

Translation and Interpretation Basics -- and Some Consumer Tips

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Translation vs. Interpretation

- Translation
 - A rendering from one language into another – a definition by Merriam-Webster
 - In our trade, translation specifically referring to written renderings
- Interpretation
 - Oral rendering from one language into another

Interpretation

- Three Basic Modes of Operation
 1. Simultaneous interpretation, when rendering happens continuously at the same time someone is speaking. Depending on situation, also known as conference interpreting or whispering.

Interpretation

- Three Basic Modes of Operation
 2. Consecutive interpretation, when rendering happens intermittently after a pause between each completed segment.
 3. Sight interpretation, a.k.a. sight translation
 - A hybrid of interpretation and translation
 - Interpreter renders a written document orally into another language

Translator's Misery

- In the good old time, a Chinese translator only needs:
 - A few pens or pencils or both
 - Some paper
 - As many dictionaries as he or she could get hold to

Translator's Misery

- Nowadays, we have to buy:
 - Powerful computers
 - High-speed Internet
 - Fax machines
 - Multiple phones – landline and mobile
 - Professional software of various descriptions
- Yet we are losing works faster than ever and are constantly under price pressure.
- Damn the globalization!

Translation and High Technology

- How to speed up the translation process?
 - Machine translation?
Nah
 - Computer-aided translation?
Yes!

Machine Translation

- Very fast
- Very cheap – no human intervention
- Not very useful

Machine Translation

- An example:

Kittredge Magnet School for High Achievers offers students in grades four through six an enriched version of the DeKalb County elementary core curriculum.

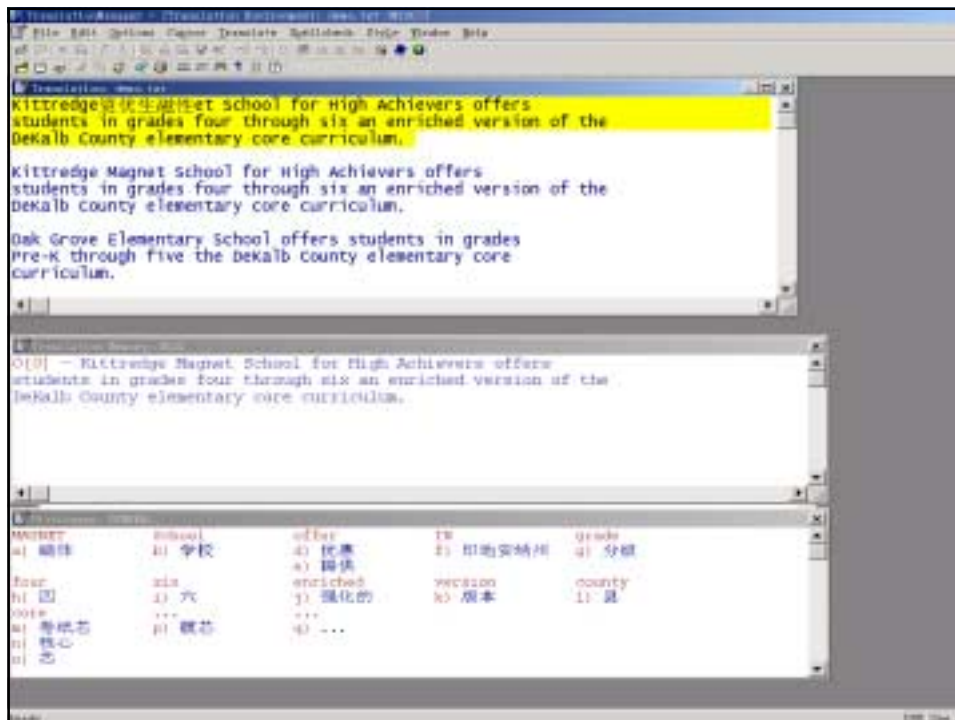
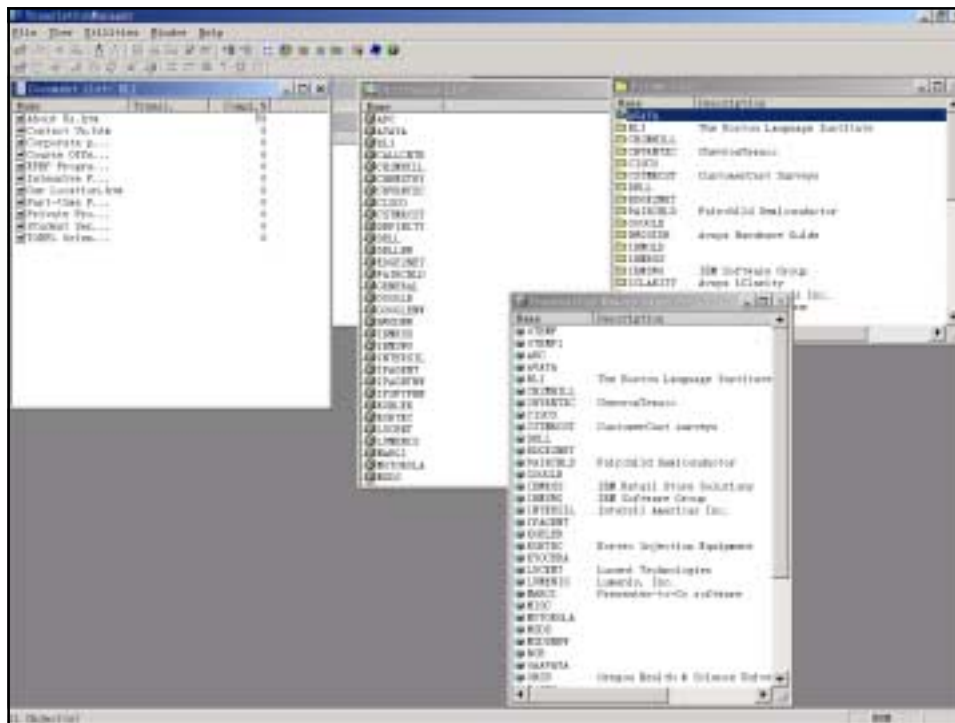
Kittredge 为高的进取者的磁铁学校 提供学生在等级四至六DeKalb 县基本的核心课程的一个被丰富的版本。

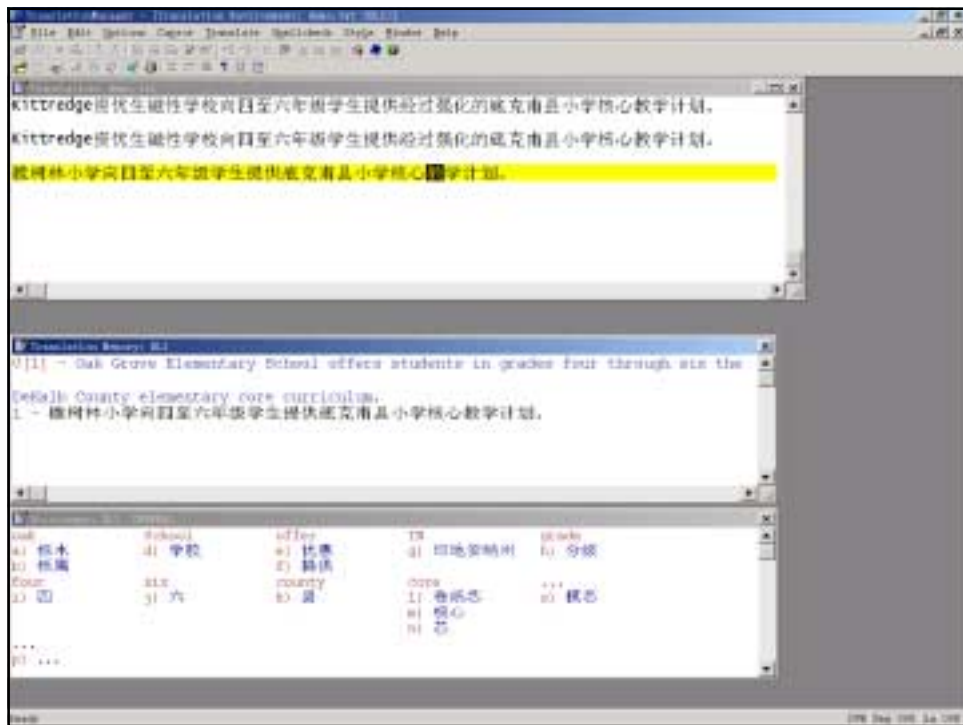
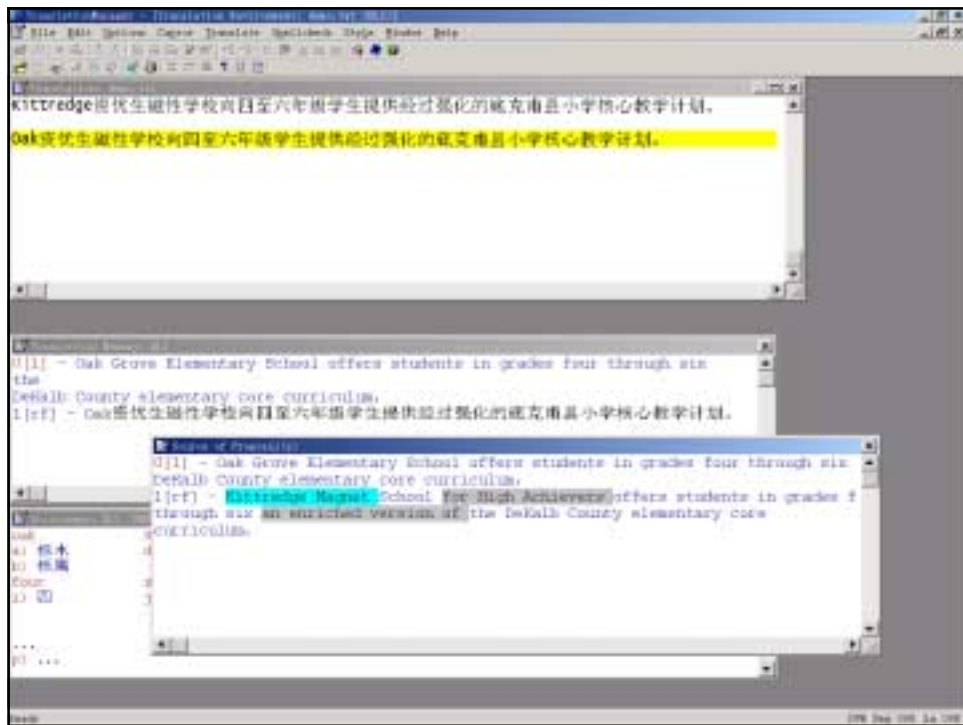
Published on

<http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/~kittredge/about.asp>

Computer-Aided Translation Software

- AKA Translation Memory Tools
 - Such as IBM TranslationManager, Star Transit, Déjà Vu, TRADOS Workbench
 - Database software in essence
 - Helping translators keep track of glossaries and previous translations
 - A demonstration?





Modus Operandi

- Staff translators
 - Full-time translators working for a specific employer
- Temporary translators
 - Probably a bilingual employee unhappily doing translation work given or demanded by a superior


Modus Operandi

- Freelance translators
 - Greatest people of the world – freedom loving, hard working, family caring... 🌟
 - Could be full-time, but not always
 - Could have direct end clients, but likely not

Professional Requirements

- None – there are NO uniform requirements for professional translators and/or interpreters
- Certifying processes are offered by various organizations, such as
 - Department of State
 - American Translators Association (ATA)
 - Georgia Commission on Interpreters

Where to Find

- Reputable translation agencies – check your yellow pages under “Translators & Interpreters”
- ATA Website: atanet.org – if you do not mind dealing with translators directly
 - Complete online membership directory – click on “Services Directories” in the left pane
 - Many are “accredited” members 
 - Currently offering from-English-into-Chinese accreditation

Where to Find

- NAJIT – National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, www.najit.org
- Georgia Commission on Interpreters, www.georgiacourts.org

What to Ask

- Rates. Per word or hourly? By English or Chinese word count?
- Experience – full-time equivalence
- Turnaround time – beware of commitment for over 2,000 English word per day
- Sample translation – insisting, if possible, the translator to work on your project personally

Thank you very much!