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1st Quarter 2003



From the President

Now that War in the Middle East appears inevitable, it is time for Americans to reconcile their feelings with the needs of their nation. In a nutshell, it is time for all of us to pledge our allegiance to our flag and the nation for which it stands. True, the land of freedom and democracy affords us the flexibility to choose issues and stand for ideals. It allows us to voice our disapproval and our opinions with the old "in-your-face" attitude that has made us so unique throughout history. But it also bestows upon us the ultimate trust to preserve and defend it to the very last man. Granted, this conflict may not come to that extreme. But our thought processing should.

When the decision is made by our President-and it will be irreversible-our reaction must focus on the support that will be needed to speak as one voice. The hundreds of thousands of men and women who have already deployed overseas need it, and our history demands it. Indeed, the learned body of our population has read many books, conceptualized countless scenarios, politicized volumes of issues, and over-analyzed patriotism. But the bottom line is that our choice was made a long, long time ago. From the first bloodshed in 1770, through the summer of 1776, our destiny was carved in stone as one nation whose indivisibility has been recited and pledged by every child from the very first day of school. That rise to rebellion was neither conceived, nor seen through its conclusion by thugs. They were men of gigantic stature and conviction who counted on each other to challenge insurmountable odds. I cannot imagine how Adams, Franklin and Washington would feel if they were to witness a nation divided in the face of the current events.

If our forward troops are committed, then we immediately become the rear, and whether theoretically or otherwise, we cannot be flanked by creating ideological holes in our own lines. That could be a very costly mistake. A weakness that no other country is allowed to incur in times such as these. Thus, if the war comes, then we must believe that it has been carefully thought through. We must believe that all the possibilities to avoid it have been exhausted. At that time, we will stand together against those who will stand together against us. This fragile oasis of freedom that we call our country, regardless of its flaws, can only be sustained by the combined strength of its people. The call may be coming soon. Let's get ready.

God Bless.

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Homeland, sweet homeland...



Senator Robert Byrd, right on the floor of the Senate, referred the Department of Homeland Security as "an irresponsible exercise in political chicanery" In a fiery and passionate speech, he equated it to a butt-coverer for Bush, a corporate boondoggle and a license for Uncle Sam to spy on Americans. Pretty strong words. However, on November 21, 2002 the Senate voted 90-9 to approve the landmark Homeland Security bill. Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., was one of the nine Senators voting against it, and in an address on the Senate floor, he raised fundamental questions about the need for the new agency and whether it will have the desired impact.

The following is a full transcript of his remarks during the conclusion of the Homeland Security debate. We are presenting to you as a means to offer our readers all sides of the issue. This is just one of them:

We have come to the end of a long, long road. For nearly five months this chamber has engaged in discussions about homeland security. But, for nearly as long a time this Congress has not engaged in seeing to it that there is actually funding to make our people any safer from the threat of another horrific terrorist attack.

It has been over four months since the House of Representatives has seen fit to pass a regular appropriations bill. We have talked a lot about homeland security, but we have done very, very little.

We have not given the cities and municipalities -- the police, the firemen, the hospital workers, the first responders, who are on the front lines -- we have not given these people one red cent to help them keep us safer from the madmen within our midst in four months. It has been a little over a year and two months since America was jolted from its tranquility by the noise, smoke and flames of two exploding commercial airlines as they smashed into the twin towers.

Yet, in these intervening months, except for the initial help we provided to New York and to Washington to aid in closing the hemorrhaging wounds of economic disruption and human devastation, caused by the terrorist attacks, not enough has changed here at home.

True, we have chased bin Laden across the landscape of Afghanistan and probably cleansed that nation of the training camps for terrorists for now. We have made progress, I am sure, in some disruption of the al-Qaida network worldwide.

But no one in this chamber, and no one in this city can look the American people in the eye and say to them: "Today you are much safer here at home than you were 14 months ago."

Because of reckless disregard for the reality of the threat to our domestic security, this administration and many in this Congress have taken part in an irresponsible exercise in political chicanery.

The White House has pressured its Republican colleagues in the Congress to reject billions of dollars in money which could have added to the tangible safety of the American people.

This White House has stopped this year's normal funding process in its tracks, and even turned back funds for homeland security in emergency spending bills that could have shored up existing mechanisms to prevent, or respond to, another devastating blow by fanatics who hate us.

They have done this plain disservice to the people in order to gain some perceived political advantage in a congressional election year, and in order to be able to say that they were holding down spending. Further, in order to avoid criticism of the too meager dollars for homeland security, this White House suddenly did an about-face and embraced the concept of a Department of Homeland Security.

The people are being offered a bureaucratic behemoth, complete with fancy, top-heavy directorates, officious new titles and noble sounding missions instead of real tools to help protect them from death and destruction.

How utterly irresponsible. How callous. How cavalier. With this debate about homeland security, politics in Washington has reached the apogee of utter cynicism and the perigee of candor.

No one is telling our people the plain unvarnished truth. It is simply this.

This Department is a bureaucratic behemoth cooked up by political advisors to satisfy several inside Washington agendas.

1) It is intended to protect the president from criticism and fault -- should another attack occur.

2) It is intended to eliminate large numbers of dedicated, trained federal workers, so that lucrative contracts for their services may be awarded to favored private entities.

3) It will be used to channel federal research moneys and grants to big corporate contributors without the usual federal procurement standards that

ensure fair competition and best value for the tax dollar.

4) It will foster easier spying and information-gathering on ordinary citizens which may be used in ways which could have nothing whatsoever to do with homeland security.

And now with this new bill, which showed up only last week on the doorstep of the Senate, insult has been added to injury by provisions that further exploit the already shamefully exploited issue of homeland security with pork for certain states and certain businesses.

My, my, my, how low we have sunk. Well, the nation will have this unfortunate creature, this behemoth bureaucratic bag of tricks, this huge Department of Homeland Security, and it will hulk across the landscape of this city, touting its noble mission, shining up its new seal, and eagerly gobbling up tax dollars for all manner of things, some of which will have very little to do with protecting or saving lives.

And maybe in five years or so, it will sort out its mission and shift around its desks enough to actually make some real contribution to the safety of our people. I sincerely hope so. But, if the latest tape from bin Laden is to be believed, we won't have time for all of that. If the latest threat assessments from the FBI can be believed, we will experience something catastrophic before that new department even finishes firing all of the federal workers it wants to get rid of.

What does it take to wake us up? What does it take to make the gamesmanship cease? When will we stop the political mud wrestling and begin to wrestle with the most potentially destructive force ever to challenge this nation?

Let us hope that when the gavel bangs to close down this session of Congress, it will awaken us to all of the dreadful consequences of continued posturing and inaction.

I know that this administration, with its newfound majorities in both houses of Congress, will quickly pass the remaining 2003 bills which will provide at least some modicum of real security for our people as soon as Congress reconvenes in January. They will want to claim that they can get things done.

Although I deplore the motivation and the gamesmanship behind such tactics, I wish them well and I pledge my help.

It is long past time for us to finally do our best to prevent another deadly strike by those who hate us and wish us ill. Terrorism is no plaything.

Political service is no game. Political office is no place for warring children.

And the oath of office which we take is no empty pledge to be subjugated to the tactics of election-year chicanery perpetrated on a good and trusting people.

Coming next month: ...the other side of the issue.

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Machine translation: How can you work at 40% accuracy?



Based on the latest wave of MT software (machine translation) that has been rolling into the market, we are often asked about translating programs and if these programs are reliable in translating material. As published by EAMT (The European Association for Machine Translation), which is supported and sponsored in part by ELDA (the Evaluations and Language Resources Distribution Agency), which is in turn sponsored by DGLF (Délégation Générale à la Langue Française--yes, the Europeans are pretty big on anything that beeps, lights up, squeaks, and could potentially beam you up into the belly of the mother ship--these gadgets are between 60 and 70% accurate. Naturally, these percentages are staunchly defended by ELRA (the European Language Resources Association)--yes, again, the Europeans are HUGE on unions, under the pretext that it demonstrates how technology is slowly taking us into the next century, and beyond.

Thus, with technology expanding in so many areas of business, it is not surprising that the business of translations would enter into the computer age as well. The question is best served by asking: at what cost?

At the end of the 1950s, researchers in the United States, Russia, and Western Europe were confident that high-quality machine translation (MT) of scientific and technical documents would be possible within a very few years. After the promise had remained unrealized for a decade, the National Academy of Sciences of the United States published the much cited but little read report of its Automatic Language Processing Advisory Committee. The ALPAC Report recommended that the resources that were being expended on MT as a solution to immediate practical problems should be redirected towards more fundamental questions of language processing that would have to be answered before any translation machine could be built. The number of laboratories working in the field was sharply reduced all over the world, and few of them were able to obtain funding for more long-range research programs in what then came to be known as computational linguistics.

There was a resurgence of interest in machine translation in the 1980s and, although the approaches adopted differed little from those of the 1960s, many of the efforts, notably in Japan, were rapidly deemed successful. This seems to have had less to do with advances in linguistics and software technology or with the greater size and speed of computers than with a better appreciation of special situations where ingenuity might make a limited success of rudimentary MT. The most conspicuous example was the METEO system, developed at the University of Montreal, which has long provided the French translations of the weather reports used by airlines, shipping companies, and others. Some manufacturers of machinery have found it possible to translate maintenance manuals used within their organizations (not by their customers) largely automatically by having the technical writers use only certain words and only in carefully prescribed ways (Martin Kay, Xerox-PARC).

The Internet is now the most common medium for the delivery of translations and computers now contain many packages that allow for multi-lingual publishing and design. Long before the World Wide Web, there were scores of computer programs that claimed to perform the actual act of language translation. But even today these programs remain very inaccurate and can yield some very embarrassing results. These programs understand words and sentences in their context, because they rely on a very simplified translation based vocabulary. Essentially, a computer translates either word-for-word or phrase-by-phrase translation, and does not understand the choice of synonyms and what meaning to choose from in regards to the original text. A computer program can never understand the sensibilities of the target audience. Computer generated translations usually contain word and grammatical errors, and at worst translations that are make absolutely no sense. Beyond this, there are many factors contribute to the difficulty of machine translation, including words with multiple meanings, sentences with multiple grammatical structures, uncertainty about what a pronoun refers to, and other problems of grammar. But two common misunderstandings make translation seem altogether simpler than it is. First, translation is not primarily a linguistic operation, and second, translation is not an operation that preserves meaning. Is this somewhat difficult to comprehend? Apparently not to European scientists who continue to work hard at making sense of something that will never work.

We believe that the world would be better served by attesting to the fact that MTs are, at best, 40% accurate at all times. That would leave the end user with some serious odds to consider when spending money on gadgets... and then some more on post-editing and proofreading. Therefore, the only possible answer to this question would be that the most useful tool for translating is a knowledgeable and experienced translator who understands the culture of the target audience and who is capable of understanding both the written and spoken target and source languages.

Anything less would be...well... 40% accurate.

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Language Rights

What is language discrimination ?

Language discrimination means treating someone differently solely because of his or her native language or other characteristics of speech. On the job, for example, an employee may be subjected to language discrimination if the workplace has a "speak-English-only" policy, especially if her primary language is not English. An employee may also be the victim of language discrimination if she is treated less favorably than other employees because she speaks English with an accent, or if she is told she does not qualify for a position because she does not speak English well enough. But language discrimination doesn't only happen on the job. For example, a person may be denied access to businesses or government services because he or she does not speak English.

Is language discrimination illegal?

Although the law in this area is still developing, there are many court decisions which have found language discrimination to be a violation of people's constitutional rights and civil rights laws. Some courts have found language discrimination to be the same as discrimination based on race or national origin. As early as 1926, the United States Supreme Court ruled that a requirement that accounting records be kept in English or local dialects but not Chinese violated the Constitution (*Yu Cong Eng v. Trinidad*). In 1974, the Supreme Court ruled that failure to provide bilingual instruction for public school students who did not speak English effectively denied them equal access to educational opportunities, and thus constituted national origin discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (*Lau v. Nichols*). And, as recently as 1991, the court ruled that in some cases, language-based discrimination should be treated as race discrimination (*Hernandez v. New York*). Other courts have also protected the right of language minority groups to be free from discrimination. Those courts have reasoned that even if language and national origin were not synonymous, language-based discrimination disproportionately harms national origin minorities and can, for instance, violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits workplace discrimination because of national origin.

These cases include rulings against accent discrimination (*Carino v. Univ. of Oklahoma Bd. of Regents*, and a finding from a Texas court that a "rule that Spanish cannot be spoken on the job obviously has a disparate impact upon Mexican-American employees". (*Saucedo v. Brothers Well Service*). In addition to court decisions, there are also federal and state laws prohibiting language discrimination. The Guidelines on Discrimination Because of National Origin, published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to interpret Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act, prohibit English-only rules, accent discrimination, and other forms of language discrimination without a strong business justification. The California Fair Employment and Housing Act also bans practices that disproportionately impact minority workers. There are other laws which may also apply to language discrimination in employment, by business and by government. On the federal level, these include the federal Civil Rights Act of 1866, which bans racial discrimination in the making and enforcement of contracts, including employment contracts, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits race and national origin discrimination by recipients of federal funds, such as universities and police departments. In California, we also have the Unruh Civil Rights Act, which bars business establishments and places of public accommodation from discriminating on race or other arbitrary grounds and the Unfair Practices Act, which prohibits unfair and unlawful business practices.

Why is Language Discrimination Illegal?

These laws make it illegal for employers to discriminate against an employee because of his or her national origin. "National origin" generally refers to the country that a person, or that person's ancestors, came from. The primary or ancestral language of a person is closely related to her ethnicity and national origin. Therefore, discrimination against that language has the same effect as national origin discrimination, just as discrimination based on surname or color goes to one's race or national origin. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is the federal government agency responsible for interpreting and enforcing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The EEOC has long held that national origin discrimination includes "the denial of equal employment opportunity because . . . an individual has the physical, cultural or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group," [emphasis added] and that the "primary language of an individual is often an essential national origin characteristic."

Common sense -- and an immense body of academic research in the areas of linguistics and sociology -- tells us that the connections between ethnicity and language are extremely close and important. For practical purposes, they are often inseparable. There is always the danger that language discrimination can be used purposefully or even unconsciously as an excuse for race and national origin discrimination. Because of subtle, unconsciously held stereotypes, an employer may assume, for instance, that a job applicant with a Hispanic accent is less qualified than one with an British or French accent.

When Can an Employer Require an Employee to Speak Only English at Work?

The EEOC generally views "speak-English-only" policies as being illegal under the Civil Rights Act unless justified by business necessity. However, a recent case in California refused to follow the EEOC Guidelines on these policies, instead holding that English-only rules must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. (*Garcia v. Spun Steak Co*) This decision came in a case where two Latina meat processing plant workers were disciplined for speaking Spanish on the job. Under this ruling, which applies to California and eight other western states, the court stated that an employee may challenge a "speak-English-only" policy in the workplace under federal law if:

- 1) the rule is applied to employees who speak no English or who have difficulty speaking English; or
- 2) the policy creates, or is part of, a work environment that is hostile toward national origin minority employees. Examples of a hostile work environment would include, for instance, the rule being applied in a very harsh manner, or a pattern of harassment in addition to the English-only rule.

If an employee is able to show that either of those conditions applies, then the employer must show a "business necessity" for the policy -- that is, that the rule is "necessary to safe and efficient job performance," and that there are no other alternatives which would serve the employer's legitimate interests with a less discriminatory effect. (*Dothard v. Rawlinson*; *Griggs v. Duke Power Co*; Civil Rights Act of 1991). The business necessity standard is hard to meet. Unless an employer can show that the work in question genuinely requires that communications between employees be in English (as opposed to any other language), that all workers must be able to understand all communications between all other workers, and that the consequences of a lapse in communication are serious, it is unlikely that the standard can be satisfied.

According to the EEOC Compliance Manual, the "business necessity" standard would apply, for example, to a team of workers on an oil drilling rig who are responsible for its operation and where constant communication understood by everyone is required. The business necessity standard would also apply to operating room medical staff who are performing surgery. On the other hand, forcing co-workers in a kitchen or on an assembly line to speak only English while conversing with each other simply because other workers are uncomfortable, or because customers dislike hearing foreign languages, is not a "business necessity."

In addition, the employer must also meet the additional requirement that a speak-English-only rule is the least discriminatory means of addressing any bona fide business concerns -- and this is hard to do. If an employer imposes these kind of rules because of tensions between different ethnic groups of workers, for example, the rules may actually worsen the situation by making language minority workers feel demeaned, humiliated, and resentful. There are far more effective and equitable ways to defuse personal disputes and tensions, which typically run deeper than any objections to the use of a particular language. Rather than imposing discriminatory rules, employers should bring in cross-cultural sensitivity training or other, more direct means of addressing the underlying interpersonal problems.

Though the ruling in *Garcia* allowed some English-only restrictions at worksites, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act remains even stronger in states outside California and several other western states. There, the EEOC Guideline, which presumes that "speak-English-only" workplace rules adversely impact national origin minority workers even if they are able to speak English well, remains in effect. Courts in those areas may thus require employers to prove business necessity after the simple showing that such a rule exists. Moreover, California employers are subject to the Fair Employment and Housing Act, which (as discussed above) has been interpreted to bar English-only rules unless justified by business necessity.

When Can an Employer Treat an Employee Differently Because of His or Her Accent?

If an employee is discriminated against because of his or her accent when speaking English, this also constitutes a violation of the employee's civil rights, since an accent is a characteristic of one's national origin. In general, one cannot be denied an employment opportunity on the basis of accent unless that accent "materially interferes with job performance." Moreover, the courts will closely examine an employer's claim that a national origin minority employee who speaks with an accent had inadequate communications skills to determine whether the claim was honest and bona fide. An employer's assessment of an employee's accent must not be influenced by subtle prejudices in favor of some accents, for example a preference for British or French accents over others, such as Spanish or Chinese, is impermissible. One recent case illustrates how the courts look at claims of accent discrimination in the workplace (*Xiang v. People's National Bank of Washington*). In Washington, a Cambodian man charged that he was not promoted because of his accent. The Washington State Supreme Court agreed, holding that the employee had successfully shown that his job performance was not impaired by his accent.

The court noted that it is legitimate for an employer not to promote someone on the basis of their accented speech only if the accent interferes materially with job performance. However, the court stated that "[a]ccent and national origin are obviously inextricably intertwined in many cases. It would therefore be an easy refuge in this context for an employer unlawfully discriminating against someone based on national origin to state falsely that it was not the person's national origin that caused the employment or promotion problem, but the candidate's inability to measure up to the communication skills demanded by the job." In short, then, any assertion that an employee's accent prevents that employee from performing his or her job adequately must be examined very carefully and with an awareness of possible subjective and cultural biases. Sometimes code words such as "communication skills" or "professionalism" are used by employers to refer indirectly to an employee's accent. Very often, accents are assessed "off the cuff" without any documentation that the employer used valid, objective or consistent criteria to evaluate whether or not it really affected the job performance. For those reasons, the employer's judgment may well be indefensible.

When Can an Employer Treat an Employee Differently because He or She Cannot Communicate Well in English?

An employer may not deny a person an employment opportunity because that person is not proficient or fluent in English, unless the job

- 1) actually requires some English language skills; and
- 2) the person does not possess the particular type and level of English language skill required to do the job.

In many cases, of course, doing a job successfully will actually require a certain degree of proficiency in English. This is the case where the job, for instance, involves composing documents, reading and understanding complicated written materials, or communicating regularly with the English-speaking public. However, if a person is told that she does not qualify for a position because she is unable to speak or read English well enough, but the position is one which requires little or no communication skills -- for example, a job as a night custodian or on an assembly line where the work is routine or individualized in nature -- she may have a strong claim of language discrimination. Moreover, even if the job requires some English proficiency, an employer cannot require a higher level or different type of proficiency than the job actually requires, thereby disqualifying otherwise qualified individuals. There are many ways in which an employer may claim that a person does not know enough English for the job in question. Some employers will simply assert that based on past job performance, the employee or applicant does not understand English well enough; others will use a test that purports to measure English proficiency.

The problem with using English language proficiency as a job requirement, however, is that it tends to disproportionately exclude national origin minorities, especially recent immigrants, from employment opportunities. Whatever screening method is used, the law is clear that where that method has a disproportionate impact on minority applicants or workers, the requirement must be "validated" -- that is, the English proficiency requirement must be clearly related to the job in question, based on the actual job skills that are required.

In evaluating English proficiency as a job requirement, the only proper questions are:

- (1) whether a certain level or type of English proficiency is truly required for the job, and
- (2) whether the means the employer uses to measure that proficiency are accurate and do not require more proficiency, or a different sort of proficiency (such as written as opposed to oral English), than is actually needed for the job itself.

GUIDELINES AND QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS CONSIDERING THE USE OF WORKPLACE "SPEAK-ENGLISH-ONLY" RULES

1. Is there a business necessity for the rule? Some commonly asserted employer rationales include:

a. **Employee morale:** Employees may complain about co-workers speaking in a language they do not understand. However, this usually reflects underlying, more deeply rooted interpersonal tensions that are best dealt with directly, rather than by imposing sanctions that fall only on certain ethnic groups -- and which would, if anything, increase workplace tensions. And even assuming that employees are in fact using their proficiency in another language to denigrate co-workers -- i.e., that the problem is not imagined -- there probably are more individualized solutions, tailored to particular situations, that are preferable to imposing a plant-wide rule that stigmatizes all who speak that language.

b. **Efficiency:** The argument that English should be enforced for efficiency reasons ignores the fact that workers are generally able to communicate more accurately and quickly in their primary language.

c. **Safety:** Again, in an emergency or other safety-sensitive situation, employees will generally be able to communicate more efficiently and quickly with each other in their primary language. Indeed, federal OSHA regulations encourage employers to administer safety trainings in employees' primary language, be that English or otherwise, to ensure maximum comprehension.

d. **Improving employees' English proficiency:** Although it may be a laudable goal for employers to assist their employees in learning English, requiring them to speak it or suffer discipline or termination is an extremely punitive (not to mention ineffective) means of doing so. Employers interested in increasing employees' English proficiency have profitably done so through other means, such as providing access to ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. Moreover, if the employees were hired for their jobs at their existing English skill levels, it would seem difficult to justify increasing their proficiency levels on business necessity grounds.

e. **Distraction:** Some employers claim that it is distracting for workers to overhear conversations in non-English languages they do not understand. This argument lacks a foundation in common sense, i.e., one is more likely to be distracted hearing a conversation one does understand, than a language one does not. If an employer was truly concerned about distracting conversation, the proper approach would be a rule against all unnecessary speech, not just speech in languages other than English.

f. **Monitoring employees' work:** This rationale assumes that overhearing what employees are saying to each other is a primary method of evaluating their work. But employers commonly use other methods to do so -- visual inspection, quality control checks, and so forth. In any event, it is hard to see why a speak-English-only policy would be needed for this purpose, since (if the employees speak English to begin with) it is unlikely they would refuse to speak to a supervisor in English about work-related issues.

2. Even assuming that there is some bona fide business purpose which the speak-English-only policy was intended to achieve, are there less discriminatory, better-tailored means of achieving that purpose?

3. Is the policy applied to those having difficulty speaking English? Under the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court ruling in *Garcia v. Spun Steak*, employers should not impose such a policy upon workers who have difficulty speaking English.

4. Does the policy tend to create a hostile work environment? Under *Garcia*, if a speak-English-only policy creates or contributes to an overall environment of discrimination against national origin minority employees, it will probably be found illegal. Some factors to be considered:

a. Employers should keep in mind the close connection between an employee's primary language and that employee's cultural and ethnic identity. Suppressing one's primary language imposes differential burdens on that person because of her national origin, and may contribute to feelings of intimidation, inferiority and isolation.

b. Is the policy applied unreasonably, or in a "draconian" manner, so as to make employees nervous about even minor slips of the tongue?

c. Is the policy applied only to members of some ethnic groups, but not others?

d. Even if the policy itself may not create a hostile work environment toward national origin minorities, does it combine with existing tensions to create or aggravate such an environment?

e. Is the policy applied in a consistent manner, predictably and without arbitrariness?

5. Is the policy clear as to the circumstances under which languages other than English may not be spoken, and the consequences of violating that policy? This pamphlet is intended to provide accurate, general information regarding your legal rights concerning language discrimination. Yet because laws and legal procedures are subject to frequent change and differing interpretations, the Employment Law Center and the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Northern California cannot ensure the information in this pamphlet is current, nor can they be responsible for any use to which it is put. Do not rely on this information without consulting an attorney, the Language Rights Line, or the appropriate agency about your legal rights in your particular situation.

The Employment Law Center, a project of the Legal Aid Society of San Francisco, and the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Northern California have jointly established the Language Rights Project to end language-based discrimination in the workplace and in other sectors of society. The Language Rights Project is made possible by generous grants from the Rosenberg Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation. This information was extracted from material produced by the Employment Law Center and the ACLU Foundation of Northern California. They are solely responsible for its content.



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Fun Stuff



So, you don't really think that a proper translation can truly make a difference? Well, we've gone straight into the information superhighway in search of some typical examples of what happens when folks like yourselves (the non-believers in certified and accredited translators) place your trust in the ability of that marvel of multi-lingual tools: "machine translation software." Get ready, because the following examples are not only funny... they are also very, very real.

Next time anyone asks you if you have heard of "machine translation software," simply tell them that you have seen enough... take a close look at these:

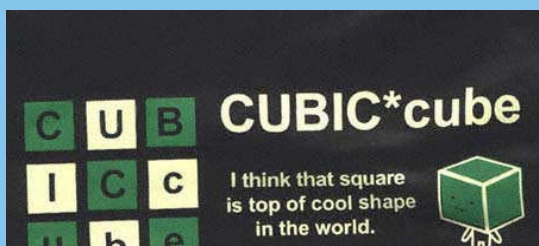


For the discerning buyer who is interested solely on the toy's good looks, as extreme priority, of course. Now if your priority changes to... say... safety, then this IS NOT the toy for you. It slices, it dices, its minces... ladies and gentlemen, this is the complete tool that no kitchen, garage, or workbench should be without. Now, you will have to be careful with that little part that suffocates. Except that, apparently, it only happens when the sharp part is swallowed. Of course, the chances of that happening are remote

because of the generous containment, naturally. The whole thing changes once you assume responsibility... by yourself.



Here is the multi-purpose pocket knife to end all multi-purpose pocket knives. The rustproof, TK-1... touch-knife? Oh, well... how bad can it be... I mean, it has a U.S. Patent (or patented) and it does caution us that the blade is extremely sharp. As any knife should be, I suppose. Now, for those who have not figured out that killing is illegal in all fifty of our states, please, keep out of children.



Ah, those crazy cubic cubes! They sure are lots of fun, aren't they? In fact, I've heard that they are top of cool shape in the whole wide world! What have you heard about the crazy cubic cubes?



Well... OK... I guess. I'll refrain no check good if you tell me what a "forguest" is. Now, I've heard of these creatures, but I've never seen one. But as to the "no check good" thing, I'll refrain... I promise.



Ahh, and what journey into a foreign land would be complete without a portion of some delicious Pumpkin Poo? Poo has not taste this good since the depression, folks. Seriously, you **MUST** try it.



Well, actually, I'm not sure. What type of pleasure is your pleasure. What if our pleasures don't match? In any event, I've got a plane to catch, but... thanks anyways. No, really, I mean it. Thanks.



Wait a minute, boss... which version do you want me to repaint first? No, no... I understand that this is not a new product. I got it, not a new product "at all." So you are trying to tell me that THIS is not new. I got it. Now, as I understand it, all of you guys on the first floor, well... I mean all of you guys already being marketed were recently painted in the new method. I see, boss. And... well... I gather that this new method was the "hi-skill" method? Well, I don't mean to be presumptuous, boss, but that may be your point of view... the fact is...

This box was most certainly designed with teenagers in mind. You can put your cassettes, CDs, tools, and even drugs... or "drags," as cleverly depicted in the graphics below.

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From Maryland to the World

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