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Writing Wrongs:  
Losing it in the translation

Part 7 –  
Language

Short title:  
Losing It: Introduction

by  
David Grossman

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## Language issues

This book is

A resource for tips, ideas, methods,  
and knowledge about dealing with  
language and languages.

These  
selected  
topics

reflect a personal and Jewish  
approach.

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## Proper use of language

### *Introduction*

Good translators must have sources for the proper use of the target language.

- Changes in language<sup>1</sup>
- Good English<sup>2</sup>
- Oxymorons<sup>3</sup>
- Politically correct terminology<sup>4</sup>

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Keyword: [Language](#)



### *Change*

Americans who travel abroad  
for the first time  
are often shocked to discover that,  
despite all the progress  
that has been made  
in the last 30 years,  
many foreign people  
still speak in foreign languages  
– Dave Barry

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<sup>1</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Language | Change

<sup>2</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Language | Good English

<sup>3</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Language | Oxymorons

<sup>4</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Language | PC

As a translator, you are likely to live in the country that speaks and uses your minority or secondary language. That is the language that you translate *into*. Thus, if you translate from Hebrew to English, you are likely to live in Israel. That means that you are less likely to hear Standard English than somebody who lives in an English-speaking country.

However, the fact that you do not have ready and constant access to the secondary language is not an acceptable excuse for using outdated or outmoded terminology or concepts.

True, you once knew that language well. However, every modern language changes over the course of time. It is your responsibility to constantly reinforce and update your knowledge of the latest terms, concepts, expressions, and speech patterns. You will be expected to avoid those that are outmoded or no longer used.

These changes and additions involve more than new words. For example, in English, the words "tremendous" or even "awesome" used to be superlatives. As these terms began to be used for issues that did not represent superlatives, new superlatives had to develop, such as "ballistic."

It is *your* job to deal with the fact that those superlatives are now used for mild purposes. You also have to deal with the fact that each generation comes up with new uses for older words.

This issue leaves you with various options:

- Reading
- Using the Internet
- Making regular visits to the country in which the minority language is spoken

- Developing contacts in that language

Those steps, and others, will help you continue to feel comfortable in the target language.

That's an awesome responsibility. It can make some translators go ballistic.

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### *Good English*

Language is the source of misunderstandings  
- Antoine de Saint Exupéry

You have reached the most controversial page in this book.

- It has been presented as the basis for discussion on the Jewish Editing<sup>5</sup> group
- It is one man's opinion (that of the author)

You don't have to accept the guidelines on this page. You don't have to come to the defense of the English language.

You don't even have to read this page if you feel that it will hurt your delicate sensibilities.

---

<sup>5</sup> Jewish Unity Forums | Jewish Editing

## Do not use these expressions correctly

Some sticklers for good English believe that we should be very careful about our terminology.

They are often correct. However, after fighting the world for many decades, I have come to the conclusion that the world is right and that I am wrong. We don't always have to be pedantic about correct usage. We can save our strength to fight<sup>6</sup> other battles.

I will wave a white flag about the following terms. The world won. I lost. These expressions are hereby declared acceptable:

### **Nauseate**

Henceforth, the correct expression should not be "He nauseates me," but rather, "He makes me nauseous." Forget what your English teacher said. Forget what I said when I was your English teacher.

### **Healthful**

The correct expression is not "lettuce is healthful" but rather, "lettuce is healthy".

OK, you and I know that the generally accepted fuddy-duddy term implies that the lettuce itself is healthy. Perhaps instead of waving a white flag here, I'll wave a green leaf.

### **Aggravate**

---

<sup>6</sup> Yiddishe Kop | Fight

Yes, to aggravate does indeed mean to make worse. Yes, it does not mean to anger or to upset. "You aggravate me" means that you are making my essential existence worse. Again, let's lower our standards to meet those of the masses.

### **To laugh at somebody**

True, it is probably better to use "mock." You don't really laugh at a person. You laugh at, or because of, a person's actions, appearance, or statements. However, "laughing at" has been so thoroughly ingrained in the English language that the situation is hopeless. Use the incorrect term.

### **Thank you. I feel better now**

No, my tactile sense is not likely to have improved over the past several minutes.

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### ***Oxymorons***

The English language is replete with oxymorons. We can point to examples such as "the band was awfully good" or "that group is effectively useless". Other languages have fewer examples, but we'll try to locate those that do exist.

We translators face two major problems with oxymorons:

- We don't always realize that we are using them
- They rarely translate well

This section will raise our consciousness and sensibilities. If we are on guard, then we won't fall into the trap of translating them.

1. Absolutely unsure
2. Act naturally
3. Advanced BASIC
4. Airline Food
5. Almost exactly
6. Alone together
7. American taste
8. Amicable divorce
9. Authentic replica
10. Awfully good
11. Bad health
12. Bad luck
13. Bankrupt millionaire
14. Big town
15. Bittersweet
16. Black heart
17. Black light
18. Bland spice
19. Blank dictionary
20. Boring entertainment
21. Boyish grandpa
22. Bright night
23. Bright rain
24. British fashion
25. British cuisine
26. bureaucratic efficiencies
27. Business ethics

28. Calculated risk
29. Calm wind
30. Childproof
31. Civil war
32. Clean boy
33. Clean dirt
34. Clearly misunderstood
35. Clogged drain
36. Cold comfort
37. Cold fever
38. Colorless kaleidoscope
39. Completely destroyed
40. Completely unfinished
41. Computer security
42. Confident fear
43. Cooked sushi
44. Corporate ethics
45. Criminal cop
46. Dark day
47. Dark victory
48. Deafening silence
49. Death benefit
50. Definite maybe
51. Devilish angel
52. Diet ice cream
53. Different pattern
54. Distant relative
55. Down elevator
56. Dry ice
57. Dry pond
58. Dry snow
59. Dull knife
60. Dull needle
61. Educated guess
62. Effectively useless

63. Exact estimate
64. Expected surprise
65. Express line
66. Extinct Life
67. False hope
68. Fast food
69. Fast walk
70. Firm pillow
71. Flying fish
72. Found missing
73. Freezer burn
74. Friendly enemy
75. Friendly fire
76. Future history
77. Gentle turbulence
78. Genuine imitation
79. Genuine(ly) fake
80. Giant dwarf
81. Gigantic microorganism
82. Good grief
83. [Government organization](#)
84. Grateful dead
85. Great Depression
86. Grounded airplane
87. Hair growth
88. Half empty
89. Half full
90. Hard cushion
91. High ground
92. Holy war
93. Huge shortage
94. Icy hot
95. Idiot savant
96. Ignorant professor
97. Incredibly dull

98. Inside out
99. Joyful trouble
100. Jumbo shrimp
101. Lame skills
102. Large ant
103. Legally drunk
104. Light heavyweight
105. Little big
106. Living dead, the
107. Long brief, a
108. Long shorts
109. Loose knot
110. Loose tights
111. Loud whisper
112. Lovers' quarrel
113. Low tax
114. Low-rise
115. Master slave
116. Mean smile
117. [Microsoft Works](#)
118. [Military Intelligence](#)
119. Missing present
120. Near miss
121. New antique
122. New archeology
123. New classic
124. New York culture
125. Night light
126. Night vision
127. Non-working mother
128. Now, then..."
129. Old newborn
130. Old news
131. Opposite attraction
132. Organized chaos

133. Original reproduction
134. Paper towel
135. Partially destroyed
136. Passive aggression
137. Past prediction
138. Peace force
139. Peasant king
140. Peer pressure
141. Perfect idiot
142. Perfectly ridiculous
143. Plastic glass
144. Plastic glasses
145. Plastic silverware
146. Pleasantly confused
147. Political science
148. Positively negative
149. Positively wrong
150. Presently gone
151. Pretty ugly
152. Problem solved
153. Pure dirt
154. Quiet noise
155. Quiet riot
156. Quiet yell
157. Random order
158. Rap music
159. Relative stranger
160. Religious tolerance
161. Resident alien
162. Restless sleep
163. Round corner
164. Sad clown
165. Sad smile
166. Sadly funny
167. Same difference

168. Sanitary landfill
169. Screaming silence
170. Serious comic
171. Silent alarm
172. Silent noise
173. Silent scream
174. Silent speech
175. Silent yell
176. Sit up
177. Slow jet
178. Slow jog
179. Slow speed
180. Small crowd
181. Small giant
182. Soft rock
183. Soft thunder
184. Software documentation
185. Spendthrift
186. Spoken thought
187. Stationary bicycle
188. Student teacher
189. Study break
190. Stunted growth
191. Stupid genius
192. Sure bet
193. Sure guess
194. Sweet sorrow
195. Sweet tart
196. Synthetic natural gas
197. Talk show
198. Talking mime
199. Tame beast
200. Taped live
201. Temporary tax increase
202. Terribly nice

203. Terribly pleased
204. Thunderous silence
205. Tight slacks
206. Tiny mountain
207. Tiny tank
208. Tranquil fiesta
209. Twelve-ounce pound cake
210. Unknown knowledge
211. Usually unusual
212. Virtual reality
213. Warm ice
214. Weak muscle
215. Wheeled walker
216. White night
217. Wickedly good
218. Wild dog
219. Working vacation

Oxymorons do not always show up as word pairs. Following is a list of compound words. Each word is an oxymoron!

1. Bittersweet
2. Color-blind
3. Dimwit
4. Doorstop
5. Homework
6. Lightweight
7. Seashore
8. Spendthrift
9. Understand
10. Weekday

Hebrew has fewer oxymorons, but they do exist:

1. Chazarnu el shigrat hacherum - חזרנו אל שגרת החירום

2. Derech Eretz Plishtim - דרך ארץ פלישתים - beginning of Parashat Beshalach פרשת בשלח
3. Chareidi Leumi - חרדי לאומי
4. Ani met lichyot - אני מת להיות
5. Shtikah roemet - שתיקה רועמת
6. Omed Lipol - עומד ליפול

Can you think of additional Hebrew oxymorons<sup>7</sup>?

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

1. Think of (and submit) some additional oxymorons in Hebrew or English
2. Think of ways to translate some of these (or other) oxymorons while capturing the concept in the target language

Keywords: [Language](#), [Opposites](#), [Terms](#), [Writing/methods](#)



***Politically correct***

Words  
have a way  
with us.

– Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

This section includes we some politically-correct ideas and concepts.

1. *Growth sector*. This is the smallest sector in a description or in a graph. "Growth sector" seems to be less offensive or hurtful.

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<sup>7</sup> Tzafun | Contact | Author

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## Names

### *Introduction*

Some of these listings were taken from classroom discussions about the sources for names of students.

- Family names<sup>8</sup>
- Given names<sup>9</sup>

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



### *Family names*

Most of these reports are from students in classes in Translation Skills. Some students had to do research before responding.

### **Last (family) names**

Tessler sounds like the German "tishler", or carpenter. One student said that this name saved her grandfather's life. The Germans were looking for carpenters, and her grandfather's name was sufficient evidence that he met the requirements.

---

<sup>8</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Names | Family

<sup>9</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Names | Given

Chinkis - a family story describes the name as an abbreviation for Chachamim, Nevonim, Kdoshim and Savlanim.

Churaro, a Romanian name, is apparently related to a profession, as it means a pitcher of milk. It is also related to a 600-year-old Moroccan name, but its meaning is unclear.

Shoub is an acronym for Shochet Ubodek שוחט ובודק (ritual slaughterer).

Shilat was used as an acronym for Shiviti Hashem Lenegdi Tamid שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד.

Segel is a name used by Levites – סגן לוי.

Evgi is an acronym for Anna Bechoach Gedulat Yemincha אנה בכח גדולת ימינך.

One Samuels family used to be called Shklofsky. The family originated from the Russian town of Shklov. It was subsequently changed to Shlofsky in America, in order to make it easier to pronounce, and then further Americanized to Samuels.

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## *Given names*

- Shaindy is from Yiddish, and it's the equivalent of Yaffa in Hebrew
- Noa sometimes can stand for Nisim Veniflaot Asa Hashem נסים ונפלאות עשה ה'
- Maya was originally called Maytie. That Yiddish name has something to do with water
- Mai is an abbreviation for Medinat Eretz Yisrael.
- Batsheva means the daughter of G-d

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## **Pluritis**

### *Introduction*

Plurals are not simply a matter of adding an "s" or a "es" at the end of a word. You are about to read about a multiplicity of plurals.

- Through the len of a babe<sup>10</sup>
- Collective terms<sup>11</sup>
- Foreign terms<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Len

<sup>11</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Collective

<sup>12</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Foreign

- Latin - even more foreign<sup>13</sup>
- The dual plural<sup>14</sup>
- Plural plurals<sup>15</sup>
- Style<sup>16</sup>
- Appendix<sup>17</sup>
- Supplementary items<sup>18</sup> for a future article

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Keywords: [Published](#), [Writing/methods](#)

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### *Len*

When asked to explain the plural, my children said that if you want *one*, you say it the usual way, and if you want more, you say it with an *s* at the end. If that were completely true, then English would be a far more straightforward language.

Unfortunately, the plural form seems to be very complex, even for native English speakers. Those who have been in Israel too long are also subject to problems of interference caused by the secondary language (L<sub>2</sub>), Hebrew.

---

<sup>13</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Latin

<sup>14</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Dual Plural

<sup>15</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Plural Plurals

<sup>16</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Style

<sup>17</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Appendix

<sup>18</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | Pluritis | Supplementary

Let's look at the bilingual aspects of this problem through the lens (*after all, just what is only one lens in your eyeglasses?*) of the linguist.

As we shall see, the plural form in English may be singular in Hebrew, and the singular form in English may be plural in Hebrew. Just to make this study more complex, there may be differences in the plural form between American and British speakers. We will present only the American forms in this series of articles.

We cannot always guess or predict how many items are being discussed in Hebrew by comparing the phrase with its counterpart in English or in any other language. Different languages play with numbers and quantities in different ways.

For example, in English a man may have great riches. In Hebrew, we can expect no more than to be *Ashir*. Maybe that's why many people in English-speaking countries have more money than those in Israel.

Are riches, then, plural in English and singular (or lacking) in Hebrew? Let's test it. The man's riches (*is/are*) unbelievable. The correct form is *is*.

A word about the title: Pleurisy is a disease affecting the pulmonary cavity. Pluritis affects the tongue and the brain.

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## *Collective*

Let's continue to put our mouth where our money is. Why does an item costing three dollars or two pounds abroad cost thirteen or more *shekel* plus VAT in Israel? Apparently, even native English speakers don't think about having more than one shekel at a time.

We also say, "Her savings increases by 5% every year" or "His morals *is* a personal matter."<sup>19</sup>

Style manuals consider these "we" formations to be quasi-singular collective words, possibly in an effort to limit both our savings and our morals.

Other words only *look* singular: They were carrying walkmans<sup>20</sup>.

And just for good luck, let's consider a religious term, talisman. Would a minyan of them, each wearing prayer shawls, be talismen? (No, according to Freeman, *op. cit.*, they are talismans).

---

<sup>19</sup> Freeman, p. 224

*(We will use the editorial or royal we in the singular form throughout this article. We do have critics. Copperud insists that such usage indicates the split personality of the writer. Pinckert compares it to the "we we we" of the little pig. However, we disagree with them. We have used the editorial we ever since we were a child.)*

<sup>20</sup> *Forum*, Oct. 90, p. 48

Animal names suffer from a special form of pluritis – ossibly because deer, vermin, fowl, sheep, moose, and swine don't really have a plural form. The solution? Each one has a collective name – herd, flock, convocation, troop, chattering, exaltation, parliament, business, or siege. Our favorite (there's another variation of that editorial *we*) is an *unkindness* of ravens (See Grambs, pp. 54-56 for a complete list of animals and the names of their groups).

Hebrew plurals are sometimes singular in English. The owner of an establishment - whether a single individual, a pair of partners, or a conglomerate - is called the בעלים - *Baalim*.

Perhaps the nearest comparable form in English is the *powers that be* (note that *the powers that are...* would not be the same thing).

Why do people abroad work in an institution, whereas in Hebrew we are hard pressed to find any fewer than *Mosdot* so-and-so? Sometimes the answer is clear. English speakers can give advice and stop there. Hebrew speakers, on the other hand, don't stop until they have given *Etzot*. Similarly, the president of Macy's has a business where you can do your shopping, but the owner of any little ma and pa store in Israel has no less than *Asakim*, where you can handle *Kniyot*. As a matter of fact, an English speaker might reject this entire article and call it nonsense, while the Hebrew hyperbole might indicate that it is *Shtuyot*. (See an excellent treatment of this subject in Levenston, E.A., *English for Israelis: A Guide for Teachers*. Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1970.)

Haman and his ten sons were hanged on the gallows. Let's ignore the sons and their hang-ups for the time being, and concern ourselves with their highstrung daddy. Was Haman hanged on a *gallow*? (Fowler's says that he wasn't. *see*

Gowers, Ernest. *Fowler's Modern English Usage*. London, Oxford, 1983).<sup>21</sup>

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### **Foreign**

What's worse than a mother-in-law? Two mothers-in-law. That was too easy? Well, if one of these distinguished women lives in a mother-in-law's house, then where do both of them live? In mothers-in-law's houses, of course.

The experts seem to be more confused than you are. We drink bloody Marys (According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*), but talk about two Rockies or Ptolemies (Johnson, p. 280). It doesn't have to be that way. In Dutch, borrowed English plurals ending in a *y* look like English possessives: *baby's*, *lolly's* (Cohen, Harry. "English in Dutch," in *Verbatim*, VI:3, 1980, p. 915).

---

<sup>21</sup> *Since we're on that subject, let's handle two related points:*  
(1) *In Hebrew, Haman and his sons were merely hanged on a tree - Etz. The translators made the story a bit more romantic and exciting.*  
(2) *Haman et al. were definitely hanged, not hung - unless we argue that they were framed.*

Combine the English plural and its possessive to tickle the tip of your tongue: Whose house is that? / It's the Joneses ("Apostrophes" in *Verbatim*, II:4, February 1976, p. 225; possibly pronounced Joneseses. (Some experts decry this usage. See "Plural Anomalies" in *Fowler's*, p. 456. Cottle feels that my cousin in Guinness's's is quite feasible - but he doesn't approve of it).

We can detect the Greek or Latin element in many English words by the way in which the plural is formed. However, Hebrew usually maintains its own plural form when it absorbs foreign words.

English has one criterion, and three Israelis sitting in a board meeting have at least twelve criteria. Hebrew, on the other hand, doesn't bother with those crazy Greek endings. One criterion, many *Kriterionim*.

Similarly, one phenomenon, many phenomena, but (here's a mouthful for you) many *phenomenonim* - and that's often pronounced *penomenonim*, even if we have difficulty accepting the *Tofa'a*.

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*Latin*

Let's study more trix of the trade. One matrix, but two matrices. Or is it matrixes? (Gowers) Hebrew, correctly, recognizes the feminine *-trix* ending in Latin: *Matritza*, plural *Matritzot*.

Pluritis is *in*. The *agenda* included a report on the *hysteria* from the *data* on *propaganda* from the *media*. Hebrew can be more logical - many *netunim*, but one *natur*.

Many authorities agree that we may have one formula, and many formulas - not formulae (Eric Partridge, *Usage and Abusage*). On the other hand, radios have antennas, but insects have antennae (Freeman, *op. cit*). Books have indexes; but mathematicians and statisticians discuss indices (Freeman, *ibid.*).

Do these examples prove that the plural of all words from Greek or Latin follow the original language? Let's see.

**Exercise I:** Is the plural of *momentum*, er, momenta? That's sounds too much like *uno momento* - which, for the moment, seems singular. Momentums? That sounds like a brief antacid commercial. Moments? Maybe we should vote on it.

**Exercise II:** Is *bases* the plural form for *basis* or *base*?

Perhaps we are all ignoramuses about Latin plural endings - or are we ignorami? (Partridge, p. 232.)

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:



## *Dual Plural*

Words with Middle or Old English roots may be even less consistent than those from Latin. One foot, many feet. One goose, many geese. Yet, one mongoose, but many mongooses! When we combine these examples, we have a plant with green flowers called a goosefoot. A lot of them are called – you guessed it – goosefoots!

Two European countries were reunited some time ago. Experts questioned whether there were once two Germanys - or two Germanies. They seem to agree that there were never two Germany's – not even in the 80's.

English has two forms, singular and plural. Hebrew, to show one-upmanship, has three forms: singular, dual (or double), and plural. As a result, our English-speaking brethren and cistern sometimes teach innocent Israelis their own mistakes in English diction. Trousers, slacks, or pants are plural in English and in many other languages. Is *Michnasayim* a dual form because of the number of legs inserted therein, or is it a Hebraicized form of English? We've seen references to a *pant* and a *Michnas*, but it is unclear whether they can keep both legs warm. Surprisingly, a shirt is always singular, even though it holds both arms.

Even more unusual are the plural plurals and dual duals. If the arc-shaped pads that stop your car are called *breksim*, is one a *breks*? (Give me a brek!) If people who live in igloos are called *eskimosim*, shouldn't one be called an *Eskimos*?

When I remove the rivet from a pair of scissors (and why is it a pair when I am holding one object?) then is each of the two dagger-like objects which I see before me called a scissor? Similarly, would I want a doctor to take a stab at me with a forcep? It's probably best not to get stuck with that debate.

We'll call that *Zug Misparayim* a dual plural. It can probably be blamed on those who speak English. Its opposite is the forgotten dual - in which a pair of pliers is a *Pliyer*. Hebrew speakers can claim credit for that one, as well as the equally acceptable term, *Pliyerim*.

Sometimes Hebrew has plurals and English doesn't - or the other way around.

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reserved

## *Plural Plurals*

Horace Greeley, founder of the New York Tribune, once cabled his newspaper, asking, “Are there any news?” A staff member replied, “Not a new”. Other English speakers might write about a news item. Unfortunately, this anecdote would fail in Hebrew, which does have a “new:” חדשה.

חיים. A Hebrew speaker is blessed with long lives, חיים ארוכים. In English, only feline speakers merit nine lives. Yet, whereas a small museum has but one still-life, the Israel Museum has many still-lives.

מים. Hebrew has sweet and running waters (מים זורמים – מים מתוקים). Does English? What was that about sitting על נהרות “by the waters of Babylon?” (Besides, why is נהרות “waters?” Aren’t they [it?] “rivers?”)

פנים. True, English speakers can be two-faced, but never multiple-faced. Hebrew speakers can look you in the faces (possibly while having a chat with four eyes – שיחה בארבע עיניים).

The midday greeting is צהרים טובים. We all know that noontime are dual even though they come only once a day.

Folk dancing is רקודי עם. I could have danced all night, but there’s no way to have just one dance.

My favorite expressions come from the mouths of babes – my own, of course. My Tehilla announced one Shabbat that a wak dripped from a candle. She’s right, of course, and English is wrong. If a lot of drippy stuff “are” wax, then one stalactite must surely be a wak. Another child had mumps and

measles. When he recovered, I couldn't find one lumpy mump or even one measly measles on him.

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### Style

The English have more maths than Americans, who only have math, and they have more comms: Americans only have singular comm ports to communicate with other computers.

Which brings us to one of the major Hebrew debates in the world of technology today: whether the little rodents next to the computer are mouses, mice, or *Achbarim*. Most computerphiles have *Mausim* - and the double<sup>22</sup> entendre<sup>23</sup> makes it all the better.

Some of my colleagues insist that we have no right to expect students of English to understand such a singular multiplicity of vague, irrational, and unclear concepts. They insist that any misunderstandings that may arise are not the fault of English teachers, and certainly not of the learner. "We have nothing to blame," they say, "but the English language."

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<sup>22</sup> *Maus* in Hebrew means disgusting or detestable

<sup>23</sup> We will not contend(re) with a repulsive triple entendre: Spiegelman, Art, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. Part I: *My Father Bleeds History*. Part II: *And Here My Troubles Began*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1973, 1986. ISBN 394-54155-3, 0-394-55655-0.

A cartoon story about the Holocaust, in which the Nazis are cats and the Jews are mice.

We wonder whether that point of view will be accepted by at least a plurality of the readers.

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

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



## Appendix

There seems to be no end to the Pluritis disease.

1. I don't want to hear a peep from you = אני לא רוצה לשמוע ממך פיפס
2. Clip קליפס, plural קליפסים
3. Chipsim - potato chips or crisps; singular = "chips ehad" - צ'יפס אחד
4. Compote - stewed fruit; singular was heard as "compa"
5. Ulamei, Heichalei

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## Supplementary

Since writing this article, other terms have been brought to our attention:

Plurals that are different in Hebrew and *Hebrish*

- קברים Kvarim = kvaros
- טליתות Talitot = Taleisim
- שבתות Shabatot = Shabbosim

### Humor

A child who was not very hungry asked for a single "compa" instead of the plural "compot(e)" (stewed fruit), etc.

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# My Dictionary

## Introduction

Take a peek into the author's favorite dictionary:

- About my dictionary<sup>24</sup>: Explains how to use the lists in this section
- English<sup>25</sup>
- English to Hebrew terms<sup>26</sup>
- Hebrew to English terms<sup>27</sup>
- Business terms<sup>28</sup>
- Military terms<sup>29</sup>
- English synonyms<sup>30</sup>
- Elusive<sup>31</sup> words that escape me when I need them

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

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



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<sup>24</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | About

<sup>25</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | English

<sup>26</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | EH

<sup>27</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | HE

<sup>28</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | Business

<sup>29</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | Military

<sup>30</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | Synonyms, English

<sup>31</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | Elusive

## *About*

If you have  
a big enough dictionary,  
just about everything  
is a word.  
- Dave Barry

My dictionary is better than your dictionary.

I don't mean to offend you, but the truth is that my dictionary really is better than yours. That is because I don't relate to my dictionary as a static document. I keep adding words and expressions to it, based on my translations.

For many years, I kept my dictionary to myself. However, I decided to share it with other Hebrew translators, throughout the world.

These terms do not replace your dictionary, your word finder, or your head. Many of these words will not work properly in a general context.

However, they were necessary, applicable, and useful in a *particular* translation, and that context may arise again. Keep in mind that you are viewing these words out of context, so some of them may seem wrong.

There's more. The very fact that you are presented with another option may jog your memory and help you find the specific word that you need.

## **What is in My Dictionary?**

Don't expect to find a list of difficult or unfamiliar words. You will probably recognize nearly all of the entries.

These words were used in ways that *differ* from the dictionary definition or translation. Since they worked once in a specific context, they may work for others if a similar context arises again.

In other cases, some of the words used contexts that had been unfamiliar to me. Someone with a similar background would not be familiar with these words, and this listing may save them the bother of discussing the issues with the author.

Thus, your first resort should remain your knowledge, your intuition, and the traditional tools and resources used by good translators.

When those resources fail, give my dictionary a try. After all, it is better than yours.

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Keyword: [About](#)



## ***Blocking***

This file WILL have the keywords questions and kw sleep

It is sometimes frustrating when somebody asks you for the right word or for a person's name. You know the word, but the question was asked in the wrong way.

For example, if someone asks, "What is Mrs. Cohen's first name? Is it Shulamit?" then you may have a very difficult time figuring out the name.

You hear the name Shulamit, and it blocks out the real name. You don't have amnesia. You do know the right name. Given enough time, you'll be able to produce it. However, you will have to (somehow) put aside the name Shulamit before you can think clearly. As long as Shulamit remains in your mind, you won't think of the real name.

That is why the right word or the right name occurs to you when you sleep. You have put aside the other influences, so you can think of the name that you knew all along.

This issue is not restricted to outside influences. After you think of the wrong word while translating, you have blocked out the correct word. You've done it to yourself.

This is yet another advantage to the system whereby you throw<sup>32</sup> your translation on the paper. You work so quickly that you do not have time for outside influences to register. As a result, this method may help you overcome a potential block, and you can arrive at the correct term – without thinking.

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<sup>32</sup> Losing It | How To Translate | How I Translate



## ***Business***

The About<sup>33</sup> file gives important directions and instructions for using this list.

The following business words and expressions appear in my own private English-Hebrew dictionary:

1. Executive Vice President - סמנכ"ל ממונה - Samankal (Segan Menahel Kelalli) Memunneh or סגן נשיא ממונה Segan Nassi Memunneh
2. Senior Vice President - סמנכ"ל בכיר - Samankal Bakhir or סגן נשיא בכיר Segan Nassi Bakhir
3. Assistant Vice President - עוזר סגן נשיא - Ozer Segan Nassi
4. Assistant to the Vice President - עוזר סמנכ"ל - Ozer Samankal
5. Associate Vice President - סמנכ"ל משנה - Samankal Mishne or סגן נשיא שני Segan Nassi Sheni
6. Chief Financial Officer - מנהל אגף כספים - Menahel (Agaf) Kesafim or סמנכ"ל כספים Samankal Kesafim
7. Chief Marketing Officer - מנהל אגף שיווק - Menahel (Agaf) Shivvuk or סמנכ"ל שיווק Samankal Shivvuk
8. Head of Procurement (Executive, Division) - מנהל אגף רכש Menahel (Agaf) Rekhesh or סמנכ"ל רכש Samankal Rekhesh
9. Chairman of the Board of Directors - יו"ר חבר המנהלים - Yor (Yoshev Rosh) Hever Hamenahalim or יושב ראש הדירקטוריון - Yoshev Rosh Hadirectorion

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<sup>33</sup> Writing Wrongs: Losing It | My Dictionary | About

10. Company Secretary - מזכיר החברה - Mazkir HaHevra
11. Production Manager - מנהל יצור - Menahel Yitsur
12. Plant Manager - מנהל מפעל - Menahel Mifal
13. QA Manager - מנהל אבטחת איכות - Menahel Avtakhat Ekhut

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Keyword: [Business](#)

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David Grossman  
*English-Hebrew*

1. Adjacent, in conjunction with - ליד - Liyad
2. Admire - Ha'arachah - הערכה
3. Affirmative action - Aflaya Metakenet - אפליה מתקנת
4. All terrain vehicle, ATV - Traktoron - טרקטורון
5. Alligator skin (a form of decorative leather) - Kotel - כותל
6. Allotting, allocation - Haktza'ah - הקצאה
7. Association - Amutah - עמותה
8. Astrological sign, Zodiac - Mazal - מזל
9. At least; at most - Maksimum - מקסימום
10. Athlete - Sportai - ספורטאי
11. Attachment - Hisafchut - הספחות
12. Backing - Oref - עורף
13. Begrudge, Begrudgingly - bechessed velo bizchut - בחסד ולא בזכות
14. Besmirch - P'gam - פגם
15. Bid - Michraz - מכרז
16. To boost our morale - Le'oded otanu - לעודד אותנו

17. Brand name - Motag - מותג
18. Building plot - Migrash - מגרש
19. Butternut squash - Dalorit - דלורית
20. Call answer, voice mail - Ta koli - תא קולי
21. Captain - Seren - סרן
22. Cargo handling - Shinua - שנוע
23. Cast or crew - Tzevet - צוות
24. Cast (verb) - Hitil - הטיל
25. Casualties - Nifga'im - נפגעים
26. Closure (military; related to a curfew) - Seger - סגר
27. Coalesce - Gibush - גיבוש
28. Collateral - Mashkon - משכון
29. Colonel - Aluf mishneh - אלוף משנה
30. Compacting - Grisah - גריסה
31. Compendium, volume - Kovetz - קובץ
32. Computerization? Computer communications? -  
Tikshuv - תקשוב
33. Configured - Mekunfag - מקונפג
34. Confined - Merutak - מרותק
35. Constraint - Ilutz - אלוץ
36. Contour line - Kav ramah - קו רמה
37. Control - Pakach - פקה
38. Cooperate - Meshatef pe'ulah - משתף פעולה
39. Copywriter - Tamlilan - תמלילן
40. Correction fluid, white-out, Wite-Out - Tippex - טיפקס
41. Daylight savings time - She'on kayitz - שעון קיץ
42. Deductible - hishtadfut atzmit - השתתפות עצמית
43. Defect, breakdown - Takalah - תקלה
44. Definitive - Moovhak - מובהק
45. Demanding - Tova'ani - תובעני
46. Dependent - Nismach - נסמך
47. Deployment - Prisa - פריסה
48. Deployment - Hatma'a - הטמעה
49. Deterioration - Haslamah - הסלמה
50. Diesel fuel - Solar - סולר

51. Discrepancy - Ee hat'amah - אי התאמה
52. Disposal - seeluk - סילוק
53. Domesticated - Buyat - בויתת
54. Dormitory, ward - Pnimiyah - פנימיה
55. Doubt - Hitlabtut - התלבטות
56. Drop cloth - Niyar tol - ניר טול
57. Dumbbell - Tembel - טמבל
58. Edutainment - Lamdor - למדור, from לימור בידור
59. Ego identity - zehut ani megubeshet - זהות אני מגובשת
60. Element - Gorem - גורם
61. Encompassing - Hekefi - הקפי
62. Environmental Impact Assessment - Taskir hashpa'ah  
al hasviva - תסקיר השפעה על הסביבה
63. Ethical preaching - Mussar - מוסר
64. Expanse - Mirvach - מרווח
65. Identity diffusion - zehut diffuzit - זהות דיפוזית
66. Fallout - Nasoret - נשורת
67. Feasibility - Kda'iyut - כדאיות
68. Firing line - Kavenet - כונת
69. Foreclosure of mortgage? - Kones nechassim - כנס  
נכסים
70. Formulated - Hitgalgel - התגלגל
71. Franchise - Zikayon, Zichyon - זכיון
72. Frustration - Tiskul - תסכול
73. Fundraising - Hatramah - התרמה
74. Ghetto mentality - Galutiyut - גלותיות
75. Granular filling - Kurkar - כורכר
76. Greater - Rabati - רבתי
77. Groupware - Kovtzah - קובצה
78. Hazardous waste - Mesaken - מסכן
79. Humiliation - Hashpalah - השפלה
80. Identity diffusion - Zehut difuzit - זהות דיפוזית
81. Implementation - Yisum - ישום
82. Implication - Hashlachah - השלכה
83. Infringe, damage - Pagah - פגע

84. To infringe upon the rights - Lifgoah bezchuyot - לפגוע בזכויות
85. Infringement - Pgi'ah - פגיעה
86. Integrity - Temimut - תמימות
87. Intercepted - takal or nitkal - תקל, נתקל
88. Interrupt (computer) - Psika - פסיקה
89. (And) in witness thereof - Ulera'ayah - ולראיה
90. Journal - Bit'a'on - בטאון
91. To jump through many hoops - Laasot shminiot ba'avir - לעשות שמיניות באויר
92. Kickback, fee - Amlah - עמלה
93. Knots (inward) - Ayin - עין
94. Landed - Naflu - נפל (as in Scuds)
95. Landfill - Hatmanat psolet - הטמנת פסולת
96. Lieutenant - segan - סגן
97. Lieutenant colonel - Sgan aluf - סגן אלוף
98. To take lightly - Lehakel Rosh - להקל ראש
99. Linseed oil - Shemen pishtan - שמן פשתן
100. Local authority and district planning committee - HaVa'ada hamekomit vehamechozit - הועדה המקומית והמחוזית
101. Mainland - Yabeshet - יבשת
102. Make-up exam - first date - second date; resits (British); sub (South African); exam date - alternate date - Moed Bet - מועד ב
103. MBD, minimal brain dysfunction - Pegam mochi miz'ari - פגם מוחי מזערי, פ.מ.מ.
104. Major - Rav seren - רב סרן
105. Major - Merkazi - מרכזי
106. Major-general - Aluf - אלוף
107. Manifestation - Tismun - תסמון
108. Mobile, elite unit (military) - Sayeret - סיירת
109. Momentum - Tenufah - תנופה
110. Motive, motif - Moteev - מוטיב
111. Obligatory - Mechayev - מחייב

112. Official signatory - Mursheh chatimah - מורשה  
חתימה
113. Particularly - Davkah - דוקא
114. Peculiarity - Shigaon - שגעון
115. Perception - Marit Ayin - מראית עין
116. Peripatetic, itinerant, ambulatory, nomadic,  
mobile - Noded - נודד
117. Phenomenon - Tofa'ah - תופעה
118. Pilot plan - Mitkan nisyoni - מתקן נסיוני
119. Plan that precedes implementation - Dirkun -  
דרכון
120. Polyfoam - Kalkar - קלקר
121. Practical engineer; associate engineer. Usually  
Associate of Specialized Technology (AST) or  
Associate of Science (ASc) - Handesai - הנדסאי
122. Precision - Daikanut - דיקנות
123. Pregnancy bed rest  
See also <http://www.pregnancybedrest.com> - Shmirat  
Herayon - שמירת הריון
124. Prerequisites - Drishot makdimot - דרישות  
מקדימות
125. Presentation - Hatzagah - הצגה
126. Presenting - Mesirah - מסירה
127. Principal - Menahel - מנהל
128. Project, development - Kiryah - קריה
129. Purport - [Yamar] Hityamer - ימר, התימר
130. Pursuant - Behemshech - במהשך
131. Preparatory school - mechinah, mechinot  
kedom akadema'it - מכינה, מכינות קדם אקדמיות
132. Rate of movement - tadirut hatenuah - תדירות  
התנועה
133. Ratify - ashrer - אשרר
134. Rappeling - Snaffling (from SnapLink) -  
סנפלינג

135. Rate of movement - Tadirut hatnua - תדירות  
התנועה
136. Refinement - Shichlul - שכלול
137. Resolve, settle- Leyashev - לישב
138. Robustness - Xosen - חוסן
139. Routing slip - Tofes tiyulim - טופס טיולים
140. Sanitary Landfill - Atar hatmanat psolet - אתר  
הטמנת פסולת
141. Sap - Ma'ayan hasraf - מעיין השרף
142. Scenario - Tarchish - תרחיש
143. Second lieutenant - Segen mishneh - סגן משנה
144. Select - Muvchar - מובהר
145. Series - Behemshechim - בהמשכים
146. Setting, context - Misgeret - מסגרת
147. Severance pay - Pitzui - פצוי
148. Sheltered workshops for youth - Miftan - מפת"ן  
מפעל תעסוקה לנוער
149. Snooze - Nudnik - נודניק
150. Special enrichment - Tipuach - טפוח
151. Spend - levalot, levazbez, lehotzi - לבלות, לבזבז, להוציא
152. Squat - Palash - פלש
153. Suspended sentence - Al tnai - על תנאי
154. SUV - Rekhev Shetax - רכב שטח
155. Systems administrator - Manmar - Menahel  
מנהל מערכות Ma'archot
156. Spyware - roglá - רוגלה
157. Stolen software - gonva - גונבה
158. Take lightly - Lehakel rosh - להקל ראש
159. Temerity, presumptuousness - Chutzpah -  
חוצפה
160. Third party - Tzad gimmel - צד ג'
161. To say the least - Belashon ham'atah - בלשון  
המעטה

162. Town planning scheme - Tochnit Binyan Ir - תוכנית בנין עיר
163. Transfer Station - Tachanat ma'avar - תחנת מעבר
164. Triple - Mashlish - משליש
165. Turning outward, externalization - Hachtzanah - החצנה
166. Toy library - mischakiyah - משחקיה
167. Upon signing the contract - BeKabbalat ha'avoda - בקבלת העבודה
168. Upon signing the contract - Behazmanat ha'avoda - בהזמנת העבודה
169. Utility knife, Xacto knife - Sakeen yapanit - סכין יפנית
170. Versatile - Gamish - גמיש
171. Versatility - Gmishut - גמישות
172. Visibility - Nir'ut - נראות
173. Voicing - Hashma'ah - השמעה
174. Vulnerable - Sovel - סובל

## German

1. Schadenfreude - Simcha La'id - שמחה לאיד
2. Weltanschauung – world view - Tfisat Olam - תפיסת עולם

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keyword: [Dictionary](#)



## *Elusive*

Maybe it's because I'm growing older, but more and more words seem to slip my mind – just when I need them.

Of course, this section *should* be much longer, but the other words that are not here... escaped me!

- Elusive
- Vulnerable

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Your exercise for this article is as follows:



## *Reverse dictionary*

The following English "reverse dictionary" concepts come from my personal dictionary:

- Opposite of cellular phone: landline
- A product that contains Scriptural or Liturgical remnants that require burial according to Jewish ritual tradition - Geniza - גניזה
- Gush Katif bracelet: Friendship bracelet

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*Hebrew*

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1. general-major -Aluf - אלוף  
2. colonel -Aluf mishneh - אלוף משנה  
3. discrepancy -amah 'Ee hat - אי התאמה  
4. affirmative action -Aflaya Metakenet - אפליה מתקנת  
5. constraint -Ilutz - אלוץ  
6. to ratify -Ashrer - אשרר  
7. Sanitary -Atar hatmanat psolet - אחר הטמנת פסולת - Landfill

reserved ב

8. domesticated -Buyat - בויית  
9. journal -on 'Bita - בטאון

ג

10. coalesce -גיבוש Gibush  
11. element -גורם Gorem  
12. formulated -התגלגל - Hitgalgel  
13. ghetto mentality -גלותיות Galutiyut  
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.71 Lehakel rosh להקל ראש - to take lightly  
.72 Lehotzi לבלות, לבזבז, להוציא - Spend

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- .73 ashMigr מגרש - building plot  
.74 Moovhak מובהק - definitive  
.75 Muvchar מובהר - select  
.76 Mussar מוסר - ethical preaching  
.77 Moed Bet מועד ב' - sits -re ;second date -first date  
exam ;(South African)sub ;up exam-make ;(British)  
alternat date -date  
.78 Mursheh chatimah מורשה חתימה - official signatory  
.79 Moteev מוטיב - motif ,motive  
.80 Motag מוטג - brand name  
.81 Mazal מזל - Zodiac ,astrological sign  
.82 Pegam mochi miz'ari פגם מוחי מזערי, פ.מ.מ. - MBD  
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.83 Mechayev מחייב - obligatory  
.84 Michraz מכרז - bid  
.85 Manmar מנהל מערכות - Mehanel ma'archot - Systems  
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.86 Marit Ayin מראית עין - perception  
.87 Menahel מנהל - principal  
.88 Misgeret מסגרת - context ,setting  
.89 Mesirah מסירה - presenting  
.90 Mesaken מסכן - hazardous waste  
.91 Tachanat maavar תחנת מעבר - transfer station  
.92 ftanMi מפת"ן מפעל תעסוקה לנער - sheltered workshops  
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.93 Mekunfag מקונפג - configured  
.94 Maksimum מקסימום - at most ;at least  
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Your exercise for this article is as follows:

Keyword: [Dictionary](#)

### ***Military terms***

1. Aloof - אלוף - major-general
2. Aloof mishneh - אלוף משנה - colonel
3. S'gan aloof - סגן אלוף - lieutenant colonel
4. Rav seren - רב סרן - major
5. Seren - סרן - captain
6. Segen - סגן - lieutenant
7. Segen mishneh - סגן משנה - second lieutenant

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

### ***Synonyms, English***

Word finders are not always as helpful as they should be (and thesauri are *never* helpful to a translator).

Following are some suggested alternatives to common terms. Not all of them are listed in your word finder.

Assessment, Difficulty, Experimental ("It has been an experimental time for us"),  
Challenge Matter, Ordeal, Personal test of goodwill,  
Pivotal, Point of decision, Trial, Trouble,  
Unusual, Worry

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**Other books in this series**

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The series is divided as follows:

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- 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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