

# International Certification Study: Accreditation by the South African Translators' Institute

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*By Jiri Stejskal*

In the July issue I discussed the accreditation program developed by the Brazilian Translator Association ABRATES. This month's article will provide you with information on the varied accreditation options offered by the South African Translators' Institute (SATI). The following is adapted from a letter received in response to the ATA's letter to FIT members concerning the Certification Study. Complete information can be found at the SATI Website at [www.translators.org.za/indexes/english/accredit.html](http://www.translators.org.za/indexes/english/accredit.html).

Accreditation by the SATI is currently available for translation, for purposes of becoming a sworn translator, for language editing, for interpreting, for terminology, and for pioneer Bible translation.

Translation accreditation is available in combinations of all 11 of the official languages of South Africa, as well as a range of foreign languages including French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Romanian (!), and Hebrew. The accreditation examination is a written examination in which three questions out of approximately eight, covering a variety of fields, have to be completed. One question (a general text) is compulsory. If a translator wishes to specialize in a certain field, an effort will be made to accommodate him or her. The main objective of the examination is to test the final translation product that the candidate can present. Therefore, there is no formal time limit, although candidates may not have the examination paper in their possession for more than 24 hours. Candidates are also free to use all the sources they may have available. They may not, however, consult another person.

Grading of the examination scripts is done along the lines of the scheme used by ATA. This means that errors are classified as either major or minor errors. Two or more major errors in one text, or one major error and seven minor errors in one text, means that one fails the examination. A limited number of minor errors (20) is allowed. Once the examination script has been received by the Examination Committee, it is submitted to two graders who mark it independently and anonymously. The identity of the candidate also remains secret. If both examiners pass the candidate, he or she passes; if both fail the candidate, he or she fails. In the event of one examiner passing and the other failing a candidate, the script is submitted to a third examiner whose decision is final.

Accreditation for purposes of becoming a sworn translator was introduced by the Institute in order to provide for the standardization of the examination required as a part of the procedure for becoming a sworn translator. The sworn translator's examination is a written examination in which four texts must be translated. The procedure is the same as for general translation accreditation, except that grading includes consideration

of the conventions pertaining specifically to sworn translations.

Accreditation for language editors is run along similar lines as accreditation for translators. Six texts on a variety of subjects are provided for editing. A choice of texts may be given within the various questions. Corrections are done on the texts themselves. Candidates are

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free to choose a style for editing: either using any accepted proofreading symbols or "school-teacher style" (i.e., writing in a correct form). The examiners will assess the editing in terms of errors spotted and the suitability of corrections provided. This examination is currently available in English and Afrikaans, and is being expanded to cover the other official languages of South Africa.

Accreditation for interpreting is carried out at a suitable venue once an adequate number of applications have been received to make an examination at a particular venue economically viable. Candidates are examined in the language combination(s) and interpreting mode(s) of their choice, with an accreditation certificate reflecting the relevant details. The accreditation test comprises an on-the-spot evaluation of a candidate's interpreting abilities, which is carried out by an accreditation panel appointed by the SATI Examinations Committee.

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## ATA ACTIVITIES

### Accreditation

- Exam sittings have been added in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Washington, DC.
- Exam sittings were held in Austin, Texas, and Salt Lake City, Utah.

### Board

- The ATA Board of Directors held a Board retreat and meeting June 29-July 1 in Seattle, Washington. (See From the Executive Director in this issue for more information.)

### Conference

- The ATA 42nd Annual Conference, Los Angeles, October 31-November 3, is taking shape. For the latest information and registration forms, visit the ATA Website, <http://www.atanet.org>.
- Conference *Final Program* advertising, exhibit space, and sponsorship opportunities continue to be marketed. For

more information, please contact Megan Gallagher or Bob LePage at the McNeill Group, (215) 321-9662 or [mgallagher@mcneill-group.com](mailto:mgallagher@mcneill-group.com) or [blepage@mcneill-group.com](mailto:blepage@mcneill-group.com); [www.mcneill-group.com/mediakit.html](http://www.mcneill-group.com/mediakit.html).

### Membership

- ATA membership is running 10.2 percent ahead of last year at this time.

### Professional Development

- The deadline for mentor and mentee applications for the ATA Pilot Mentoring Program Has passed. Thanks to all who applied. If you are not a participant in the pilot program, you are invited to attend "Strategies for Getting the Mentoring You Need" (ATA-3) on November 1st at the ATA conference. For more information, please go to the ATA Website, [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org), and click on ATA Pilot Mentoring Program

on the home page.

### Public Relations

- ATA Executive Director Walter Bacak worked with a reporter from *The Miami Herald*.
- ATA has agreed to serve as a sponsor for this year's SAE Multilingual Documentation for the Automotive Industry TOPTEC Symposium, October 18-19, 2001 in Paris. (ATA was a sponsor of the same symposium last year in Detroit, Michigan.)
- ATA continues to work with the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs, ASTM Translation User and Language Interpreting Standards projects, and the Localisation Industry Standards Association.

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**Visit ATA online at [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)**

**for information on your membership benefits!**

**It's Time to Plan...**

**ATA's 2001 Annual Conference**

**Los Angeles, California**  
October 31-November 3, 2001

**Upcoming Conferences  
& Educational Programs**

### International Certification Study Continued from p. 11

Terminology accreditation involves the compilation of a mini bilingual, bi-directional technical dictionary in the subject field of the candidate's choice. Documentation in the subject field is provided and candidates have to excerpt the terms from this. The mini dictionary should include appropriate front matter, with indications on how the dictionary was compiled and the problems encountered while compiling it, and also back matter (i.e., bibliography, names of subject specialists, linguists consulted, etc.). An indication on how the dictionary is to be used should also be given.

Accreditation for pioneer Bible translation is undertaken in association with the Institute for Bible Translation in White River. Pioneer Bible translators are those who translate the Bible into new languages.

Further information on the accreditation procedures of SATI can be obtained from the Examinations Assistant, Marion Boers, at [boers@iafrica.com](mailto:boers@iafrica.com). Ms. Boers also informed me that SATI is currently revising its terminology accreditation procedure.

Next month's article will bring you information on non-degree professional certificates for Arabic/English translations offered by the Center for Adult and Continuing Education of the American University in Cairo. As the editor of this series, I encourage readers to submit any relevant information concerning non-U.S. certification or similar programs, as well as comments on the information published in this series, to my e-mail address at [jiri@cetra.com](mailto:jiri@cetra.com).

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### TRADOS Workshops

TRADOS Corporation offers one-day training workshops each month for Translator's Workbench, MultiTerm, and WinAlign at its site at 113 S. Columbus Street, Alexandria, Virginia. Attendance is limited. For more information, contact: Tel: (703) 683-6900; Fax: (703) 683-9457; E-mail: [eva@trados.com](mailto:eva@trados.com) or [www.trados.com](http://www.trados.com).

### Call for Papers Institute of Translation & Interpreting/IALB Conference on Language and Business November 22-25, 2001

**University of Hull • Hull, England**  
Please send abstracts to Dr. Catherine Greensmith, Department of French, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull HU6 7RX England; Tel: +44 1482 465162; E-mail: [c.greensmith@selc.hull.ac.uk](mailto:c.greensmith@selc.hull.ac.uk).

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