



## (U) Letters to the Editor: Trade Jargon

FROM: SIGINT Communications  
Unknown  
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(U//FOUO) We've received several comments on the recent article [Trade Jargon: Got Your "Ears"?](#) :

- (U//FOUO) "Great List. One should remember the humour that goes along with this terminology, or the great practical jokes that linguists play on each other. My favorite would be to take a reel (I'm dating myself here), fast forward it on the take-up reel, then use the take-up reel as an "original"... Present the reel to a "nugget" (a new linguist), and instruct him/her to transcribe it ASAP as it had a very important cut on it. Ha! Some, but few, would pick up on the joke very quickly, others would turn out a "great" transcript! You can only imagine the feedback!" - [REDACTED]

- (U//FOUO) "Having been doing this for nigh on 30 years, I thought I'd put my two cents worth on this. Your definition of A%, etc. is slightly off - which is understandable since I've found that quite a lot of people hired over the past few years haven't the foggiest idea of A-val, B-val, C-val, etc. A-val is certain, confirmed; B%/-val is probable, as in "that's probably what was said," C% is possible. Anything less than C% the linguist is supposed to sound out what he hears. [USSID 101](#) explains it. As for "read" - it's actually "reads" short for "readability." As linguists we would say that "the reads on this are terrible". This all comes from the Morse query using Q-signals of QRK IMI which means "what's my signal strength and readability" (5 by 5 meaning a very strong signal and very good readability). So, we could also say "the reads on this are 5 by" or "this is fivers" (meaning 5 by 5). We also use "femop" for "female operator." At one time - the newbies wouldn't understand this - we talked about "hammered copy" which meant it was garbled. I believe that came from the idea that the Morse or TTY copy looked like the operator had been using a hammer to send it. This crossed over into the voice world for those of us who worked in the same ops spaces as the Morse collectors. "A false friend" is a new one. Sounds like something A-group people would've thought up." - Anonymous

(U//FOUO) *Editor's comment: You guessed correctly. The author was an A Group [the organization that focused on the Soviet Union] transcriber for 6 years. It seems that even within the same profession there were organizational differences in jargon!*

- (U//FOUO) "This is just a note FYI. I am a Language Analyst here. I am also a certified translator and interpreter, and I have a small comment regarding this article. It stated that translation could be the conversion of text or speech from one language into another. While the term translation is widely used to describe the rendering of language A speech into language B, the correct professional term for this is "interpretation." Interpreters and instructors of interpretation are actually quite touchy about this differentiation, as translation and interpretation are two very different skills. ... Text to text is translation. Speech to speech is interpretation, and there are two kinds: simultaneous (with the headphones), and consecutive (where the interpreter takes special notes while the speaker is speaking, then presents the interpretation)." - [REDACTED]

- (U//FOUO) "Good article! As a transcriber, I can definitely identify with most of the definitions. May I suggest an addition? When I saw "ears" for headphones, "ear" came to mind. Ear (singular): A transcriber's ability to translate the target language. "Let's get [REDACTED] to do that difficult cut; she's got a good ear." - [REDACTED]

- (C//SI) "These terms have not significantly changed since I was stationed at FS Berlin in '75-78. Then Captain, now MG, Quirk was my Company Commander. Mr. Jim Cusick was the senior German DSO...however, my language was Russian. Mr. [REDACTED] was the head QC of the Russia shop." - [REDACTED] NGIC

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