TRANSLATION ACES NEWS

MARCH 2010

🎵 🎵 🎵 "ACCÉN-TUATE THE PÓS-I-TIVE" 🎵 🎵 🎵

Why Accents Matter

Even experienced printers specializing in multilingual typesetting neglect the importance of accents in many foreign languages. Here are a few examples of words and their very different meanings with and without proper accent marks:

◆ **In Spanish:**

"*año*" (with the tilde over the "*n*") means "*year*"
<u>BUT</u>   "*ano*" (with no accent) means "*ass*"
<u>SO BE CAREFUL:</u> "*Tengo 30 años*" means you've hit the big three-oh,
<u>BUT:</u>   "*Tengo 30 anos*" means you've got a load of donkeys!

◆ **In French:**

"*pêcher*" (with a circumflex accent over the first "*e*") means "*to fish*" (for trout or compliments)
<u>BUT:</u>   "*pécher*" (accent *aigue* on the first "*e*") means "*to sin*"
<u>SO BE CAREFUL</u>: "*J'ai pêché la semaine dernière*" means you went fishing last week,
<u>BUT:</u>   "*J'ai péché la semaine dernière*" means you did something naughtier!

◆ **In Portuguese:**

"*coco*" (no accents) means "*coconut*"
<u>BUT:</u>   "*cocó*" (accent aigue on the second "*o*") means a bun (the hairdo)
<u>AND:</u>   "*Cocó*" (same accent but capital "*C*") is a river in Brazil
<u>AND:</u>   "*cocô*" (circumflex on the second "*o*") is babytalk for diaper droppings

◆ <u>MORAL TO THE STORY:</u> ◆

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♦ **FEATURE** ♦ <u>Lingua Quiz!</u>
1.   Which month was the original beginning of the year?
    (a)   January, named for Janus, God of gates and doorways, so time for openings
    (b)   February, named for Februa, Roman festival of time for purification
    (c)   March, named for Mars, God of war, so time for resumption of war

2.   Which month was an extra month originally between February and March?
    (a)   Intercalaris   (b)   Mensius   (c)   Idus Martias

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ANSWERS:

1.   (c) March was the year's opener in many places for agricultural reasons: England used March 25 as the year's beginning until 1752, when using January 1 and the Gregorian calendar were simultaneously adopted. Historical names for March include the Saxon term Lenctmonat, named for the Equinox, the lengthening of days and the eventual namesake of Lent.

2.   (a) Intercalaris was added to make up the difference between the number of days in their calendar and the number of days in the solar year; Julius Caesar eliminated *Intercalius* and changed the number of days in the 12 months so the calendar would match the solar year of 365.

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