



# The MITA Reader

- April/May '07

## Creative Translation

By Laura Tamayo Gamborino

All translators have *war stories* about a phrase or term that resisted translation. The fact is that translation is more than matching words from one language to the next in a one-to-one relationship. The cultural dimensions of our work often require us to find equivalent concepts even if it means using entirely different words. This becomes even more demanding when we work with creative material. All words project an array of definitions; creative work, however, uses words so that they generate meaning beyond the ones the dictionary offers. It is in these cases that our work takes on aspects of semiotics.

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols with special regard to function and origin. So when, as translators, we are looking at a creative task that involves images or imagery, our job is to help our client not just "say it in another language", but rather

create an equivalent effect in the target language. Something as simple as referring in the text to a logo with an animal—let's say a rabbit—requires us to consider the many target-language words available to us and where they fit in the cultural space in which we are communicating. Is this rabbit meant to be cute and sell products for infants? Is it meant to imply speed and sell train tickets?

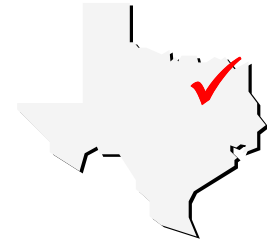
The target audience of a text or picture infers meaning from the entire context—time, place, perceived intent, author, etc. As time passes, events and new developments transform the meaning of both verbal and non-verbal symbols. This means we must be aware of current usage as well as past significance.

This affects not only how we translate, but also how we advise our clients. Keep in mind that at times, espe-

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METROPLEX INTERPRETERS & TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

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Next month: *Discounting*

### Watch your inboxes!

**MITA will be sending out a survey soon and we need EVERYONE's input, please!**

**Your voice counts—this is YOUR association!**

## June 2, 2007—MITA Meeting!

Symbols and signs, Court interpreters often deal with them during closing arguments in a jury trial. Translators run into them any time we work with advertising, marketing or similar tests. (often referred to as *transcreation*.) How can you be most effective when dealing with meaning that goes far beyond the words themselves? Come to our June 2 meeting for a study on transcreation by our own **María Yolanda Rivera!** (We'll start at 2:30 with some computer software Q&A time,

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Submissions are welcome (begged for, actually); articles should focus on language, cross-cultural, linguistic, or industry concerns, and be of interest to our general readership (preferably not language or country specific.)

**Upcoming Events:**

June 2, 2007  
MITA meeting

June 16, 2007  
ProZ Powwow, Dallas  
(www.proz.com/powwow/1158)

August 11, 2007  
ATA certification,  
Houston  
(www.atanet.org)

June 2007						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

July 2007						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**Creative ...**

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cially in the case of popular software, clients purchase the translation along with translation memories and glossaries.

In addition, where creative jobs are concerned, it is of special importance to review the notion of context with the buyer. In the world of marketing and advertising, context is all. A translation memory and glossary from 2000 may not be fully equipped to deal with a ad campaign in 2007. The "shelf life" of certain catch phrases, puns, slang, or pop-culture references is much shorter than it is for many technical terms.

On a final note, building a creative translation can be more time consuming than a more straightforward translation. Where jokes, plays on words, references to images, etc., are concerned, there is more to do than check out a dictionary or do a quick search. So when offering estimates, it is prudent to spend a few extra moments determining turn-around time and rates.



Translator and writer **Laura Tamayo Gamborino** is a regular contributor to the MITA Reader.