Objective
To measure improvements in translation speed and accuracy that result from utilizing an automated translation aid versus creating an un-aided translation.

Definition
Translator’s Aide is a representative tool for assisting translation of audio/video clips. Developed by BBN Technologies and funded by the Department of Defense Technical Support Working Group (TSWG), several features of the tool as a whole are designed to enhance performance:
- Integration of a video clip and its controls into a translation document.
- Access to a machine-generated transcript of the audio.
- Highlighting of important information such as person, location, and organization names.

Importance
Human translators are essential, especially for understanding details, nuances, and complex subject matter in a foreign language. As the call for translations in strategic languages increases it is critical to:
- Evaluate the usefulness of translation aids that have the potential to speed the translation process while preserving or increasing translation accuracy.
- Convey the findings to managers considering adopting aids into the workflow to support mission requirements.

Background
At the request of the National Virtual Translation Center (NVTC), CASL has evaluated the overall usefulness of Translator’s Aide. In addition to exploring whether the potential benefits differ for native and non-native speakers (focusing on Arabic and Mandarin), the study systematically varied three key tool dimensions in order to ascertain their importance independently of the tool itself:
- Availability of a machine-generated transcript.
- Availability of navigation features embedded in the transcript.
- Transcript quality.

Research Activities
A total of 54 Arabic translators and 54 Mandarin translators (split evenly between native and non-native speakers in each language) participated. Our findings show that translation aids that provide moderate to high quality transcripts are likely to:
- Increase productivity among non-native speakers without decreasing productivity among native speakers.
- Be well received by native and non-native speakers alike.

In addition, translators’ comments suggest that having access to machine-generated transcripts would:
- Save time for translators who already create their own transcripts.
- Enable translators to read ahead as an aid to comprehending long or complex utterances.
- Provide added benefit, for example to native speakers, if the transcripts could be edited.

Findings, Reports, and Products
Found in Translation: The Translator’s Aide Evaluation Study—A brief video, suitable for decision makers, documenting the utility of the translation aid
Initial Assessment of Broadcast News Clips for Experiments with Translator’s Aide (M.1)
Using Technology to Aid Translators—Final Results of the Translator’s Aide Evaluation (M.5)