



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR  
2005 PROJECT SUMMARY**

<b>Name(s)</b> <b>Tyler R. Lancaster</b>	<b>Project Number</b> <b>J1710</b>
<b>Project Title</b> <b>An International Game of Telephone: Translation and the Transformation of Ideas</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p><b>Objectives/Goals</b> My research showed that a substantial number of the world's languages belong to the Indo-European language family, with various other languages belonging to four additional major language groups that share significant common grammatical characteristics. Based on these family ties numerous languages can be said to be related, and based on these ties, it is expected that a translator can reliably convey ideas across languages.</p> <p><b>Methods/Materials</b> To test my hypothesis that meaning will survive translation, I routed an original English language description of a sumo wrestler on a pogo-stick through a succession of seven foreign language translations by seven professional translators, until the passage was translated into English once again. Additionally, I requested that each of the translators complete a brief questionnaire regarding the passage and problems with its translation.</p> <p><b>Results</b> Comparing the English versions and analyzing the questionnaires completed by the translators, I found that the original description was changed significantly in its details, but that the essential character of an oriental warrior survived this game of international telephone.</p> <p><b>Conclusions/Discussion</b> The alteration of details was significant, but on a less refined level, an original meaning was conveyed. If on some level we can communicate the question remains whether the imperfections of that communication accurately and fully convey a given idea or "meaning" as the original writer intended. Translation operates to bridge differences and meaning is carried on that bridge and the reviewed commonalities of language groups.</p>	
<b>Summary Statement</b> My project concerns the communication of ideas across languages and the potential distortions inherent in translation.	
<b>Help Received</b> Mother helped in locating translators.	