

PART 3 LOST IN COMMUNICATION



1. Read the following definitions of 'Translation'. Do you agree with them? Why or why not?

- Reading a translation is like looking at a tapestry on the wrong side. – *Cervantes*
- Poetry is what is lost in translation. – *Robert Frost*
- Pope's translation of Homer is a portrait endowed with every merit except that of likeness to the original. – *Edward Gibbon*
- It is as impossible to translate poetry as it is to translate music. – *Voltaire*
- The Latin translations of the Bible are not versions but perversions. – *St. Jerome*
- An interpreter is the one who enables two persons of different languages to understand each other by repeating to each what it would have been to the interpreter's advantage for the other to have said. – *Ambrose Bierce*
- Prose can be translated, but poetry can only be transmuted.
- Some writers are so obscure, they are untranslatable even into their own language.
- Translations are like women: if they are faithful, they are not beautiful; if they are beautiful, they are not faithful.

2. Some people say that at some time in the future machines will be able to translate from one language into another better than humans, and there'll be no need in translators and interpreters. Do you agree? Why or why not?

3. Work in pairs. Read the article on electronic translators by Mark Harris from the Sunday Times and then decide whether the statements after the passage are true or false. Correct the false statements.

You've ordered your latte flawlessly in the charming Sicilian cafe, but when it comes to asking about parking restrictions you may need linguistic assistance. Electronic translators have several advantages over phrasebooks. They're often smaller and more comprehensive, with intelligent search functions to track down your chosen phrase in seconds. The latest models, including all six mentioned here, can speak foreign words and phrases out loud, and some can recognise and translate speech at the touch of a button.

All these translators can interpret French, German, Italian and Spanish and at least one other language. If you're travelling further afield, the Franklin and Ectaco iTravl can translate Chinese and Russian, among oth-

0. All latest models of electronic translators can speak foreign words and phrases out loud	•	TRUE
1. Most latest models of electronic translators can recognise speech and translate spoken words and phrases out loud	•	FALSE
2. All latest models of electronic translators can interpret at least 5 languages	•	TRUE
3. Most latest models of electronic translators can interpret East European and Oriental languages	•	TRUE
4. To enable elementary communication 2000 phrases may be enough	•	TRUE
5. Intermediate communication may require minimum 3000 phrases	•	TRUE
6. Advanced communication may call for well over 20000 phrases	•	TRUE
7. Some latest models of electronic translators can recognize stylistic registers	•	TRUE
8. Most latest models of electronic translators are sensitive to language	•	TRUE
9. If the phrase you want to be translated is not in the machine's memory, no electronic translator will help you	•	TRUE
10. Some latest models of electronic translators can be used for learning a language	•	TRUE
11. Some latest models of electronic translators can perform basic digital functions	•	TRUE
12. All latest models of electronic translators can predict the speaker's intention	•	TRUE
13. Some latest models of electronic translators are reliable	•	TRUE
14. No model of electronic translators uses British English	•	TRUE
15. The functions of all latest models of electronic translators are similar	•	TRUE

Choosing a translator depends on how and where you're travelling. The Talkman's PSP lets you play console-quality games, while the Garmin's sat nav keeps drivers on track. The Limeo should let you order dinner almost anywhere and has great battery life. A good all-round choice is the Ectaco IT'Travel, thanks to its huge dictionary and good (if temperamental) voice recognition.

Another annoyance is that all the Talkman and Garmin, use American voices and words, so chrome screens of the Franklin and Limeo could be easily seen in bright sun, and neither was great indoors. Which is shockproof, dustproof or waterproof. All but two were hard to read in strong sunlight. Only the mono hours rather than weeks. Sportsing, beach and rainforest holidays could prove fatal to these translators, none of which is shockproof, dustproof or waterproof. All but two were hard to read in strong sunlight. Only the mono-memo and MP3 players on several.

Electronic translators can perform other digital functions, such as currency conversion, alarm clock and calculator — found on all models, except that the PSP has no calculator. You'll also find basic games, voice memos and MP3 players on several.

The PSP Talkman and Ectaco IT'Travel also work as tutors, offering exercises to improve fluency and evaluate rating pronunciation. Only the Talkman asks whether you want to say a phrase in a forced or laidback manner, or in a friendly or unfriendly tone — useful when you've exhausted your stock of politeness.

Even if your exact phrase isn't there, the Talkman offers an intelligent variety of phrases to select from. Partmer. The PSP worked better: you simply pick a situation, say what you want and the PSP checks its memory vice will translate it into your selected language. In tests, this proved impressive but not reliable, especially on the vice will translate it into your selected scenario and speak a phrase into the microphone. If it is there, the de-

On the Ectacos, you choose a theme and select a phrase into the microphone. If it is there, the de-

stuary English into idiomatic French. You're thinking of Star Trek.

and both Ectacos have speech recognition, although don't expect them to time consum-

ing, especially on cramped keyboards and tiny touchscreens. The Talkman chooses and gives a lecture to medical students.

Kitchen and give a lecture to medical students.

Language Guide and Ectaco Partner may be comprehensive enough to run a

your complaint to the doctor, while the 14,000-20,000 phrases of the Garmin

pressions should enable you to voice your appreciation of a meal and describe

for ordering breakfast and finding the hospital. The Ectaco IT'Travel's 7,000 ex-

kim, Limeo and Sony Talkman have between 1,000 and 3,000, which is fine

It's worth checking how many phrases the translator knows. The Fran-

tongues), Turkish, Persian (Farsi) and even Korean — 19 languages in total.

ers. For round-the-world travel or if you just want to converse fluently with

