course, but they should be able to meet this goal after completing the course successfully.

At the teacher's prerogative, alternative assignments can be provided to students who rebel against this novel approach. The alternative assignments should be more difficult and more extensive, in order to encourage the students to choose the assignments that teach them to think translationally.

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<sup>23</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 4 – Teaching | The First Day  
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Indeed, the success of the sequence suggested in this series of articles depends upon the degree to which students cooperate with the proposed approach. Thus, students who elect to do alternative exercises will not have the opportunity to reflect on the material that has been taught during the year. This is not inherently bad, but it is important to realize that the teacher will have developed one course program, while some students are doing something else.

Our proposed method assumes 52-56 frontal teaching hours of 45-50 minutes. It also assumes that the students will be taught in small groups, and that one to two sessions will be spent on introductory material, one to two sessions will be spent on class tests, and one to four sessions will be spent on private meetings.

The teacher should evaluate the students at least once during the course. The number of meetings is likely to be determined by the availability of students and the teacher, as well as the size of the class.

As early as possible, students should either realize that they have the potential for translating on a professional level, or that it would be recommended they select a different profession. This clear, gentle, and tactful message may well be one of the most difficult teaching aspects of the course.

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Keywords: [assignments](#), [courses](#), [evaluation](#), [Language](#), [translation](#)



## *Curriculum*

Many articles have been written about teaching Translation. However, there is no published syllabus in the field, and each teacher has to develop the course without the benefit of assistance from other translators.

Teachers have to find ways to achieve the most important element – making the class interesting. They cannot present exercises each class meeting. They must use a variety of different approaches.

Outsiders do tend to perceive translation as dull work, or as drudgery. Those who anticipate such work, but translate nonetheless in order to supplement a family budget, will probably be less successful, and will hate their work. The proposed course offers a different view of translating, as an exciting challenge – and as fun.

Fun?

Yes, and it can be done. For example, think of the humor to be found in translating, or the challenge and thrill in finding just the right word to express an otherwise untranslatable expression.

Examples of these two goals can be found in the literature.

But don't search the professional literature!

Articles for translators are usually written by serious researchers. They cover important and abstruse questions that are of no interest to a college student. Feed the student the material in the books, and watch your class dwindle.

This is not meant to disparage all translation literature *per se*.

- It serves a purpose for experienced translators
  - It may help those who want to progress in the field
  - It may help those who want to improve specific aspects of their work
- It may help professionals who wants to refine certain skills in which they feel weak
- It may be good for the readers of this article
- It may be good for other researchers

However, the beginning translator requires more immediate and practical substance. That translator, who is already fluent in at least two languages, expects the transference is done in a rather *ad-hoc* manner, in which thoughts in one language are converted into text in another. It's difficult to explain that good translating is different, and the translation teacher can expect many almost-legitimate "but what's wrong if I..." type questions.

In short, the professional literature is too advanced, and the typical student will reject it.

With one exception.

Most translation materials present examples of translations from one language to another. These translations frequently give extreme examples of difficult or abstruse points, and the examples are presented in languages which the teacher never studied.

What a superb way to add life to the classroom! Cull those examples from the literature, and throw away the rest. Watch the class interest, atmosphere, and excitement improve. See

what happens when each student leaves with knowledge of a bit of Hindustani and of the local dialect spoken in western Alaska.

Although this procedure will help, it is clear that more basic material and philosophy is required. You will not find this in any standard reference guide or textbook. You'll have to prepare your own curriculum for your class.

Where is the background material to be found?

Well, a wealth of material has been published about the study of English lexicography, etymology, and linguistics. Some of this stuff is amazingly boring, but there is sufficient usable material.

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Keywords: [curriculum](#), [teaching](#), [translation](#)



### *Definition*

Some people may think that there is not much to know about teaching translation. After all, you just put in the words that match the original language and make sure that they sound good.

If that were really the case, then there would not be much to do in a translation class.

Teaching translation means a great deal more:

- Defining the parts of a good translation
- Learning how to look for those parts
- Learning how to translate successfully
- Learning how to make sure that the translated document matches the characteristics of the original
- Learning how to determine those characteristics
- Learning the different ways and means of translating different types of literature or scientific material
- Learning how to create a translation business
- Learning how to survive in the translation world

These elements do not necessarily come naturally to everybody.

Some students who will find translation easier than others. That does not mean that they do not require an understanding of the elements and bases of translation. It does mean that they may have more of a tendency towards translating, and that they still have a great deal to learn.

Indeed, everybody has to learn a great deal about translation theory in order to be a successful translator.

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Keyword: [teaching](#), [translation](#)



### *Ductive skills*

There is more than one way to approach most skills, including translation.

- The teacher can explain the rules of translation, and then apply them to specific texts
- The teacher can ask students to work on specific texts, and then develop rules as a result of their work

These *inductive* and *deductive* methods<sup>24</sup> can be equally successful. One concept in a structured Translation class, leads logically to the other. That class will usually benefit from a method in which rules are developed from working on texts.

This is useful, because most students of Translation are naturally skeptical of the teacher's methods. They begin the class with varying levels of proficiency in translating. New concepts have to be *proved* to them, in order to root out their preconceptions. They have to *experience* the benefits of other methods.

Of course, some didactic teachers may want to lay down the rules first. This will only work if their students cooperate with that method (and this reflects on the teacher's style). This method will save time, but it won't work in most classrooms.

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Keyword: [teaching](#), [translation](#)



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<sup>24</sup> See also the methods of analysis and synthesis presented in Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 4 – Teaching | Resources | Teaching other disciplines

## *EFL*

Why should we teach translation in an EFL class?

Let's face it: They do it a great deal anyhow. Many future English teachers who studied English as a foreign language will never be true bilinguals.

Let's re-formulate and formalize the nascent translation skills that they have been developing on their own, in their haphazard, personal way. Let's re-direct them to our own purposes.

Let's help create an environment in which they will feel similar to native English speakers. Let's help them feel comfortable about presenting their own difficulties in translating words, concepts, or idioms.

Those difficulties reflect the problems that they face in handling a concept in their target language.

For this reason, it is important to contrast differences in idioms, localisms, and grammar, especially where there is no absolute correspondence. Those cases are easy to find, since absolute correspondence with different languages is quite rare.

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Keyword: [EFL](#), [teaching](#), [translation](#)



## Goal

Translation  
is not a matter  
of words only:  
it is a matter  
of making intelligible  
a whole culture.  
- Anthony Burgess

There is a direct connection between translation skills and the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages, or TESOL.

When you remove all of the pedagogical buzzwords, then TESOL includes the following elements:

- Vocabulary
- Language
  - Idiomatic usage
  - Sentence structure
  - Relaxed feeling in English
  - Enjoyment of English

It probably involves other issues as well.

However, the elements relating to a relaxed feeling and to enjoyment seem to have been forgotten in many TESOL classes. This is unfortunate. Those elements might lead to the other factors.

The approach presented in this article differs from the accepted TESOL philosophy, in which language learners have to cram facts, terms, syntax elements, vocabulary, grammar, and more into their heads. It expects teachers to engender a *love* of the subject matter, and it is presented in a way that makes it relevant to the learner's daily life.

## **EFL vs. native speakers**

It may be argued that one of the most important advantages enjoyed by native speakers is the fact that they don't have to struggle to use the correct word.

In other words, native speakers can relax.

- They don't have to worry about making mistakes
- They don't have to silently conjugate verbs as they talk, ultimately coming to the correct form.
- They don't have to count quietly with their fingers in their pocket until reaching the right number. When they do get to that number, they don't have to try to remember the difference between sevenTEEN and SEVENTy.

How can we help the non-native speaker achieve this relaxed, natural feeling?

How do we develop a feeling for the language, so that the student doesn't have to make an effort to overcome the influence of his native language?

And, as an added bonus, how can teachers improve the student's composition skills while they are teaching other tasks?

A translation class is a possible way to bring together all of these issues. The class can come to grips with real, and sometimes embarrassing, problems that face the language learner.

However, that course in translation must not degenerate into a series of essays, which are inevitably returned, replete with discouraging red teacher marks.

That frustrating, negative method of instruction shows the students, more than anything else, that the teacher has a hopelessly unending arsenal of wrong ways that students can write essays. It does little more than reinforce a feeling of frustration and resignation.

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Keywords: [EFL](#), [Teaching](#)

David Grossman



### *Guest speakers*

Teachers of translation skills may find that it is useful to invite various experts in related fields. Some suggestions follow:

- a publisher who translates materials
- a text editor
- a lay person who has had a book or document translated
- a person who regularly hands out work to be translated from a large institution
- another experienced translator
- a translator who works for a newspaper
- a foreign correspondent

- a translator who works with subtitling films
- a simultaneous translator
- a courtroom translator
- a publisher of multi-lingual documents
- a parent who has raised bilingual children
- an importer from another country with a different language
- a linguist
- a person who travels frequently to foreign countries
- a person from a different region who speaks a variant of the same mother tongue
- a proofreader
- a person who specializes in developing bilingual logos
- a representative of machine translation software
- an immigration worker

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## ***Resources***

Many critics, no defenders,  
translators have but two regrets:  
when we hit, no one remembers,  
when we miss, no one forgets.  
- Anonymous

## **New online resources for teaching Translation Skills**

Numerous books and websites feature articles about translation skills. Perhaps that is because translators enjoy writing about their own profession.

Those resources sometimes deal with a related topic – the instruction of translation skills. The requirements for this course differ<sup>25</sup> in many ways from the teaching of sciences, languages, or other established subjects. One main difference is that there are still no universally accepted rules for *teaching* people how to translate, even though there are many articles about the art of translating.

Furthermore, the existing articles about teaching translation discuss issues that result from work under ideal conditions. However, translation teachers need to be able to communicate among others about real-life issues. For this reason, some online articles now encourage feedback, and some blogs offer limited communication among several people.

This shared effort has changed the way that translators work in two spheres: *education* and *networking*.

### **Education**

Today's translators benefit from the opportunities that are provided by numerous institutions of higher learning. These courses in translation skills demand a concomitant cadre of qualified instructors, who need to network their successes, ideas, and experiences.

Thus, although the establishment of graduate programs in translation was a welcome first step in improving the quality of translations, we do need more. Perhaps, in the future, we

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<sup>25</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 4 – Teaching | The First Day  
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may expect translation teachers to register for an academic retraining program. At this stage, we can achieve a similar result by creating a professional networking forum.

## Networking

The concept of a networking forum is not new. Translators (but not teachers of translation skills) have been networking for years.

The need for networking goes back as far as the need to find *le bon mot* – that elusive, but correct word, phrase, or expression that is needed in a translation. Even non-translators sometimes experience a situation in which they try to pinpoint a word that is on the tip of their tongues.

In the past, translators would put aside their work for a few days. Sometimes this helped them think of the right word. They might consult with one or two fellow translators. More recently, some languages offered print media such as dictionaries, concordances, or word and synonym finders. The translator would do as well as he could, but it was inevitable that some frustrating words, phrases, or expressions were not translated to his satisfaction – or to the satisfaction of his readers.

This form of “networking” with one or two other translators is a reasonable first step, but most translators are limited in the degree to which they can impose upon their colleagues.

For this reason, today’s international online translation forums represent a quantum leap forward in cooperation among translators.

Some of these forums offer subscribers the opportunity to deal with general concepts of translation in any language, while others are specific to a certain language or language family.

### **Issues raised on translation forums**

What is the best way to introduce the topic of translation?

- Should translation skills be presented as an art or as a science?
- Can a new translator be taught a way to approach any (generic) translation?
- Do translators just “do” their job, or should they be taught specific techniques?

Let us assume that techniques can be taught:

- Where can the teacher find a list of those techniques?
  - Is it possible to structure that list?
- Can those techniques be presented sequentially? For example, should students change the register if the original is not satisfactory?
- How can the teacher present the techniques in an effective and interesting manner?

Are any textbooks available?

- If textbooks are available, which ones have been found to be most effective?
- What are the differences among the existing textbooks?
- Are some textbooks more effective for specific audiences or levels of future translators?

- What is the best way for the translation teacher to use and present those textbooks?
- What is the best way for the teacher to prepare and present his own new material to the class?

Any experienced teacher of translation could certainly supplement this admittedly overwhelming, and possibly daunting list, with his own questions. A person may be a fine translator, but he is likely to feel that he has reached his level of incompetence<sup>26</sup> when asked to *teach* the subject.

### Teaching other disciplines

Perhaps we can respond to some of these questions by investigating a popular method used to teach other disciplines.

Some sciences are taught by methods of analysis and synthesis.

#### Analysis

- The discipline is divided into its component parts
- Each lesson provides sequential, logical, understandable, interesting, and challenging pieces

#### Synthesis

- After presenting this series of “bite-sized” pieces, the topic is presented again as a *Gestalt*
- The students can then understand how the entire subject “works”

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<sup>26</sup> Peter, Laurence J. *Peter's Quotations: Ideas for Our Time*. NY: Wm. Morrow 1977

Can translation teachers provide this analysis and synthesis?  
Where can they receive help and confer about these analyses?

Subscribers to forums such as Translation Teacher<sup>27</sup> or the Jewish Translation Teacher<sup>28</sup> assist each other by turning the translation profession into a quasi-science:

- They evaluate and analyze the concept of translation as a group. This process will ultimately lead to the stage of synthesis
- They discuss ways to deal with related issues, including interpretation, globalization, internationalization, and localization
- They refer our subscribers to online resources relevant to the current discussion
- They recommend proven methods for making lessons interesting and worthwhile
- They help subscribers select the best textbooks and resources for their classroom needs
- They discuss the ways in which translation encroaches encroach on related *disciplines*, such as linguistics
- They discuss related *skills*, including editing, revising, rewriting, proofreading, and writing
- They discuss the impact and limits of translation software and computer-aided translation
- They discuss our expectations from our students
- They evaluate the level and degree of written SL and TL proficiency that should be exhibited before students are permitted to take translation courses

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<sup>27</sup> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/JewishTranslationTeacher>

<sup>28</sup> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TranslationTeacher>

- They work together to prepare generic classroom exercises
- They define additional joint projects to help the community of translation teachers

These translation teacher resources help teachers disseminate, network, discuss, evaluate, and refine the new options.

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### *Untranslatables*

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When translating  
one must proceed  
up to the intranslatable;  
only then  
one becomes aware  
of the foreign nation  
and the foreign tongue.  
- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

reserved

Teachers of translation know that Hebrew-English differences can be further emphasized with a list of untranslatables<sup>29</sup>. (Go ahead; call them lexical voids in your class, if you are determined to lose your students). These words have no real equivalent in the secondary language.

By struggling with Untranslatables, and by accepting the fact that they have no real correspondence in the secondary

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<sup>29</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 6 – Differences | Untranslatables  
Page 42      Copyright © David Grossman. World rights reserved.

language, some students will begin to understand the differences among languages, and the uniqueness of their own language.

This deeper recognition of advanced language theory will help them realize that those who speak other languages think in a way that is different. The resulting discussion will elicit the futility of direct translations, as well as the problematic nature of some computer-based translations. Brighter students will then realize that there may not necessarily be one-to-one correspondence between concepts in different languages. As a result, they broaden their general understanding of language structure.

Some students may choose to investigate the sources for such differences, and they will then investigate differing word forms, cultural differences, historical differences, local and specialized differences in languages, register types and levels of language, and etymology in both languages.

The class work may then move away from word-for-word translations, as the students begin to think of larger and more general English (or  $L_2$ ) concepts.

At this point, they will begin to relax when preparing their own translations.

As they relax, they may begin to laugh at each revelation of their own mistranslations. They will be happy to understand another difference between their  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ . If the class is handled well, they will feel that they are in a safe and non-threatening environment.

By learning to laugh at themselves, these future teachers or translators have moved from the drab, routine memorization of words or concepts, to a new, higher stage.

They can then feel free to think differently, as they read a complex passage in their secondary language. They can better understand what a writer means in a foreign language. They will no longer feel the restrictions that they had exhibited in the past, when they would say - "But in my language, the words should mean..."

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: [Humor](#), [Linguistics](#), [Translation](#)



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## How to Translate

### *Introduction*

This section may be of interest to people who want to develop their own style, as well as those who are looking for possible methods to adopt.

- About this method<sup>30</sup>
- How I translate<sup>31</sup>
- Sharing information with other translators<sup>32</sup>
- Translating by computer<sup>33</sup>
- Important<sup>34</sup>
- Printout<sup>35</sup>
- Simultaneous<sup>36</sup>
- Psychology<sup>37</sup>
- Superior<sup>38</sup>
- Traditional<sup>39</sup>
- When to translate, and when not to translate<sup>40</sup>
- Use my method<sup>41</sup>
- Use the old method<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | About

<sup>31</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | How I Translate

<sup>32</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Sharing

<sup>33</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | By computer

<sup>34</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Important

<sup>35</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Printout

<sup>36</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Simultaneous

<sup>37</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Psychology

<sup>38</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Superior

<sup>39</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Traditional

<sup>40</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | When To

<sup>41</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Use Mine

- Calm<sup>43</sup>
- Throw it on the page<sup>44</sup>
- What this section will contain when completed<sup>45</sup>
- How to translate humor<sup>46</sup>

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Method, Translation

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### ***Sharing***

Why should we share our secrets? Shouldn't we keep our good methods of translating – our tricks of the trade – to ourselves?

Clearly, successful translators do not act in this manner. Translators share their experiences. Busy translators often offers jobs to other translators. They then looks to others when their own workload is slower.

Similarly, translators should share methods of translating. The series of articles in this website is one example of carrying out this goal. We're one big happy family, and we like to believe in unity among translators.

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<sup>42</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Use Old

<sup>43</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Calm

<sup>44</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Throw It

<sup>45</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | HowTo | Section To Do Plans

<sup>46</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Humor | Translating

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Business, Method, Translation



### *Superiority of the method*

Is my method superior?

Possibly. It would require extensive research to verify such a claim, and it would also require a comparison to other methods.

However, we can form some initial conclusions based on my own experience.

Over the course of the years I have translated with both the traditional method<sup>47</sup> and the new method. I have formed certain conclusions.

Over the course of several (overlapping) decades, I have also taught regular classes in Translation Skills, where I have encouraged my students to prepare at least one project using my method. We then discussed the results. The overwhelming majority of the students favored this method.

However, this may not be a fair evaluation. My students may feel the need to agree with me, or to give a politically correct answer in order to get a higher grade.

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<sup>47</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing it | How to translate | Traditional methods

However, I also maintained contact with some students years after taking the course, and most of them still use this method, even after being exposed to other methods.

Perhaps that gives it more validity.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keyword: Method

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**Traditional** David Grossman

Traditionally, people translate in a different manner.

They look through a significant part of the text first, and they consider the difficult problems that they are about to face.

They then determine the style of the writer. They may also speak to people about basic issues relating to the text itself.

After completing this laborious preliminary study, then then laboriously translate the text, perhaps a phrase at a time, making sure that everything is perfect.

Perhaps this method works. After all, people have been doing it for a long time. The translation itself also takes a long time, and it involves a great deal of effort. And, yes, the resulting job is usually quite satisfactory and respectable.

However, this method is more applicable to a different generation in which there was less material to translate, and

people did not have to produce material with a tight deadline. It was also a time before modern technology, such as the printing press. People understood that translating existing religious and historical material would take a long time.

Today, people expect translations to be completed under great pressure. True, the translator might be the last one who is remembered in the writing sequence, but he is – in many ways – one of the most important people involved in getting material published.

In today's world, the final product must be very good – but it must be prepared in a different way than before, so that it can be completed quickly.

Furthermore, translation offers many of us a livelihood. The more material that can be translated in an hour, the more that the translator can provide for his family.

The method of translating has to change to meet the times. The traditional method is no longer appropriate.

That is what this section is about.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Age, Stress, Style



### *When you are calm*

You work better when you are calm.

For this reason, both the translator and the environment should be as stress-free as possible, in order to assure that the job will be of the desired quality.

Yes, this issue does raise some important questions about the validity of tests in schools of translation skills. Indeed, those tests are counterproductive. They do not measure the skills that should be taught. Students should not be expected to write a translation quickly, effectively, and accurately, while under pressure.

A translator should not be *too* comfortable. It is important to create a business-like environment. On the other hand, a translator whose work is interrupted frequently by phone calls, by clients who ask about the progress of their work, or by noisy relatives, is at a disadvantage. This is yet another reason why some translators work at night<sup>48</sup>

Be sure to maintain your peace of mind by buying a spare computer<sup>49</sup>. Problems do arise with computers, and a second system, together with a recent backup of your material, can save you a great deal of heartache.

Make sure that your own calm atmosphere is most conducive to your own needs.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Evaluation, Stress, Telephone

<sup>48</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 2 - Time

<sup>49</sup> Computerization | Spare



## *How I translate*

The first 90% of a project  
takes 90% of the time  
The last 10%  
takes the other 90% of the time.  
- Source unknown

New translators would do well to copy guidelines of experienced professionals. They may develop a personal style over time, but they need a starting position.

The method presented on this page works for me. It is the result of an attempt to analyze what I do when I sit down to translate.

My goal is to translate quickly, yet to do a good job. It is also my goal to eliminate other secondary problems<sup>50</sup>.

1. Before translating
  - Have all your supplies ready
  - Set up your physical work area
2. First draft
  - Throw לרגום your material onto the paper
    - Isn't that where the word *translate* comes from? :-)
    - Note: It's much easier to handle subsequent stages if you throw your material onto the *computer* screen

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<sup>50</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing it | Part 7 – Languages | My Dictionary | Blocking

- Don't know a word? Write it in Hebrew (or the source language)
  - No daydreaming or pondering allowed
  - No dictionaries allowed
  - Stuck? Skip it
3. Second draft
- Make the paper readable, so that you can understand it
  - Start thinking here
    - That means that you were not thinking before, right?
  - Use word finders: thesaurus, synonyms, Reverse Dictionaries.
  - Use your **bilingual** dictionary
  - Confirm questions with the author, with the Hebrew Translating Forum<sup>51</sup>, or with an expert
  - Put your draft aside for a few days
4. Third draft.
- Compare your work with the source language
  - Confirm your own bugaboos. Here are mine:
    - Numbers
    - Dates
    - Specific facts: now-not-nor
5. Fourth draft
- Editing style
    - Work on the material so that it reads well
    - Confirm any major change at this stage with the original
    - Monolingual dictionary for spelling problems

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<sup>51</sup> Jewish Unity Forums: Hebrew Translating

- Work on special problems with humor and poetry
  - If possible, put this draft aside again for a few days
6. Read your fourth draft out loud to yourself.
    - As you are reading, circle anything that doesn't flow
    - Circle items which require confirmation
    - Handle those circles
  7. Read the draft to somebody else
    - Circle phrases when you are told about problems
    - Check for body language
      - Note your listener's facial expressions
      - See if the listener squirms or winces - even a little bit
      - Look for movements of any other part of the body
      - Note those movements
  8. Optional drafts.
    - Fourth draft got too messy? Do it again
    - Repeat additional drafts until it reads well
  9. Final draft
    - Check those numbers again
    - Proofread the entire document slowly. Twice
    - *Save a copy* of the final draft
  10. Print it out
    - Read the printout
    - This applies to writing, translating, editing, or website design

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:



### ***Important***

The truth is that you can and will use any method that works for you. Nobody can or should convince you to use any other method.

However, there are some very important advantages to the method presented in this website.

It helps you translate faster. The faster you translate, the more money you will make.

A different method might be more convenient for your own personal style. If so, go ahead and use it. However, you will pay the price. You will not be able to translate as quickly.

Speed is an important issue with some clients. They often forget about the translator or the translator's needs until the last minute. Translators who can assure clients that they can translate rapidly will be able to make the difference between getting and losing certain jobs.

It is likely that the speedy translator who gets the jobs that you lose will use the method proposed in this section.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:



### *Printout*

**This page has good information, but it is an unedited transcript of a dictation. It will be used as an exercise in editing.**

**Students in the Translation classes should not select this page for their assignments. It would not be enough of a challenge, since there are so many obvious mistakes.**

Printout

The printout doesn't match your original work.

This is true whether you are translating, editing, writing, or preparing a web page. The rule is the same in all cases. The printout doesn't match what you wrote. It never fails.

It is very important after you are through preparing your document or your web page to print it out and then to look it over. To read through the entire document entirely from beginning to end. You will make some very very interesting discoveries which will surprise you or some surprising discoveries that will interest you. What you thought you had prepared is different. That's right. When you print it out it looks different. There could be two main reasons for this. Reason number one it really is different. This occurs when you print it out and there is some problem some defect in the actual printing process created by your computer and this

happens more often than you think. I know. Your computer was working fine yesterday. The printer was working fine yesterday. But today it's missed some words and it left you with blank spaces or perhaps you'll see some gibberish on a selected page near the end, not necessarily all over or any other problems. The question is simply who's going to discover it, whether it will be you or your intended audience.

The problem here is very simple. You're not going to want to go over it then one additional time. You've already done the work. You've gone through a number of drafts. You've looked it over until you were tired of looking it over. When you couldn't look at it any more you decided to print it out. And now, after you're tired of looking at it it's the time that you have to look it over once more.

Sorry, but that's part of the game.

It does look different when it's printed out.

Another way in which it is different when it is printed out is as follows. For whatever reason when you read something on the screen the words look different and you notice mistakes or phrases that are written in a poor way differently from the way you notice them in a printout. It has a different effect on you. There are certain mistakes that you'll notice more on the screen whereas others you will notice more on the printout and personal differences individual differences contribute to this situation. However, you are going to want to make sure that it is going to be readable for your audience and you are going to make sure that all of the possible problems have been handled. It is therefore important to correct all of those problems even though you don't necessarily see them on the screen.

In other words, the fact that they don't show up on the screen is not an excuse.

These two reasons for reviewing your document – technical errors because of the computing and printing process or things that are just not noticed either on the screen or on the printout – are handled in a single reading and during this single reading you notice things differently. These are two good reasons to go over it one last time before presenting to the client.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Method, Translation

## *Psychology*

*Le mot juste* [French]  
The exact word  
or The precise expression

There is a psychological basis for the method proposed in this section.

A stack of pages to be translated may seem daunting. The translator is overwhelmed:

- How will I ever to be able to accomplish this?
- I won't be able to do it
- There's too much work involved
- They said it wouldn't be a big deal, but it is
- It's a major job

- I don't have the time to do it
- I won't be able to manage it
- I'm tired
- I also have other things to do
- I hate this translation job
- I hate myself for thinking such things

Every translator faces the same problem and difficulties.

The proposed method deals with this major problem. It helps you "complete" the translation very quickly. Within a very brief time, a large quantity - maybe the entire document - is completed.

Of course, you know that you're fooling yourself. You fool yourself each time that you use this method. The translation isn't really completed. There's a lot more to go. It isn't even readable.

That doesn't matter. Your feeling of accomplishment works every time, no matter how many times you've used this method. That psychological factor keeps you going.

After *throwing* your translation on the paper or on the computer screen, you feel that the translation part is completed. Now, "all" you have to do is the remaining editing. You tell yourself that you "just" have to fix it up a bit and then you can submit the job.

Of course, it's never that simple and easy. The editing stage takes much more time than your investment on the initial rough translation.

Isn't it amazing how you can fool yourself over and over again?

This trick is one of the major features of this method. It offers a tremendous psychological advantage.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Method, Psychology

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### ***Simultaneous translation***

It is difficult to locate rules for simultaneous translation on the Internet.

- The following information is based on the writer's experience
- Your mileage may vary

### **Fluency**

- As you say one phrase, look ahead to the next one
  - See where the phrase begins and ends
  - Think about how you will translate it *while* you're still talking about the previous phrase
- Hebrew-English differences exercises help here
- Think of the English term *simultaneously* while you see the Hebrew term

You will always be one step ahead of the translation

## Pauses

- Pauses are annoying
- They cause the listener to be impatient
- You should try to talk smoothly, just like the original speaker
  - You have to continue speaking even if the original speaker pauses
  - Your goal is to maintain the best pace in a simultaneous translation

## Forgetting a word

- Your efforts to practice Hebrew-English differences do not always work
- Think of a substitute word quickly
- It may not be the precise word
- It must be usable

## Re-use that word

- Keep that word in the back of your mind
- It may come up again in the current translation
- Use the same translation in the current session
- Do *not* use a "better" word unless you explain that it will be replaced
- That explanation is likely to be awkward in a simultaneous translation

## Requirements

- Differs from other types of translation
- Most translating can be done outside your area of experience or knowledge
- Simultaneous translation requires a strong knowledge of the exact material
- There is no way or time to look up difficult words or concepts in simultaneous translation

## Level of speech in simultaneous translation

- May be flexible
- May be closer to spoken language
- Must be proper, standard language
- Must be easily understandable
- Must not have sentences that require intensive thought
- Must not have expressions that require returning to an earlier part of the sentence

## Behavior

- Body language should reflect that of speaker
- Body language should reflect questions, pauses, and features of spoken language
- Behavior should match that of original speaker
- People will watch you as if you were the speaker
- People will associate you with the speaker
- People may question you about your views, assuming that you agree or identify with the speaker

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Behavior, Method, Translation



### *Throw it*

Nobody but you will see your first draft. It should be unreadable and unspeakable trash at this stage.

- Don't worry about creating a perfect first draft
- Don't get involved with parts of speech, grammar, or punctuation
- Don't verify facts
- Don't edit or revise your work
- Don't worry about quality

Remember that first drafts are usually stupid. If you shoot off your mouth with your first draft – that is, if you say what you think before you've had a chance to think – your stupidity shines forth for all to hear. But, if you write your first draft – of a letter, a memo, a description of some transcendental experience that comes to you while jogging – then you fall on your face in absolute privacy. You get the chance to change it all around. It is harder to put your foot in your mouth when you have your pen in your hand.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Safire, William. *On Language*, Times Books, NY, 1980.

That first draft can be expected to be filled with misspelled words, poor comma placement (and possibly no commas), run-on sentences, and sentence fragments. After you have completed your first draft, you can turn those awful sentences into polished work<sup>53</sup>.

Don't worry – you'll have plenty of time to fix it up later. Any changes at this stage will get in your way. They will impede your progress, and they will prevent you from enjoying an important psychological<sup>54</sup> advantage.

Just throw your work onto the paper. Think of it this way: The English translation of the Hebrew word for translation itself – תרגום or תרגום – comes from ר-ג-מ – to throw. Instead of throwing stones, you should "throw" your translation onto the paper or the computer screen. That translation rule – ורגמוהו – comes straight from the Torah.

Well, maybe that's not *really* the derivation of the word תרגום, but it's a good thought to keep in mind when using this method of translating.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: Editing, Method, Translation, Value



<sup>53</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | How to translate | How I translate

<sup>54</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 4 – Teaching | How to translate | Psychology

### ***Use my method***

Should you use my method? If so, when?

Actually, my method is not for everybody. Some people will benefit from it. Others find it to be less than ideal.

Those with direct classroom training in the use of my method are likely to find that it will be superior in certain cases. Others may have a lower chance of acceptance.

For still others, the method might click. However, if not, then by all means, do what is best for yourself. Don't let anybody, any expert, or any book convince you to do anything unless it is best for you.

Not even me.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keyword: Method

reserved

### ***Use the old, traditional method***

Are there times when you *should* use the traditional method?

Yes, of course there are, and they are as follows:

After trying my method, if you feel that it does not work for you, then go back to the traditional method.

If you still use a typewriter or pen and ink, and your first draft has to be your best, then use the traditional method. After all, you would not want to retype drafts over and over again.

If you are in an office that uses the traditional method, and you do not want to change the office style, or you do not want to cause waves, then it would be advantageous and strongly recommended to use the old method.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keyword: Method

# David Grossman

## *When not to translate*

Some words, phrases, or idioms should *not* be translated.

A subscriber to the Yiddish Forum<sup>55</sup> asked how to translate the Red Hat Society. He received the following response (now edited) from another subscriber:

What is the Red Hat Society, what does it do, and why is it called that? These questions have a bearing on the translation.

- If it is a group of a dozen people who sit around talking once a month, you might want to use "khevre" for society

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<sup>55</sup> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/yiddishforum/join>

- "gezelshaft" may be more appropriate for a service organization with thousands of members
- If it is called that because the members all wear red hats, you might translate literally
- If it is called that because its headquarters are in Red Hat, Minn. (a theoretical location), then don't translate those words

There are other organizations whose names you wouldn't translate. You wouldn't call General Motors "Algemeyne Motorn" and you wouldn't call *Algemeyner Zhurnal* the "General Newspaper" in Yiddish.

If you said your friend in France reads "The World" every day, who would guess you meant "Le Monde"?

A serviceable translation for that organization differs from a setting of the English words into Yiddish.

Perhaps similar questions could be asked about whether to translate the White House as *Habayit Halavan*.

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Keyword: Method



### ***Translating by computer: the case of Hebrew***

Your word processor is likely to allow for a split screen. That will allow you to show your Hebrew original on one part of

the screen, while you translate the English material in another section of the same screen. In some cases, you can use two monitors, with the Hebrew part of the screen on one monitor and the English part on the other.

This option offers you the advantage of focusing on the screen, instead of switching from the screen to your source language document.

Let us discuss these circumstances and possibilities.

Translators must deal with the limitations of computer screens. If you focus on a screen for any significant length of time, your eyes will get tired and your vision will be blurred. You will face an additional burden by having to jump back and forth to the two different screens or to the windows with your documents.

With the older, CRT screens, you can improve the situation by using a better-quality non-interlaced (NI) screen with a high refresh rate. Some people prefer thin (but large) LCD screens. However, these factors cannot compensate for the problem itself. It's much easier to read documents on paper. Typists know this, and they try to stare at the original document on paper, while checking the screen on occasion to be sure everything appears as it should.

Translations from Hebrew to English provide additional issues:

Eye movement<sup>56</sup> in Hebrew is different from eye movement in English. People who are used to reading Hebrew move their eyes from right to left; those who are used to reading

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<sup>56</sup> Forked Tongues | Watering Plants

English move their eyes from left to right. This constant change in direction is likely to add to the issues that are raised by using a computer screen.

Furthermore, it is necessary to have sufficient source language and target language material on the screen, so that you will be able to deal with differences in word order and syntax. Translators have to be "feel" the context – and they need a large number of sentences on the screen.

This factor may be less important with some scientific documents that demand a word-for-word translation. However, it does become a factor with prose and with documents that must be studied carefully in order to be understood, or with materials that express relationships among concepts.

Paper documents can be spread out in order to visualize as much of the material as is necessary. It's easier to turn several pages with a paper document than by scrolling on the screen.

This contrasts with a screen document, which takes up approximately half of the viewable area of the screen.

This viewable area is itself smaller than the full screen. In most word processors, the screen has a certain amount of clutter.

Users who know enough keyboard shortcuts can opt for a "clean screen" at the expense of toolbars and menus. That clean screen will make it more feasible to split the screen vertically (with the source language on one side and the target language on the other), or horizontally. It allows a reasonable amount of working area for both the source and the target languages.

Be consistent if you choose this option. Select the location for the source language and for the target language, and always keep them on the same side. You don't want to be subjected to a momentary pause while your mind registers which language you are reading.

The multiple-screen option allows you to scroll through each screen independently. Larger screens can include a greater amount of material. Even so, you may have to raise your hand from the keyboard in order to switch screens with your mouse. Try to create a keyboard macro in order to replace this function.

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Keywords: Computers, Method, Translation

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## The First Day

### *Introduction*

How should the beginning Translation teacher approach the first day of classes? Let's investigate some options.

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Keywords: [Published](#), [Teaching](#), [Translation](#)

David  Grossman

### *Who teaches translation?*

The increasing need to translate today's Babel of languages throughout our global village has in turn created an urgent demand to develop and train more professional translators. Let us consider the tribulations of those who teach others to translate.

The first Translation class sets the tone for the rest of the year. It is a major factor in determining the creativity, liveliness, and interest of subsequent classes.

In order to initiate a positive tone from the outset, an effective teacher should stress the joyful aspects of translation. At the same time, he/she should minimize an incorrect feeling prevailing among some non-translators – that the supposed drudgery of translating is onerous and boring.

Of course, the basic methods employed in teaching translation are similar to those in many other disciplines. Any teacher should apply his/her personal style in order to develop classroom rapport, while establishing a well-disciplined, educational atmosphere. However, each discipline, including translation, has its own unique methods.

The techniques for teaching Translation Skills would not be a problem, were it not for the fact that the subject is often taught by English teachers. English teachers learned to teach English. Since some of the skills involved in teaching Translation differ from those involved in teaching Shakespeare, TESOL, EFL, CALL or CAI, some skilled English teachers may feel that they are no longer on familiar territory when they are asked to teach Translation.

Not all translation teachers promote translation skills successfully. Many teachers “invent” a personal approach to the topic, often without reviewing the literature from other instructors.

Indeed, there is no reason why it should be different. No academic program teaches translation teachers how to do their job. Teachers of Translation Skills often supplement their “main” job with translation courses. They bring their own training in other areas, such as English as a Second Language, to the translation class. They are not aware of any unique strategies for teaching translation, and they do not see a need to develop methods that are different from those that have proven their effectiveness in their other classes.

Even if a teacher would see the need to approach translation teaching in a different way, he would be hard-pressed to find an appropriate resource to guide him in his efforts. As a

result, some otherwise excellent teachers are likely to be lost when trying to develop interesting, worthwhile, and sequential classes that can turn their students into successful translators.

Since they do not know a “better” way to approach the subject, many teachers teach by giving boring frontal lectures about translation theory, or else they bring in endless reviews of sample translations. Others assign a seemingly unending stream of documents to translate, after which they mark and return those exercises.

That latter, negative approach may work with some of the more gifted students. However, it could be argued that gifted students would be successful even without the courses. In any event, as we will see later in this article, no other discipline would tolerate such a lack of professionalism.

How, then, can bright, inquisitive students be encouraged to think translationally<sup>57</sup>? What can we teachers offer students who may already have extensive previous experience in translating?

These are serious questions. The latter question becomes critical when the teacher discovers that the supposedly homogeneous translation class is blessed with a mixture of experienced junior translators, as well as other students with great potential, but with no experience.

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<sup>57</sup> "Translationally" is a sniglet – a word based on Rich Hall’s *More Sniglets: Any Word That Doesn’t Appear in the Dictionary, But Should*. NY: Collier Books, 1985. Sniglets are not in the language, but should have been. We will use the word "translationally" freely in this article. See also *Lost Beauties of the English Language* for additional examples.

Therefore, from the outset, the teacher must feel secure in the knowledge that he/she is teaching new material that reduces competition, and which places all students, irrelevant of their diverse backgrounds, on an equal level.

The resulting security is not necessarily related to the teacher's competence or knowledge. To the contrary, some better students may feel threatened by a brilliant teacher who has all the answers.

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Keywords: [EFL](#), [Teaching](#), [Translation](#)

*Security*

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Translation  
quality assessment  
proceeds  
according to the lordly,  
completely unexplained,  
whimsy of  
"It doesn't sound right".  
Peter Fawcett

How can we develop feelings of security and cohesiveness in the classroom?

One of the best ways to encourage the students to succeed is by allowing them to demonstrate their own knowledge. This ability of each student to present equal knowledge in an area of translation at this initial stage will be the link that unites the entire class towards a common goal. This common link

will in turn be the basis for working together, and ultimately the way to find the *means* to explain why a particular passage is translated well or poorly. The resulting atmosphere will allow students in the class – irrelevant of their level – to feel comfortable and secure with both a theoretical and practical study of translation.

Security – both for the students and the teacher – is thus the primary issue to be resolved at this stage. This feeling must be fostered quickly – before the class deteriorates into pathetic and insecure "it just sounds right, so it's probably better" discussions about translation issues.

We can begin to establish this feeling of security by asking ourselves three questions about our plans for the first class:

- How can we teachers begin the first class with a feeling of personal security?
- How can students be guided into thinking translationally from the first class?
- How can students begin to analyze translations before they have a background in the basic theoretical principles?

The best way to accomplish this potentially daunting task is by allowing the *students* to shine. The teacher should help each student find a place in a united, cohesive group.

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Keywords: [Security](#), [Teaching](#)



### ***Case Studies 1-2-3***

How can we develop basic feelings of security and cohesiveness in the classroom?

#### **Case Study 1**

The teacher asks students to work together on a catchy, enjoyable passage. She breathlessly writes the excited flow of suggestions on the board, and elicits a joint conclusion about the best translation. The class then compares selected words or phrases with others that were rejected.

Analysis: This method does show obvious merit, but it may overwhelm some students on the first day. They need to be reassured about their own abilities to translate.

However, this method may create arbitrary, artificial, and sometimes incorrect, barriers or distinctions among some students who have previous translation experience. It may also exclude those who would have had equal potential for thinking translationally, if they had been given the proper didactic guidance.

Even worse, it could lose some students who do not yet have the necessary theoretical and linguistic background to participate in the ensuing discussion. They may not be able to formulate reasons for selecting particular words or phrases. A student who feels left out of the initial discussion may harbor lasting insecurity or resentment in future classes as well.

True, the class may be homogeneous, there may be no exceptional students with a potential for being lost, and the students may exhibit a unified range of skills. Case Study 1 *might* work without harming subsequent class cohesiveness.

But how is the teacher to know this on the first day?

## Case Study 2

The teacher divides the class into groups, in order to avoid the potentially divisive situation faced by the teacher in our first case study. Each group translates the identical brief text, and a representative from each group then reports to the class.<sup>58</sup>

Reporting could take one of several forms. The teacher may ask a representative of each group to write the translation on the board. If the board is too small (and is it ever large enough for a translation class?) he/she might limit the report to one or two illustrative sentences. The selections would illustrate one or more common faults that the teacher wants to elicit, such as a possible contrast between the level or register of the L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> documents.

Analysis: This method is somewhat less threatening than the first. However, students cannot yet analyze documents from a theoretical standpoint. Why introduce guesswork?

The ultimate value of this method is questionable at this stage.

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<sup>58</sup> No, this bears no resemblance to the jigsaw method of instruction, since all students are working on the same text.

### Case Study 3

The teacher presents a translated passage with interesting problems, and guides the class in analyzing specific points and discussing possible improvements.

Analysis: An improvement, but again, some students may not have the necessary linguistic background to evaluate the problem – even with the teacher’s help. The class will probably be dominated by a few students, while other students who did find a problem might not be able to explain it effectively.

Experienced translation teachers should recognize these three options. Again, they are sound methods of instruction at *later* stages.

A successful alternative must effectively respond to our criticisms of these three case studies. It must have the following goals:

- To ease students into an equal level
- To introduce our instruction of the requisite background in translation theory
- To lay the groundwork for avoiding vague discussions about translations “sounding” right
- To develop the students’ security

The first and fourth goals are closely interrelated. Security must clearly take precedence over actual translation instruction and practice at this stage – and the standard methods of teaching Translation Skills are just not capable of fostering it. We must give students an exercise in a new area in which they all face the class as equals.

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Keyword: [First impressions](#), [Teaching](#)



Let us explain how to develop the basic feelings of security and cohesiveness in the classroom.

#### Case Study 4

##### *What does your name mean?*

Most students know the meaning of their own names. Many of them can translate it, and they are frequently proud of the historical, religious, personal, or cultural heritage that their name represents.

Students are often familiar with the Biblical or familial source of the first (given) names. Some may attempt to identify with the name, while others may pointedly reject it. The moniker may anguish some students because they are teased about it – in which case they may use a nickname. Others may use their name to show a trait that they perceive to be desirable. Thus, Yerachmiel may ask to be called Rocky – thereby intentionally changing the meaning and intent of his name.

Some amateur class psychologists may attempt to show ways in which a classmate's name reflects the owner's personality, while others may present a behavioral connection among various acquaintances who share the same name.

Still others will readily reveal that they were named after deceased or living relatives (usually resulting from familial Ashkenazi or Sephardi tradition). They may explain how their names were Hebraized in interesting ways – by maintaining either (a) the meaning (and the resulting discussion will form the basis for a future introduction to translation) or (b) a sound which is similar to the original (and the resulting discussion will lead to the discussion of transliteration).

Still others will demonstrate (c) the relationship of their name to a particular religious, military, historical, or social event (this will lead to a discussion of interpretation, and provide a link with translation and transliteration). Aviva may have been born in springtime. Menachem, Nachman, Nechama, or Tikva may have been born during wartime. Children born during the first Lebanon war may sport a name such as Shai.

This class effort, in which all students were able to take part, has thus already touched on the major distinctions to be studied in the translation class.

## **Surnames**

The second part of the lesson will deal with second names (also called surnames or family names).

Last names may reflect a person's livelihood, physical appearance, political affiliation, or aspiration or status in society. Some names may have been Hebraized, shortened, or modified. In many cases, the change may have been precipitated by negative connotations. The Translation teacher can expect to hear a fascinating story behind nearly every change.

For example, although some Cohens cannot be traced to a traditional priestly lineage, most are assumed to be descendants of Aaron, and they have reason to be rightfully proud of their names. The Russian phonetic system may change the name to Kagan or Kaplan. Descendants of Cohanim are Kaganoffs, while descendants of Aaron (the same people, right?) are Agranats. A righteous Kohen Tzedek would be given the acronym Katz, and their traditional blessing (duchening) would be the basis for the variations of the name Duchan. Since Kohanim stand with outstretched hands while duchening, some are called Adler (an eagle in German). The pronunciation may change to Kahan or Kahn. In German, a Kahn is a ship. We therefore find many Kohanim named Schiff<sup>59</sup>.

If time permits, or if the class is small enough, then the teacher might ask students where their parents came from. The name of the city will often have meaning or significance that relates to last names of various acquaintances.

At home, the students could then ask relatives or close friends about the derivation and significance of their names, and they would be asked to report to a subsequent class.

Students' names are frequently based on real words. They present a daily, fascinating clash of languages in which all members of the class have some direct contact. That first class will be a success if students associate and group all of the Goldsteins, Avnis, Hararis, Zahavis, and other permutations of that name.

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<sup>59</sup> These selections were adapted from Kaganoff, Benzion C., A Dictionary of Jewish Names and their History, passim. It should not come as a surprise that Kaganoff is an expert on Kohanim.

By means of this introduction, students will view translation as an engrossing experience, intimately related to their own environment – and thus to the body of knowledge in which they feel secure. They will maintain this security as they move together into the whys and hows of translation. All members of the class, as well as the teacher, will feel that they are on an equal level and status in this assignment – and this will provide the security and cohesiveness that we have been trying to achieve. The teacher’s involvement in the students’ fascinating personal background will be another factor in creating a strong bond from the first day. Students and teachers will have joined together in thinking translationally.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keyword: [Names](#)



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## Assignments

### *Introduction*

It is always useful for new teachers of translation skills to lean on the assignments that were given in other classes. This section provides some options.

Your students should realize from the outset that you are more than a teacher. You will treat them as full-fledged translators, and they should treat you as a client. They must provide you with the service and work ethic that a professional translator provides to his clients, including proofreading, and timely and respectable presentation of assignments that make the right impression.

You will wear two hats, and you will read and evaluate their translations both as a client and as a teacher.

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Keywords: [Teaching](#), [Translation](#)

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### *Topics*

Where words can be translated  
into equivalent words,  
the style of an original  
can be closely followed;  
but no translation  
which aims at being written  
in normal English  
can reproduce

Woe  
to the makers  
of literal translations,  
who by rendering every word  
weaken the meaning!  
It is indeed by so doing  
that we can say  
the letter kills

## Response 4 - Response 4 \* Printed Winter 2007

the style of Aristotle.  
- Gilbert Murray

and the spirit  
gives life.  
- Voltaire (1694-1778)  
French writer and historian.

The following topics may be taught in elementary Translation classes:

- Lectures and exercises
- Translating together
- Correcting samples of bad student translations
  - Eliciting ways in which a partners' translation could have been improved
  - All students in the class must agree that they will not be embarrassed by this work
- Generalizing from the bad translations to what should be done
- Creating rules of English from the students' work
- Translating current printed local language (such as Hebrew) material
- Translating any available free documents
  - This includes synagogue handouts
- Translating multiple copies of booklets or leaflets
- Analysis of latest announcements about local translation teaching policy
- History of teaching translation
- Translating articles about translation from current newspapers
- Dealing with clients
  - Getting clients
  - Keeping clients
  - Charging clients
  - Dealing with specific client issues
  - Expectations of different clients
  - Expectations from different clients
- Avoiding mistakes faced by new translators

- Use and misuse of back<sup>60</sup> translations
- Evaluating translations
- Editing translations
- Proofreading translations
- Computer-assisted translations
- Independent translations
- Office translations
- When to translate word for word
- Translating various genres
- Translating lengthy documents
- Translating material under pressure
- Translating difficult material
- Translating offensive material
- Getting help with translations
  - The Hebrew Translating forum
- Translating in pairs
- Translating in groups
- Translating for a newspaper
- Dealing with issues that arise when working at home
- Maintaining a job as both a translator and as a teacher
- Determining what makes a good translator
- Determining who can translate
- Evaluating dictionaries
- Evaluating thesauri
- Evaluating other resources and tools
- Show and tell: Demonstrating translation resources

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Note to myself: Move the following keywords from their original location in TT/topics to their new location here in Assignments/Topics  
Keywords: syllabus, translation /grossmantranslation/TTTopics

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<sup>60</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Back Translations



## ***Brochures***

Students were asked to prepare a brochure in Hebrew and English. The content of the brochure would publicize or advertise a product or service of their choice. In our translation class, the different languages in the brochure reflected the different ways that the brochure would be addressed to a speaker of English and a speaker of Hebrew.

The students were given the following guidelines:

The brochure must be prepared and reviewed well in advance if it is to be successful. It should be a convincing, advertisement for their cause. Students should revise their project many times before it is submitted. It does not have to be funny, but humor does help.

The projects should have some graphics, especially from students who have imagination. They are not returned, so students are urged to make a photocopy.

Some examples of good advertisements are as follows:

*Sony ze kol hashoni* vs. the original, Sony makes all the difference. Is the Hebrew version better than the original?

Turtle Wax: Tzav צב Hasha'a as a good play on the words צו and צב, as well as שעה and שעה.

Compare the Dummies with the Kol Echad Yachol series.

Students must submit information about their brochure on a separate page. That basic information should include the student's name, the date the project was actually submitted (and no late submissions are accepted), the audience, the log (a listing of the problems encountered in preparing the project), and the letters A or B on top of the project submission page, representing American or British English.

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David Grossman



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*Advanced assignments*

**Optional assignment:**

Make a presentation or develop handouts for teaching specific issues in translation theory in high schools. Select from a prepared list. Teach it to the class and submit the materials. This supplements the assignment on the manual.

Brochure is one option.

Textbook option.

Track changes for editing practice

Create your own web page

Simultaneous translation into a cassette

Translation book

A 5-hour annual translation. Each translation exercise must represent a different genre.

Choose one of the following: first semester you choose one of these and you can choose the same item or a different one for the second semester.

- a. Find X number of mistakes in specified volumes of this Translation book. Read Volume 1, About | Reviewers for guidelines
- b. Prepare X number of acceptable exercises for the question in a border in this Translation book.
- c. Participate actively in X number of discussions in the Hebrew Translating<sup>61</sup> forum.

Semester Two. Prepare a written evaluation of the translation prepared by a classmate.

Mark up each other's text using Word's track changes feature.

Interview a translator and report to the class about his work. The interview questions are as follows:

- How he gets his jobs and where
- How much he gets paid, and on what basis (if he's willing to reveal this information)
- How long it takes him to translate a typical double-spaced page or a 24,000-character printing sheet
- His experiences with taxes and legal issues
- His special hints for translators
- How he finds the correct translation for difficult words or expressions
- Who edits and who types his material

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<sup>61</sup> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hebrewtranslating/join>

- How well he knows and maintains his source language and his target language

One person reads the source language text to another, and the second student translates it simultaneously into into a recorder. The entire class listens to the result and offers recommendations for improvement.

Find a passage filled with Hebrew idioms (what suddenly, to the bone of this day) and translate it incorrectly.

Contrasting dictionaries as a project

Creating a user's manual in two languages. Create a clear, step-by-step explanation for lay users. Students can select from these items each semester.

Analyze and correct mistakes in a list of specific chapters in *Writing Wrongs*.

Students who know other languages can locate glossaries in those languages. Those who locate other glossaries can submit the exact URL of X number of glossaries by email.

Students can Research ways of raising bilingual children, and then present it to the class email group and to the class. The information should be different from that described in *Forked Tongues*.<sup>62</sup>

Translating a two-hour (or larger) job for a real client and submit it to the class. It must be a translation from Hebrew or any other language to English. As part of its classwork, the

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<sup>62</sup> Jews Speak with Forked Tongues: Bilingualism

other students will work together to offer assistance with difficult translation issues.

Find or create an advertisement that would not work properly or would not be convincing if translated into English. Describe what is wrong with the translation. Describe what would be required in order to make it more effective, and then translate the revised version into English.

Create smaller, one-hour translations on pre-set dates. They will be reviewed by peers, on a rotating basis. Everybody must review other student documents by exchanging them on the online class forum.

Are you required to read this article for a course? Do *NOT* print out the article. It is copyrighted.

Your exercise for this article is as follows:



### ***Reviewing a thread***

Evaluate and analyze a thread from the Hebrew Translating<sup>63</sup> forum, Translation Teacher<sup>64</sup> forum, or Jewish Translation Teacher<sup>65</sup> forum, as follows:

- Copy and paste all of the parts of the thread, so that they form a single Notepad or Word document

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<sup>63</sup> Jewish Unity Forums | Hebrew Translating

<sup>64</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Part 1 – General Issues | Translation Teacher

<sup>65</sup> Jewish Unity Forums | Jewish Translation Teacher

Response 4 - Response 4 \* Printed Winter 2007

- Arrange the document sequentially, with the oldest item first
- Set apart each message from the others (use a row of asterisks, dashes, or another symbol of your choice)
- Include the following information in the beginning of each message in the thread:
  - Name of the writer
  - Date and time of statement
  - Text of speaker's message
- Remove all of the greater-than (>) symbols
- At the end of each message, indicate how the writer has added to the conversation in one of the following ways:
  - Provided new insight into the meaning of the word (explain that new insight)
  - Clarified, rejected, improved upon, or in some other way affected the comment of a previous writer
  - Clarified the term
  - Helped us understand the term in a new way
  - Related the term more successfully to the context
  - Corrected a mistake
  - Presented the etymology (explain why it was needed)
  - Other (describe)

After your basic summary of the thread, analyze the discussion, as follows:

- Summarize the steps of the thread again - this time through the eyes of the translator, rather than the eyes of the participants
- Show how the thread helped the original translator do his job

- Explain the way(s) in which the client will provide a better translation as a result of the thread
- Show how the Hebrew Translating group was helpful to this translator in any other way
- Show how Hebrew Translating group's translation was better than a query to a friend or two?

Write a brief conclusion of this exercise:

- Show how this writer helped or hindered the analysis
- Show whether this analysis brought us closer or further away from the translation of this term

Do not select a thread randomly. Choose a thread that relates to and fulfils most of the guidelines in this document.

Not every thread in the Hebrew Translating group can be analyzed in this way.

- Some discussions are more general in nature
- Some discussions analyze concepts rather than translations
- Some discussions include only some of the analysis aspects listed above.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:



## Back Translations

### *Previously translated material*

Translate a book  
a dozen times  
from one language to another,  
and what becomes  
of its style?  
Most books  
would be worn out  
and disappear in this ordeal.  
The pen which wrote it  
is soon destroyed,  
but the poem survives.  
- Henry David Thoreau

Should you translate materials that have been translated previously?

In theory, it is possible. After all, many things that you translate ultimately came from another source.

On the other hand, a block of translated text opens you up to various problems. Do try to avoid using it, no matter how skillfully you translate. Make an effort to return to the original document and to quote the exact source.

Granted, that is not always possible or feasible. You do not always know the source, or it may not be available. Be sure to discuss this problem with the person who will pay you for your work.

If that person does have access to the original, he is likely to compare it to your translation. You will then have a real problem.

No matter how well you have translated the material, you depend on the previous translator who worked from the original. There *will* be differences in style, and possibly in content. Those inaccuracies are not your fault, but they will make you look bad, and possibly invalidate your work.

For these reasons, you should retranslate material only when the person who is paying you fully understands and accepts the pitfalls and problems that you face.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

David  Grossman

### ***Composition***

A course in student writing successfully implemented back translations.

Students translated a well-written Hebrew document into English. They then exchanged that document and translated it back to Hebrew, and so on – four times. Each "round" of the translation was done at home, and the students submitted their work to the class group.

An evaluation of the translations showed some interesting results.

Where the final document matched the original, it was a source of praise. One student did a study of the differences as a term project.

We demonstrated differences in linguistics, syntax, idiomatic usage, terminology, and untranslatables, by using real examples from the students' papers.

The student enjoyed the excitement of discovery. The large number of "mistakes" – or differences in the back translation – could never be taught and absorbed by using a standard, frontal approach. Students become involved in each translation.

Of course, students need to understand the limitations of back translations, and the fact that a translation that does not match the original is not necessarily bad<sup>66</sup>.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keywords: [Bilingualism](#), [Evaluation](#), [Reading](#), [Teaching](#), [Writing](#)



### *Exercise*

Assignment: Back-translation exercise. You will be paired off. Each member of a pair should be prepared to work in the same non-English language. One member of the pair will receive Form A, and the other will receive Form B.

Member A should translate the English sentences on Form A into the target language, and e-mail them to Member B, and Member B should translate the sentences on Form B and e-mail them to Member A. Then member B should take the

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<sup>66</sup> Losing It | Surviving | Excuses

target-language versions of Form A, and translate them into English, and member A translates member B's sentences back to English. If you guess what the English original might have been, try to do the translation as if you hadn't guessed (anyway, you might have guessed wrong!). Remember to e-mail these assignments to your partner, not to the class email group. You and your partner can work out the schedule for this.

When the translation back into English has been completed, mail the whole thing to the group e-mail forum. Don't peek at anyone else's postings on the back-translation exercise until you have sent in your completed exercise.

### **Tools for a back translation exercise**

The Babelize<sup>67</sup> program automatically creates a back translation for you. You might want to see how they do it, so that you can understand the exercise that we will do in class.

Another program, Babelfish<sup>68</sup>, can translate a web page on the fly. It can also translate up to 150 words of inserted text automatically.

Are you required to read this article for a course? Do *NOT* print out the article. It is copyrighted.  
Your exercise for this article is as follows:



<sup>67</sup> <http://humor.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?>

site=<http://www.tashian.com/multibabel>

<sup>68</sup> <http://babelfish.altavista.com/>

## *Teaching translation*

The Translation Teacher forum had a discussion about the value of back translations. The comments are presented below:

I'm planning to give a class an exercise on back translations, in order to show the importance of translating from the original text.

- Do any other teachers have a similar exercise?
- How do you present it to your class?
- How do you explain the purpose for the exercise?

David Grossman

### **Response 1**

I should imagine that by now your students are aware that there isn't a one to one correspondence between the languages in question. But are your students dealing with three or more languages?

If so, you could have one set of students translate a passage from Hebrew into Language A and another set translate from Hebrew into Language B. Then you could have the "Language A" students translate the passages from Language B back into Hebrew and the "Language B" students translate the passages from Language A back into Hebrew. Then you could discuss the discrepancies between the results and the original Hebrew text.

Even if your students don't all speak Hebrew, Language A and Language B, it may be possible to pair up languages so that things get back translated.

## Response 2

The new ASTM standard on translation quality, which is currently in ballot, has this to say about back translation:

3.1.3 \*back translation”, “n” – retranslation of a translated text back into its source language.

3.1.3.1 \*Discussion – “A back translation will not result in a text that is identical to the source text, and furthermore, a back translation is not necessarily a good indicator of the quality of the translation. The one place that back translation is useful is when playing with poor-quality machine translation programs – it's really good for a laugh. Seriously, back translation is not a good exercise for students. There's too much to do that is useful and time is so scarce. Clients who foolishly request it need to be educated.

## Response 3

My most successful experience of using back translation in the classroom was with a second year (of two) post graduate group working from Spanish (L1 or L2 – in the case of native Basque speakers) into English (L2 or L3). This was done at the end of an Introduction to Text/Discourse module and the main objective was simply to increase awareness of text problems for the final reader.

The material was taken from a version of “Wilt” translated into Spanish and students were told to render it into English (I changed the names of the main characters just in case I was

“twigged”, but everything else was left as in the original L2 translation).

The amount of rich discussion that the exercise produced was really amazing for what had been a somewhat “dumb” group over the months. I think this activity helped to give the students more confidence as potential professionals inasmuch as they were able to see *in situ* not only positive, but also negative features of a published translation of a popular work without knowing that it was a translation. They were able to discover before starting their tasks that some things in Spanish just did not make sense and tried to rectify accordingly in their English versions.

The discovery that they had back-translated, with the original English in their hands, did what I had aimed for – a new awareness of text communication problems was created. In this particular fragment, there were clear examples of very “English” humour, cultural references with no Spanish equivalence – “pasty factory” – and a dialogue which at first sight appears two monologues going in different directions.

I think back translation can play a useful role sometimes. In addition to the cool experience of the previous post, I recently had an on-the-job experience, where I was asked to convert a GB-EN text into a AM-EN text. The original text, however, had been in Danish (and I know no Danish). I got to a few parts that made absolutely no sense whatsoever (but the whole context gave mean an idea of what could/should have been there), found an online Danish-English dictionary and attempted a crude back translation of the questionable words and found several places where the original translator had really bungled (basically this person had no business doing this translation).

I agree that back translation has nothing to do with translation quality, but that's one of the reasons I do exercises in back translation with my students, to show them how a text is always going to change in translation.

What my students sometimes have difficulty with is the 'other' form of back-translation, which we make regular use in our multilingual core group on translation theory and practice; students working out of English are asked to back-translate their solutions into English so that the class can all see how the particular problem has been solved. Early on in the course, students don't always back-translate literally enough for the exercise to be useful, and this takes a bit of practice.

#### **Response 4**

Thank you for saying it: Seriously, back translation is not a good exercise for students. There's too much to do that is useful and time is so scarce. Clients who foolishly request it need to be educated. I was wondering if I had not missed something in translator training while teaching translation.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:



## **Writing Wrongs: Losing it in the translation.**

### **Other books in this series**

We include writing, translating, editing, proofreading, lexicography, and transcribing in our definition of the writing trades.

The series is divided as follows:

#### ***Part 1: General issues***

- Find out about this book
- Translation humor
- Truth
- Who can translate
- Forums

#### ***Part 2: Life as a translator***

- Working at Home
- Social issues
- Translating offensive or objectionable material
- Time

#### ***Part 3: Making money as a translator***

- What are the differences among the Business, Surviving, Marketing, and Rates sections?
- Business
- Surviving

- Getting jobs
- Marketing yourself
- Rates
- Directory of translators, to or from Hebrew – canceled.

#### ***Part 4: Teaching translation***

- How to teach the writing trades
- Teaching Translation Skills
- How to translate
- Assignments for teaching Translation Skills
- The first day
- Back translations

#### ***Part 5: Lesson plans***

- Lessons

#### ***Part 6: Distinctions***

- Hebrew-English differences

#### ***Part 7: Languages, lexicography, and glossaries***

- Language
- Names
- Pluritis
- Additions to my own dictionary and word finder

#### ***Part 8: Editing and proofreading***

- Editing
- Proofreading

***Part 9: Writing***

- Writing

***Part 10: Transcribing***

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## **Other books by the same author**

**Jews speak with forked tongues: Bilingualism**

**Yiddishe Kop: Jewish psychological issues**

**Your Jewish Personality.**

**It's the Teacher's Fault**

**Jewish Dating: So this is the best time in my life?**

**Jewish Parents Should Be Licensed**

**Are you good enough for Israel?**

**Yiddishkeit Lite**

**Collecting Dust: Libraries and librarianship**

**Doing Our Own Thing: The Grossman Family. Five parts**

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**Computer Gemach**

**Jewish Special Needs articles and links**

**Achdut. Jewish Forums: A life of moderation**

**Achdut. Jewish Forums: Guidelines**

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**Achdut. Jewish Forums: Directory**

**Jewish Achdut and Jewish Language. Translated  
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**Achdut forums: Israeli**

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