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MEMBER
OPINION

PROMOTING INCLUSION IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

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The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

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The greatest lessons I carry with me into my presidency are not those learned as a result of taking on large projects and roles, but those that came about from working with such a diverse group of colleagues and volunteers.

Working Together to Move ATA Forward in a Changing Landscape

As I begin my term as ATA president, I find myself reflecting on—and grateful for—how the past decade contributed to my ATA experience. I’ve served the Association as an administrator of one of ATA’s largest divisions, chair of three standing committees, five years as a director on the Board, and, most recently, president-elect and conference organizer.

Each of these positions has offered some unique lessons while allowing me to see a different perspective of the largest translator and interpreter association in the world. These roles came with challenges and achievements, small projects and large ones. All in an effort to move our Association forward in one area or another.

But perhaps, more importantly, the greatest lessons I carry with me into my presidency are not those learned as a result of taking on large projects and roles, but those that came about from working with such a diverse group of colleagues and volunteers.

During my two terms as administrator of ATA’s Medical Division, I had the chance to engage with colleagues from many different linguistic, cultural, and professional backgrounds. I worked with both translators and interpreters, often collaborating with the Interpreters Division to meet the needs of members we had in common. Continuing to

find ways to work together as a stronger unit will be crucial in the coming years.

As chair of the Public Relations Committee, I learned about the importance of promoting our members to the general public and to the media, getting the word out about who we are and who we serve. Elevating our professions in the eyes of the public remains a top priority for me and for ATA.


Chairing the Membership Committee taught me to better understand the needs of our individual members and how ATA can show up for them better. Working to refine and improve our member benefits will be an ongoing effort, and I will continue to look to you to offer feedback and ideas.

As chair of the Governance and Communications Committee, I was able to look at the Bylaws and policies that govern our Association to see where we could make improvements and bring some of our guiding principles up to date to serve our members as a whole.

As a Board member, president-elect, and

conference organizer, I’ve been fortunate to see ATA in a different light than any of my previous positions offered me. The big, complex picture that is our Association, made up of thousands of language professionals from all walks of life, is a humbling one. All the gears that turn to make ATA what it is continue to impress upon me how far we’ve come and how far we can go, even in, or especially in, the changing landscape of our professions.

There will surely be more to learn in this next chapter. When making decisions that affect our members, my goal will be to keep all members in mind regardless of background, membership class, voting, or certification status. I want to assure you that I am here, ready to work with you, learn from and with you, support you however I can, and offer a seat at our Association’s table for every diverse voice that makes up ATA as well as those who wish to join us.

Thank you for your confidence in me. I look forward to serving you in this role during the next two years. 

LAST ONE!

My last column! Finally! Of all the tasks asked of ATA's president, this is the only one I truly dreaded and hated. I can talk about ATA and the Board all day long, but writing this column was consistently a chore that made me wish I were Tom Sawyer with a pail of whitewash. So, I'm happy to see this come to an end. My other duties not so much, but it's time to move on.



TED R. WOZNIAK

And since this is my last column, I'm going to exercise my editorial prerogative and reflect on my service on the Board and to ATA since October 29, 2010.

It's hard to believe it will have been 4,018 days (11 years) since I was first elected to the Board. There have been a lot of changes since then—for me, for ATA, and in the translation and interpreting (T&I) universe. Among other things, ATA has made major improvements to its professional development program, increased member benefits, become much more “interpreter-friendly,” and (finally!) moved the certification exam to a fully online system. The profession has grappled with the rise of machine translation and increased automation in project management and seen explosive growth in (not-so-) new fields of T&I such as audiovisual, transcreation, search engine optimization marketing, and remote interpreting.

In my candidate statement in 2010, I listed nine areas of concern I wanted to work on,

of which all but two (really one and a half) have been accomplished.

Improve Communication between Members and ATA:

While not intended as a direct communication channel to the Board, the ataTalk listserv has served to increase debate and discussion among members. *The ATA Podcast* also provides members with information about ATA happenings and governance issues. And I believe the Board's communication to members about policy and governance issues is now much better and more informative.

Offer More Business

Education: ATA's training offerings of the business of T&I is certainly far greater and of much higher quality than in the early 2000s.

Improve Cooperation with the Association of Language Companies:

I not only opened a dialogue with the Association of Language Companies (www.alcus.org), but we have also cooperated on several issues of common concern, such as advocacy

efforts surrounding AB 5 and related independent contractor issues, issues arising from the pandemic such as early vaccinations for on-site health care and legal interpreters, and support for language access by the federal government. An attempt to develop a joint model contract for use with language services companies did fail, but at least we made the attempt in a friendly and professional manner.

Increase the Use of Electronic Meetings/Balloting by the Board:

I changed my mind on this one after learning more about the legal issues surrounding board meetings and seeing the effect of having open meetings.

There have been a lot of changes since I was first elected to the Board in 2010—for me, for ATA, and in the translation and interpreting (T&I) universe.

I was wrong about this one. In order to have completely frank and honest discussions among board members, especially when discussing our mistakes and failures, it's necessary to have in-person closed meetings. That is not to say "secret" meetings, but closed meetings. At least during discussions of items when the Board needs to air some "dirty laundry." Members could still attend portions of in-person meetings to talk directly to the Board (even though I can't recall ever having more than five members attend a Board meeting, even at the conference). Concise minutes, coupled with statements from the president in this space, can inform members about the Board's work.

Increase the Use of Online Presentations/Seminars to Save on Costs: Webinars have become an almost daily occurrence—even pre-COVID—and the breadth and quality of them has increased dramatically. The future of hybrid or fully virtual conferences/seminars remains to be seen as the financial costs are currently very high. But that could change, making at least virtual seminars and specialized conferences economically feasible.

Revitalize the Ethics Committee/Complete the Revision of the Code of Professional Conduct: Done. And almost done. As chair of the Ethics Committee, Rudy Heller began the revitalization of the committee, and the

Ethics Procedures were completely rewritten to ensure a fair and impartial hearing of all complaints received. The Code of Ethics and Professional Practice was revised back in 2010 and is currently undergoing a major revision that should be completed soon. The number of complaints received initially increased dramatically as members learned that ATA took their complaints seriously, even if many of their complaints didn't result in sanctions. Twelve members have since been sanctioned, compared to just one during many prior years. And history was made when ATA expelled a member in perpetuity for the first time.

Work on Model Contract Project: Not done (as envisioned) but we tried. This may have been a bridge too far. As mentioned above, we attempted to work with the Association of Language Companies to develop a joint model contract for independent contractors and language services companies, but the differences were just too great to overcome. But at least we tried. There's a model contract for translators that's suitable for use with direct and private (non-language services company) clients, and a similar model contract for interpreters is in the works.

Offer Military Linguist Outreach Program: Created and underway. As a former military linguist, this was certainly a priority for me. Former military and other government linguists


represent a rich pool of potential professionals, many in languages of lesser diffusion. Under the outstanding leadership of Rusty Shugart, chair of ATA's Government Linguist Outreach Task Force, the program was launched two years ago and has now recruited about a dozen new ATA members—despite the fact that in-person events and direct communications were halted by the pandemic about six months into the program. (On the other hand, this initiative has cost ATA extremely little in financial resources given the lack of travel, so the cost per new member has been very low.)

Of course, there are other issues I've worked on, ATA's finances and governance in particular. The Association's finances are not quite where I would like them in terms of long-term stability, but we're getting there. Treasurer John Milan has the situation well in hand and is advising the Board on future actions. Ensuring that the Annual Conference at least breaks even on a consistent basis is the last major step for the Board to act on. Given that conference locations are set five years in advance, this will take a bit longer to achieve.

The membership restructuring that's currently under discussion is also a positive step in orienting the Association to become the representative and advocate for individual professional practitioners, instead of a trade association working for the industry as a whole and trying to represent all participants (with the attendant inherent conflicts

ATA has made major improvements to its professional development program, increased member benefits, become much more "interpreter-friendly," and (finally!) moved the certification exam to a fully online system.

of interest). While the draft proposal could use some tweaking and will not please every member, I do believe it's in the best interest of the vast majority of our individual members, the independent profession provider of T&I services.

Finally, I would like to thank every Board member that I've worked with over the past 11 years, all of the committee members who do the heavy-duty work of meeting the needs of our members, the staff at ATA Headquarters who are often overworked and underappreciated, and thanks as well to all the individual members who have reached out to me over the years offering suggestions or support. And certainly not least, I have to thank my wife, Kathy, for allowing me to take so much time away from her to serve ATA. It has been an honor and a privilege and the capstone of my professional career. 



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Board Meeting Highlights

The American Translators Association’s Board of Directors met October 30–31, 2021, in conjunction with the Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Here are some highlights from the meeting.

Welcome: President Madalena Sánchez

Zampaulo welcomed the newly elected officers and directors—President-Elect Veronika Demichelis, Secretary Alaina Brandt, and Director Manako Ihaya—and congratulated Treasurer John Milan and Directors Eve Bodeux and Meghan Konkol on their re-election. They join Directors Jamie Hartz, Cristina Helmerichs, Lorena Ortiz Schneider, and Robert Sette. The complete election results are online: www.atanet.org/about-us/board/elections. (By the way, all five proposed Bylaws amendments passed.)

Director Vacancy: The Board approved the appointments of Robin Bonthron and Ben Karl to fill the vacancies created by Director Demichelis being elected president-elect and Director Brandt being elected secretary. Directors Bonthron and Karl will serve until the next election in October 2022.

Appointments: The Board approved the following committee chair appointments:

- Finance and Audit Committee: John Milan
- Governance and Communications Committee: Veronika Demichelis
- Nominating and Leadership Development Committee: Ted Wozniak

Revised Policies: The Board approved revisions to the following policies:

- Antitrust Compliance Policy
- Commercial Disputes Between Members Policy
- Governing Policy for Divisions.

ATA’s policy is to fully review all policies at least every five years.


Certification: Certification Committee Chair Michèle Hansen and Deputy Chairs Holly Mikkelson and Larry Bogoslaw briefed the Board on the Certification Program, including the new online exam platform. Deputy Chair Bogoslaw discussed with the Board a proposed study of the quality of post-editing machine translation involving ATA graders.

Support for Afghan

Interpreters: President Sánchez Zampaulo shared with the Board that the Advocacy Committee will be the contact for our efforts to assist Afghan linguists. To share ideas and to offer assistance, please contact Advocacy Committee Chair Ben Karl at advocacy@atanet.org.

Membership Survey: The Board discussed the proposed membership survey. The survey results will give us a snapshot of the membership demographics and the value of ATA benefits. The survey is targeted for the spring.

Be Sure to Renew

It’s time to renew your membership! Just go to www.atanet.org/membership/renew. Thank you for being a member in 2021. Don’t miss out on the value of ATA membership, including the online directory to market your services 24/7, the full gamut of professional development opportunities, and much more. We look forward to serving you in 2022! 

The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are also posted online in the members-only section. (www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php) The next Board meeting will be in late January/early February. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.



Promoting Inclusion in Translation and Interpreting

Considering that diversity is at the very heart of our work, we owe it to our amazing professions to remain fair and inclusive.

By Cathy-Eitel Nzume

The tense social climate we're living in today is forcing us to reassess how inclusive our industry really is and what we can do to make a change. The translation and interpreting industry, like all industries, is not immune to bias based on the deep-seated, preconceived ideas we all carry, many subconsciously.

I'm a linguist, interpreter, and translator. I'm also originally from Cameroon but have lived and studied in France and the U.S. and worked with francophone colleagues from all over the world. Over the past decade, I can't tell you how many times I've heard a question most of us francophone interpreters and translators of African origin dread: "Oh, do you speak African French?" Sometimes it's a statement such as, "I'm looking for a certified interpreter who can speak Cameroonian, Ivorian, or Togolese French." Other times, they don't even need to ask the question. For some, my name, Cathy-Eitel Nzume, reveals my origins right away.

On more occasions than I can count, after inquiring about a job posting, the project manager (usually from a language agency) would answer that, sorry, they're

looking for a French interpreter (or even translator) "from France."

Many people see nothing wrong with questions or statements like these. If their client is from France, they should have an interpreter from France, too, right? However, most interpreters and translators of African origin will understand the assumption implied by these questions: we do not speak French "properly," or we speak a variety of French that's "sub-standard." This assumption flies in the face of the inclusion we're striving for within our industry, as it often results in fellow colleagues being denied opportunities or, worse, a stained reputation before even being afforded the opportunity to prove ourselves.

This issue occurs with colleagues working in other language pairs as well, particularly when the language in question is spoken in many countries. Spanish is a great example of that. French, too. Even German. I remember an instance where a colleague from Costa Rica was asked if he was from Spain, because the language agency needed someone who spoke "proper" Spanish from Spain.

It's time to debunk the idea that African French speakers,

and, by extension, language professionals from any particular region, are inherently less qualified than those from the country where a language is known to have originated.

Let's examine the facts. First, due to France and Belgium's colonial history on the African continent, Africans have been and continue to be schooled in French, using the same reliable textbooks used in French schools. Therefore, claims that Africans somehow speak a sub-standard version of French remains to be proven. Vocabulary can differ at times, but a lot of these vocabulary variations come from slang. As in all cultures, people who were lucky enough to receive an education know when to use slang and when to use a more sophisticated register. Africans may also have a different accent, but so do people from the south of France, the north of France, Canada, and so on. Having a different accent doesn't mean that an interpreter is less qualified.

Second, when a translator is certified for French, it implies a certain level of language expertise and that they are capable of executing a French-language assignment, regardless of the country where the client resides. A professional translator is capable of adjusting register and style to suit the client's needs. Qualified or certified interpreters and translators

will also usually decline an assignment if they don't feel equipped to meet the client's expectations. Simply assuming an interpreter or translator with a certain background is incapable of completing an assignment inevitably harms that individual's career.

How Inclusive Are We?

So, let's admit that there's an inclusion problem within the language industry. Keeping the aforementioned in mind, how could we, as a whole, promote inclusion? Within ATA and in the translation and interpreting industry, we frequently interact with clients, agencies, project managers, fellow linguists, as well as leadership committees and boards. These various stakeholders could help promote inclusion by encouraging collegiality in a variety of ways. How? Let's examine what agencies/project managers, fellow colleagues, and associations can do.

Ways Agencies/Project Managers Can Help

Agencies and project managers could begin to take additional steps to help promote inclusion. First and foremost, they could work to diversify their vendor pools whenever they're looking to hire new language professionals. This is one area where networking events and conferences come into play. Attending a wider range of these events would be a great way for agencies to meet language professionals they wouldn't otherwise know. Agencies themselves could organize

more networking events/seminars where the theme is specifically designed to encourage conversations on diversity (e.g., "Your Role in Workplace Diversity" or "Overcoming Unconscious Bias in the T&I Industry").

Diversity training has proven to be key, as it not only allows trainees to understand the degree to which certain communities are excluded from our society and industry, but also helps slowly change mentalities and mindsets. Therefore, agencies should train project managers to foster inclusion and collegiality in their daily interactions with linguists around the world. For example, these workshops could cover:

- How to be mindful of other cultures
- Cultural competency
- How to deal with microaggressions or unconscious biases
- Defining types of bias (e.g., affinity bias, attribution bias, beauty bias, confirmation bias, conformity bias, implicit bias, and unconscious bias).¹

Another potential avenue to explore is social media. Today, social media has made it so much easier to reach out to colleagues, and agencies can research and get to know the interpreters and translators with whom they could be working quite easily. Examining social media presence could be a practice used to help agencies make informed decisions about potential new hires in a way that is more objective than relying on biased ideas about

a linguist's country of origin or name.

Speaking of bias, it's essential for project managers to remain professional and collegial at all times, especially when corresponding with linguists from diverse cultural and regional backgrounds. Project managers also need to remain neutral during the hiring process and reject the preconceived idea that interpreters and translators from a particular region are not capable of undertaking an assignment in the same language spoken in another region, especially when candidates are qualified or certified.

Another bias that's rarely discussed is name bias. For example, consider a hiring manager reviewing two résumés. They see the name at the top of one résumé and, rather than looking at all the skills and the candidate's broad experience, get stuck on the fact that they can't pronounce the candidate's name. As a result, the person moves on to the next résumé. In the same vein, if a project manager or hiring manager sees a name that sounds "more Spanish" or "more French" than another, they may give that person's résumé more attention than someone whose name is not traditionally known as "Spanish" or "French." That's how someone can be unconsciously biased when selecting interpreters or translators from a directory or pool of language professionals. (There have been many studies on this, including one from Harvard Business School.²)

Finally, project managers should change how they

inquire about certain assignments. Instead of asking loaded questions such as "Do you speak African French?", they could ask, "Could you serve clients from this region? Have you worked with clients from here before?" The latter doesn't imply that the linguist is only capable of tailoring their language services to clients from their country of origin, but instead acknowledges their potential versatility.

Ways Fellow Colleagues Can Help

Collegiality is a great way to start down the path of greater inclusion. But what does "collegiality" mean? Well, it encompasses many things, including:

- Trying to get to know more colleagues who are different from us, even if they work in another language pair. In other words, if we primarily interact with people who are culturally similar, it doesn't always offer the same benefits as meeting people from different ethnic/racial backgrounds. Wider and more diverse circles are always a good thing, both culturally and professionally.
- Remaining professional at all times, no matter with whom we interact, and being mindful and respectful of other cultural practices. This is where having a network of colleagues from diverse backgrounds can make a difference. You'll have a greater awareness of how a person's culture can influence their professional conduct.

- Researching and learning about the various countries where your language is spoken. Incidentally, this also makes you more marketable. Doing so will increase your awareness of how the dynamics of a language can change depending on where it's spoken. It also makes you more open to cultures that are different from your own.
- Referring fellow certified or qualified interpreters and translators. We might not be able to meet a client's expectations every time, so we connect them with a colleague who can. Again, if you have a wide and diverse network, you'll have a better chance of finding a colleague who can provide the client with what they need. (When referring colleagues, this might also be the time to help clients realize that a translator or interpreter's qualifications for an assignment should not be based on the country they are from.)
- Recommending fellow certified or qualified interpreters and translators for membership in professional associations. (Some associations require recommendations from peers to become a member.) Your recommendation could help diversify an association's membership, which will ultimately benefit the industry by promoting a sense of inclusiveness.
- Making a conscious effort to avoid criticizing colleagues because of the way they talk or look. Let's try to remember that we're

all teammates and can learn so much from each other. I know I have!

Ways Associations Can Help

Associations play a big role in shaping our industry. It goes without saying that, as a whole, they could help promote inclusion on a bigger scale. How? Well, associations could:

- Start fostering inclusion by creating more diverse committees that include underrepresented people, such as Africans, those from Latinx countries, and people from Eastern Europe. During meetings or gatherings, associations could be more intentional when asking members from underrepresented communities how they could be better served.
- Implement policies for holding members accountable if they engage in exclusionary or discriminatory practices.
- Include statements on their websites that make it clear they oppose all forms of discrimination.
- Offer a diversity and inclusion workshop where

speakers could share their experiences to illustrate how discrimination affects the industry.

These measures would help members feel protected and valued.

Working Together to Raise Awareness

The great thing is we're making progress in our industry, and that's commendable.

- In 2017, ATA members proposed, and the Board approved, a resolution supporting diversity: "Whereas translators and interpreters are committed to promoting and facilitating communication and understanding between peoples, be it resolved that we, members of the American Translators Association, strongly oppose all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, country of origin, or sexual orientation, as well as all forms of expression of and incitement to xenophobia, racial hatred, and religious intolerance, and strongly favor welcoming qualified immigrants who, with their skills and knowledge,

contribute to the wealth of our country or seek refuge here from war or persecution."

- In addition, in July 2020, ATA issued a Statement on Racism and Inequality, which is posted on its website.³
- ATA's 62nd Annual Conference in Minneapolis also featured the following sessions: "How Translation Choices Affect Stereotypes in Translation," "Words Matter: The Vocabulary of Diversity," "Rethinking Professional Ethics in a Non-Binary Context," and "Subtly Sexist Sources: What's a Woke Translator to Do?"

These ideas are just a start, and I know some of my colleagues will be glad to share more. Let's work together to raise awareness of these issues that have plagued all industries, not just ours, so that ATA and other organizations can continue to promote the values of inclusion, fairness, and nondiscrimination. We owe it to our amazing professions to remain fair and inclusive, considering that diversity is at the very heart of our work. 

NOTES

- ¹ For more information on various types of bias, read: "11 Harmful Types of Unconscious Bias and How to Interrupt Them," <https://bit.ly/bias-types>.
- ² Gerdeman, Dina. "Minorities Who 'Whiten' Job Résumés Get More Interviews" (Harvard Business School, 2017), <https://bit.ly/whiten-jobs>.
- ³ ATA Statement on Racism and Inequality (July 2020), <https://bit.ly/ATA-racism-inequality>.



Cathy-Eitel Nzume is a certified French<>English court interpreter and translator specializing in legal, corporate, commercial, and conference interpreting and translation. She has law degrees from the University of Picardie Jules Verne in France and Howard University in Washington, DC. She is the host of ATA's French Language Division's podcast. She also serves as a member of ATA's Ethics Committee. cathyeitel@cmnlegallanguageservices.com



Getting the Most from Your ATA Language Services Directory Profile

Knowing what search options are offered in the *Language Services Directory* can help you craft a profile that fully maximizes the types of searches one could make.

By Eve Lindemuth Bodeux

When ATA's new website launched in February 2021, ATA's Directory of Translators and Interpreters became the *Language Services Directory*. The directory (www.atanet.org/directory) features profile listings for more than 7,000 individuals and companies offering professional translation and interpreting services. When exploring the profiles, potential clients can customize searches—by language, specialty,

location, credentials, and more—to match a translator or interpreter with their job specifications. ATA provides free access to the directory to encourage its use and increase exposure for members.

As an individual translator or interpreter and member of ATA, you can take full advantage of this incredible marketing tool by carefully leveraging your profile to make it easy for new clients to identify you as a good fit. This includes utilizing the various specializations

and language services the profile format allows you to showcase. For this to be most effective, you need to be consistent about updating your profile.

To ensure your profile is current, set a specific schedule for when you'll review and update your listing. Minimally, this should be done at least annually, but, given the fast pace of change in our industry, you may want to do it twice a year to include new skills or specialties

you acquire that make you unique.

Before you begin modifying your profile, take some time to review the updated directory layout and features. Look at it from a potential client's perspective. Be aware of the directory search options that are available to users when they look for a language professional so you can leverage them to attract the type of clients you're targeting. For example, users of the directory can:

- Search by geographic location and a specific radius (e.g., within 10 or up to 100 miles).
- Define whether they need a translator or interpreter, both of which are conveniently defined for users new to the language industry.
- Specify a source or target language only, or a specific language combination.
- Search by last name if they're looking for the contact information for a specific individual.
- Filter by a translator or interpreter's native language.
- Select a provider's level of education, including high school through doctorate, while also specifying if they require a degree in translation or interpreting.
- Specify that a provider be a member of a given ATA division, including language-specific divisions (e.g., Arabic, Dutch, Korean, etc.) and subject-specific divisions (e.g., Audiovisual, Educators, Law, etc.)

- Choose potential providers according to a specific type of ATA membership.
- Filter according to certification and other professional credentials, areas of specialization, and more.

Users are not required to make selections for all options. The fewer fields they specify, the wider their search results will be, and the more they choose, the narrower their results will be. In language combinations with many practitioners, such as English<>Spanish and English<>French, when less specific searches return a large number of listings, users may add additional filters to limit the number of profiles they need to review to choose a supplier to contact. You can take advantage of this fact by filling out as much information as possible about your background, skills, and services. It's interesting to note that unless the user clicks the box for "Sort Results by Last Name," the results provided will be randomized and not in alphabetical order.

Within the directory, there are some search fields specific to either translators or interpreters. The "Translator Search" section focuses on translation services, including translating, editing, proofreading, and localization. This area of the directory also allows users to specify a translation tool they require (e.g., Across, Passolo, WordFast, etc.). Users can also specify if they're seeking an ATA-certified translator in a specific (or any) language pair.

The "Interpreter Search" section of the directory allows users to select the type of interpreting mode they prefer (consecutive, sight, or simultaneous) or see results containing interpreters who offer any mode. Potential clients can also specify a specific interpreting method, such as in-person, over-the-phone, or remote simultaneous, among others. Those seeking interpreters can also specify if they prefer a community, conference, educational, health care, or court interpreter. The type of interpreter credential sought can also be selected.

Areas of specialization can also be designated when searching for both translators and interpreters. For interpreters, examples of these include business/trade, government/diplomatic, and immigration. For both translators and interpreters, these include arts and humanities, business, social sciences, and medicine. Each area offers a list of related sub-topics as well.

Creating an Effective Profile that Works

Paying attention to your ATA directory listing will pay you back. To begin creating an effective profile, go to the Members Only section of ATA's website¹ and log in with your member number and password. Under the ATA Membership Information section, click on "Update Your Online Directory Profile" to begin. You will be taken to the main *Language Services Directory* profile page. You should begin by reviewing and editing your contact information. As you create or

edit your profile, be sure to save each section before you continue to the next.

Contact Information

Always verify that your contact information is up to date. Potential clients can't get in touch with you about possible projects if an email bounces or you have not removed the landline number that's been dropped in favor of your mobile number.

Within the address section when editing your profile contact information, it's important to note that to enable geographic searches (used when a client seeks a provider in a specific geographic area), you should enter your physical address even if you don't want it displayed in the directory for public view. This way, your profile will appear in the search results when you match a specific geographic area.

If you don't want your full address (or other contact information) displayed, you can choose this option when setting up or modifying your profile by clicking on the "View/Update Your Published Profile" section and then checking the appropriate boxes under "Please do not include the following items in my directory profile." You may also completely hide your entire profile by selecting the "Please do NOT list my directory profile" option. However, be aware that selecting this option prevents potential clients from seeing your profile.

Also, under the "Edit Your Contact Information" section, be sure to specify your native language so that your profile will appear when

potential clients are seeking a match to that specific field.

Availability Dates

Another feature of the directory is the ability to let potential clients know when you'll be unavailable. This feature can be selected by clicking on the "View/Update Your Published Profile" section. However, if, for various reasons, you don't want to inform potential clients of your out-of-the-office dates, you can simply leave the dates fields blank.

Language Information

You must manually add the language combinations you would like to include in your profile. You may add up to seven language combinations using ATA's dropdown list. If you would like to add additional languages or dialects, you may do so in the related searchable free-form field. Make sure to list only those language pairs in which you work professionally to avoid diluting the power of your profile. Your goal is to receive work in the languages where your expertise and knowledge will positively impress your clients. You should avoid listing "all" languages you know if they're not languages for which you offer professional services. Note that you can also set the order in which you would like multiple language pairs to appear. The default setting is alphabetical, but you can modify this to emphasize one language pair over another.

Before you begin modifying your profile, take some time to review the updated directory layout and features.

Services, Education, Experience, Tools, etc.

The next section (“Please include the following information in my directory profile”) allows you to provide additional information about the services you offer, your background, tools, as well as the types of payment and currencies you accept. This section uses dropdown lists, file uploads, option buttons, and free-form fields to gather your information.

To start, list the services you provide. For both translation and interpreting, you may indicate multiple services. To do so, use CTRL + click (for PC) or Command + click (for Mac) to make your selections. If there’s a service listed that you don’t offer, just don’t select it and it will not appear in your public profile.

You’ll also be asked to indicate the highest level of education completed, whether you have a degree in translation or interpreting, and how many years of experience you’ve worked as a translator or interpreter. Select one of the options listed for each of these categories. Please note that you can skip these questions entirely since they’re not required. If you leave these fields blank, the information will not show up in your profile. However, the more information you can provide, the more times you’re likely to show up in potential client searches, especially when they’re selecting multiple criteria to narrow a search.

If you’re an interpreter, this section of the profile management interface provides information and

links for how to submit your credential documentation for inclusion in your ATA profile. Follow the specific instructions in this section if that applies to you.

If you provide voice work, you may include a prerecorded voice sample along with your directory profile. Simply describe the sample in the field provided and upload the audio file for access by those viewing your profile. Note that when you upload an audio file, a new window opens. Once you’ve completed the file upload, return to the previous tab to continue modifying your profile. You can also provide information about what type of computer equipment and translation-specific tools you use (if applicable).

To personalize your profile, you have the option to upload your résumé or link to it directly with a URL you provide. If you choose to upload a résumé, review it before posting to ensure that it effectively shows your expertise for the areas in which you’re seeking projects, and that the information provided in the résumé matches what you say in your profile. You may decide to upload a version of your résumé that you’ve specifically prepared for your profile. If you chose to hide some of your contact information from your public ATA profile as described above, you should also consider what contact information you would like to include on a résumé that may be downloaded by visitors to your profile. Note that the content of your résumé is not included in “keyword searches” by users.

You may also upload a photo to further personalize the profile. This is optional. If you decide to use this feature, be sure to use a professional, business-focused photo that clearly shows your face. If you don’t have a suitable photo, just skip this step

Finally, there’s a free-form field in this section with the label “Would you like to include additional information about your services, education, and experience?” This field allows you to add or clarify any information. Use this space to emphasize particular expertise that may not have been covered elsewhere in your profile and to highlight what makes you unique. For example, do you have niche areas of expertise you would like to highlight that are not included in ATA’s dropdown list of subject-matter expertise, or specific services you offer that are not listed? If so, be sure to add them here. Note that areas of specialization appear in the next section of the profile update screen, so you may wish to review them and then return to the free-form field to ensure that you’re using it most effectively.

The free-form information you add to your profile appears on your listing under the “Additional Information” heading when viewed by users. It’s important to note that all the text you enter in the free-form field is seen by users when they access your profile (human readable) and is searchable by users of the directory in the “keyword” field on the search page² (machine readable). Keep that in mind

when writing this section and think about key phrases that a potential client might enter as search terms and how they will view this information on your profile. Users can use one- or multiple-word searches and phrases that are both human and machine search readable. For details on how the search function works for the “Additional Information” field, review the list of tips found on ATA’s website entitled “Keyword Search Tips.”³

Areas of Specialization

In the next section, you may list up to 12 areas of expertise for your translation or interpreting practice. If you feel that you have more than 12 areas of expertise or sub-areas, prioritize them so that you list the areas you focus on in your business. You can also add additional details about your areas of expertise in the free-form section discussed above.

Once you’ve completed this last section, use the Submit button to finalize your changes.⁴ You will then see a summary of your current profile. Review it and click on the “Change My Contact Information” or “Change My Profile” links at the bottom of the page if you would like to make additional edits using the process outlined above. (Note: you should avoid using your browser’s back and forward buttons at this stage to ensure that your updates are not lost.) When you’re satisfied with the information contained in the profile, you can continue to the final steps.

Final Steps: Review Your Public Profile and Your Next Review

As mentioned previously, it’s always a good idea to view your profile as a user of the directory will see it, rather than as you see it when updating or creating it. To do this, return to the public search page⁵, choose “Search by Last Name,” and enter your last name to locate your public profile. (You can also choose to search using other criteria that match your profile to see if you would like to tweak your profile further once you see the results.) Once your name appears in the search, click on it to access your public profile, just as a potential client would. Review the information it contains in this format. If you wish to make any changes, make sure you’re still logged in to your ATA account, return to the Member Center page⁶, and modify your profile until you’re satisfied.


Now that you’re good to go, think about using the unique URL for your profile to promote your services. Copy your profile’s URL from your browser when viewing your profile as a user, not from the profile update screen. You can use it on your website, on your résumé, in your email signature, or other promotional materials.

Finally, don’t forget to schedule a yearly or six-month review to make sure your contact information, areas of specialization, and all the other items in your profile are current. Remember to update this information as you evolve as a language professional.

Bonus Tip!

Request the Individual Member logo⁷—or use your ATA-certified translator (CT) seal⁸ or credentialed interpreter (CI) designation⁹—and link to your profile in the *Language Services Directory* from your website.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ATA on-demand webinar, “Maximizing Your ATA Directory Profile to Attract Your Ideal Clients,” presented by Eve Lindemuth Bodeux, <https://bit.ly/Bodeux-directory>.
- ATA’s Membership Committee has created a video tutorial on how to set up and update your ATA directory profile listing. It will be released within the next few months. Look for it soon on ATA’s website, YouTube channel, and other social media. 

NOTES

- ¹ www.atanet.org/membersonly
- ² <https://bit.ly/individual-search>
- ³ “Keyword Search Tips,” <https://bit.ly/directory-keyword>.
- ⁴ In addition, if you’ve been using the “Save” or “Save and Continue” buttons for each section of your profile, each section has also been finalized individually.
- ⁵ <https://bit.ly/individual-search>
- ⁶ www.atanet.org/membersonly
- ⁷ ATA Logo Usage Guidelines, <http://bit.ly/ATA-logo-guidelines>.
- ⁸ ATA-Certified Translator Seal, <https://bit.ly/ATA-CT-seal>.
- ⁹ ATA Credentialed Interpreter Designation, <http://bit.ly/ATA-CI-credential>.



Eve Lindemuth Bodeux is a 20+-year veteran of the language services industry and has worn many hats. She is an ATA-certified French>English translator focusing on corporate communications, market research, and international development content. She also has multilingual project management expertise for clients worldwide. She is the author of *Maintaining Your Second Language: Practical and Productive Strategies for Translators, Teachers, Interpreters, and Other Language Lovers*. She sponsors the online book club for translators *Global Reads Book Club*, which focuses on books in translation. She has graduate degrees from both the University of Lorraine (Nancy II) in France and the University of Virginia. She currently serves on ATA’s Board of Directors. eve@bodeuxinternational.com



LinkedIn Groups:

How They Can Help You Meet the Right Clients

If you really want to meet your clients where they are, making a plan to join and engage in LinkedIn Groups is an excellent way to add to your LinkedIn marketing strategy and get in front of the right people.

By Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo

LinkedIn Groups are an often overlooked area of the social networking platform that can truly be a gold mine for freelancers to grow their networks and conduct market research.

There's a LinkedIn group for just about anything you can think of. Unlike other social media platforms, LinkedIn Groups are geared toward professionals with similar interests and fields of practice. For example, most translators I know are members of several LinkedIn groups for translators. The same can be said for interpreters.

So, why are LinkedIn Groups important from a marketing standpoint, and why should you utilize them as part of your LinkedIn strategy? Simply put, these groups are where you'll find more people who work in the same field or industry you want to serve. People you might not otherwise have the opportunity to meet.

Just as we join groups with other translators and interpreters, professionals in other fields and professions do the same. So, if you really want to meet your clients where they are, making a plan to join and

engage in LinkedIn Groups is an excellent way to add to your LinkedIn marketing strategy and get in front of the right people.

How Do You Find the Right LinkedIn Groups?

Figuring out which LinkedIn Groups to join is the first step to finding more people who could make great clients. Start by searching for groups where your ideal clients would be. To do this, ask yourself:

- What fields or sectors do they work in?
- What kinds of positions do they hold?
- Where might they go to network with other people who work in the same field or with the same type of job?

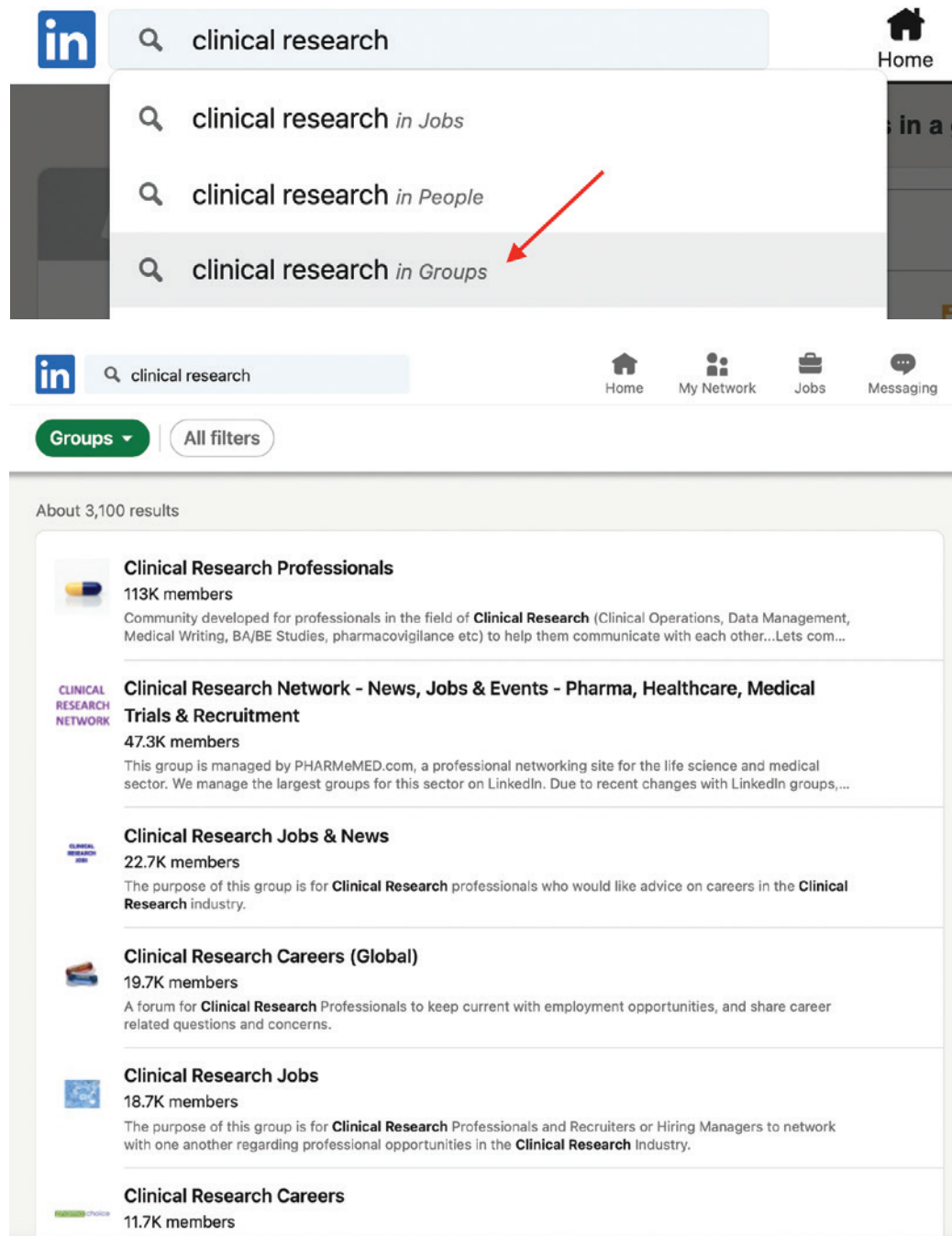
Answering these basic questions should give you an idea of some keywords to search for to find the right groups to join.

Let's take my specialization in translation as an example. My freelance work as a medical and life sciences translator and a health and wellness copywriter gives me the ability to work with clients in several types of organizations and businesses. So, if I'm looking to increase my network of clients who work in the area of pharmaceuticals, I would search LinkedIn for a term like "clinical research." As indicated in Figure 1, the third option allows me to see groups related to this term.

When I click to view the results, I see there are 3,100 matches for groups related to clinical research. Many of

Figure 1

Use LinkedIn Groups to find clients in your specialization



them have tens of thousands of members. This is more than enough to keep me busy, but it's still a bit too broad for my purposes.

As I scroll through the groups in the results, I can find some in which I would

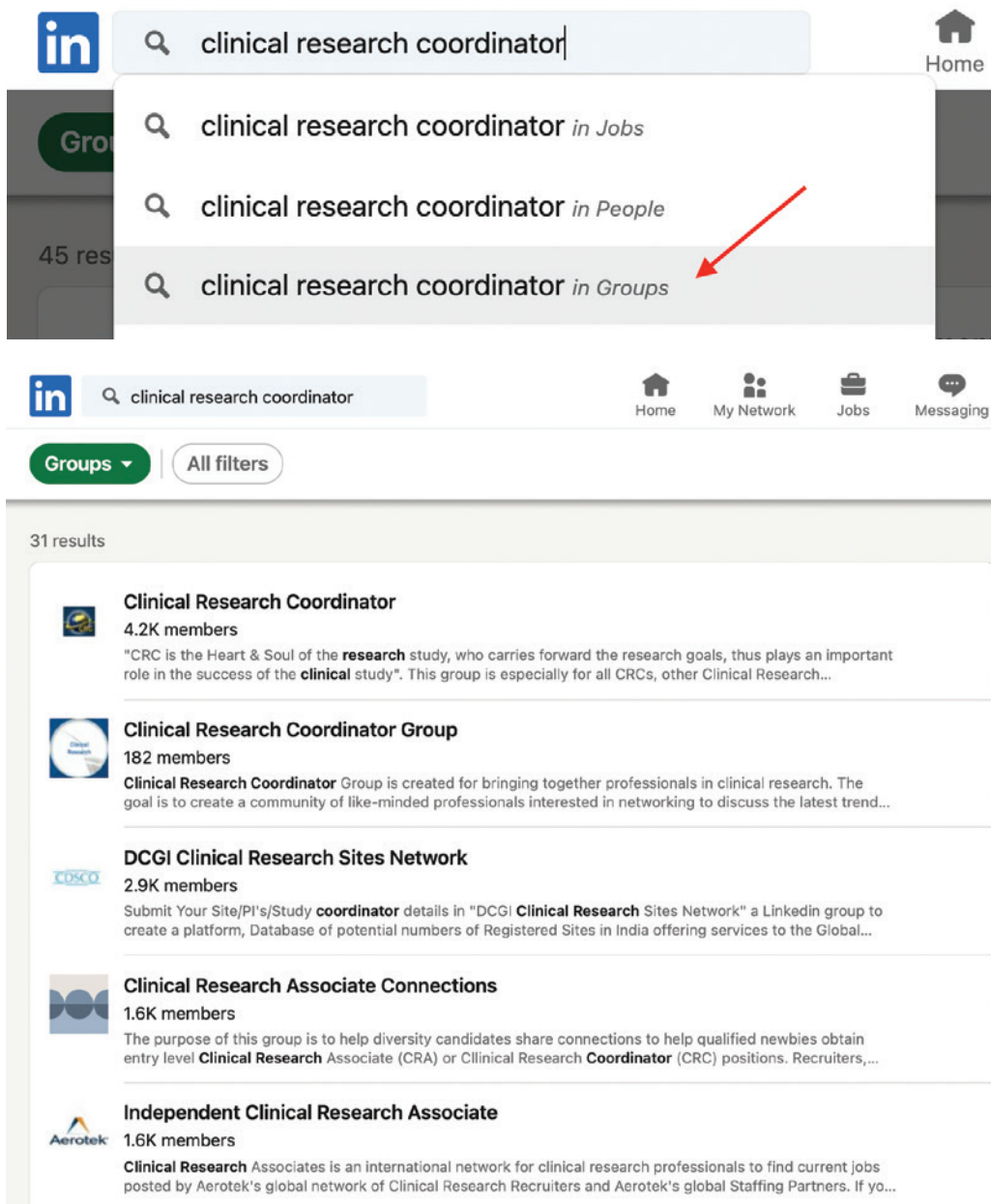
likely find my ideal clients. However, with that many results, it's often helpful to search for a more specific term.

Figure 2 shows what I get when I add the position of someone who might be an

ideal client to the search term. In this example, I added "coordinator" to the search and chose to see the results for groups. This provides 31 results, which is way better than sifting through 3,000+! This more

Figure 2

Add specific words to narrow your results



targeted approach allows me to find the people with whom I really want to connect.

From there, I can look at each group and decide whether I want to request to join it. Here are some of the client-facing groups I've joined on LinkedIn.

- Life Science & Pharmaceutical Industry in the New Global Economy

- Hispanic Pharmaceutical Industry Professionals
- Brazil & Latin American Pharma Industry— Business Development, Licensing, and Portfolio
- Women in the Pharmaceutical Industry

You can see that these groups are very niche-specific, so I know I'm not

wasting my time joining groups where I won't find ideal clients and networking opportunities. You can do the same by taking a simple search term, choosing the "Groups" option, or filtering only for Groups in the results, and trying to add specific words to narrow your results. The goal is to end up with a wide range of

results but not so many that you'll never have time to get through all of them.

Once you find the groups you're interested in, you'll have to request to join them. Since most groups on LinkedIn are closed to the public, you'll need to provide the group administrator with an idea of why you want to join. This is an easy step: just mention you work in this field and are a translator who helps these professionals communicate, etc.

Most groups that are active will have an administrator who reviews these requests and approves them regularly. Others might be less active and could take much longer to approve requests to join. Either way, this is a long-term game, so be patient and keep joining groups where you might find your ideal clients hanging out!

How Do You Make LinkedIn Groups Part of Your Marketing Strategy?

Now that you know more about strategically searching for and joining groups on LinkedIn where your ideal clients hang out, you need to think about what you'll do once you join these groups. Here are five tips to help you work LinkedIn Groups into your marketing strategy:

Network with ease. People join LinkedIn Groups because they want to be in a community with others who share similar interests, goals, and challenges. Search your groups for conversations where you can add value and continue the discussion.

Unlike other social media platforms, LinkedIn Groups are geared toward professionals with similar interests and fields of practice.

Remember, you shouldn't join a group with the goal of pitching your business! Instead, by engaging with others, the work you do and how you help your clients will inevitably come up in conversation threads and private direct messages with other group members. If you join a group that turns out to be not very active, try starting a new discussion or thread. Some groups just need a few people to start the conversation to become active again!

Say something of value.

Comment on and like others' posts in your groups and be sure to add your perspective on a given topic. Mention solutions when people request ideas and feedback. If you can add value to a specific thread, others will note your professionalism, approachability, friendliness, and willingness to help. Inevitably, their engagement with you will make them curious to get to know you better.

If you're concerned about spending too much time on LinkedIn threads, set a timer for 10 or 20 minutes and engage for that amount of time before diving into your paid work. Over time, this will

add up to more connections with the right people who see you for the expert you are.

Use posts to connect (not just follow!). Connecting with others in your groups who seem like promising contacts or just great people to know is vital to growing your network with more of the right people—either potential clients or people who can refer you to potential clients.

Send a quick connection request if you want to connect with another member of the group by commenting on a post or comment they made. It can be as simple as “Hi [new connection's name], I see we're both in the same [name of group] Group. I liked your post/comment about [topic of post/comment]. I would love to connect with you here and follow your work.” Of course, you can tweak this message to fit the circumstances, but all you have to do is make the connection.

I prefer to make connections with others versus following them for one very simple reason. If I follow them but don't connect with them, I can see their content and activity, but they are unlikely to ever see mine. (Connections lead to followers!)

Search for solid leads in the group's list of members and connect with them. I do this all the time. If you look on the right side of the screen when viewing a group to which you belong, you'll see the option to view the list of members. Expand the list and start skimming. Look for people who have titles

and positions that fit your ideal client profile. This will help you figure out who your ideal connections will be from the start.

You can connect with these people right away by mentioning you're in the same group. Or you can set a Google alert about them or their company or organization so you can share something timely with them when you're ready to connect. For example: “Hi [new connection's name], I saw that you received an award last week for [achievement]. Congratulations! I see we are in the same [name of group] Group. Would love to connect with you.” Once you're connected, you'll see more about this person in your news feed and they'll see more of your activity and content as well. Win-win!


Follow up. It's easy to join client-facing groups, connect with promising group members, and call it a day. But the real connection, the real networking, happens when you follow up with people.

After you connect with someone, send a quick message of thanks for connecting and ask them to share a little about what

they do or who they serve. Mention that you would like to keep this information in mind in case you can ever make a referral or connection for them. Don't ask for anything in return. Simply leave it at that. People will appreciate your openness to offer value without asking them to return the favor. And they'll frequently end up returning the favor as a matter of courtesy.

When you see your new connections sharing content on LinkedIn, or if you get a notification about them like a work anniversary, promotion, etc., take a moment to comment or congratulate them. Check in with your connections regularly and, over time, your growing network will repay you tenfold.

The Right Way to Connect

By making LinkedIn Groups part of your marketing strategy, you can grow your network with more of the right people. It's wonderful to be connected to colleagues and friends, but if you really want to connect with your ideal clients, LinkedIn Groups are an easy and efficient way to do that. 



Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo, CT serves as president of ATA. She is the owner of Accessible Translation Solutions and a Spanish>English and ATA-certified Portuguese>English translator. She served as chair of ATA's Governance and Communications Committee (2019-2021), Membership Committee (2018-2020), and Public Relations Committee (2014-2018), and as administrator of ATA's Medical Division (2011-2015). She is also a consultant for the University of Louisville Graduate Certificate in Translation. You can read more of her articles on her blog at www.madalenzampaulo.com/blog-home. madalena@accessibletranslations.com

Cognitive Debriefing: A Challenging but Rewarding Project

No matter how short or long, any questionnaire developed in one part of the world to be used in another part may carry linguistic, cultural, and conceptual features that present challenges when translated into another language.

By Pham Hoa Hiep

Eight years ago, when a large language services company providing translations to the pharmaceutical industry first contacted me to work on a cognitive debriefing project, I had a vague idea of what the job entailed. The project manager explained that the assignment would involve collaborating with other linguists to translate a short patient questionnaire from English into Vietnamese, but the major task would include testing the translation on five patients in Vietnam with a medical condition. Impressed by the high rate the company offered, I accepted the assignment after a brief training session.

I've learned a lot about this area since that first job. Today, I receive requests to

conduct cognitive debriefings from companies almost every month and derive a portion of my income from these assignments. So, how can you take advantage of this specialized market? What skills are required? Let me share my experiences working on cognitive debriefing projects, both as a recruiter and interviewer, along with tips for success.

What Is Cognitive Debriefing?

Cognitive debriefing, sometimes referred to as pilot testing, is part of a linguistic validation process generally used to evaluate clinical research instruments designed to gather information from respondents in multinational



trials.¹ These instruments can include clinical outcomes assessments, such as patient-reported outcomes, clinician-reported outcomes, observer-reported outcomes, or similar questionnaires.

Basically, cognitive debriefing is the process by which a questionnaire or other assessment is tested among representatives of the target population and target language group. Ideally, this takes place during face-to-face interviews. The purpose is to verify that the translations of all items on the questionnaire will be understood in the same way across target populations and regions. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration requires cognitive debriefing to show content validity for all submitted translations.

For instance, suppose an American company develops a questionnaire for adult patients with Hepatitis B consisting of 10 questions with multiple response options. The questionnaire originally targets American patients who live in the U.S. and speak American English. Now suppose the researchers involved in the study want to use the same questionnaire in Vietnam to collect data from Vietnamese patients with the same medical condition. This will require the questionnaire to be translated into Vietnamese. Since patients in the U.S. and those in Vietnam don't share the same language, culture, or even certain concepts, conducting a cognitive debriefing will help the researchers bridge that gap to ensure that all respondents have an equal experience.

Patient questionnaires vary in length. The average length of the source text can be 300 words, although I was once asked to work with a 4,000-word questionnaire and another time to debrief only 66 words. No matter how short or long, any questionnaire developed in one part of the world to be used in another part may carry linguistic, cultural, and conceptual features that present challenges when translated into another language.

Prior to the cognitive debriefing phase, companies always invest much time and energy into translating a questionnaire. The translation process usually involves two forward translators and two back translators. Drafts are often exchanged between translators, project managers, and developers before a final, harmonized version is approved. However, no one can be sure this final translation will be understood by the target audience without first testing it on them.

Bridging Cultural Barriers

One major purpose of cognitive debriefing is to determine if the target population would find certain words, phrases, or concepts inappropriate or confusing. For example, one question in English from a questionnaire I worked on for patients in hospice care read: "Do you believe in God or someone or something greater than yourself?" During the translation phase, a translator, aware that a majority of people in Vietnam are Buddhist, translated it as:

"*Quý vị có tin vào Đức Phật, hay người nào đó, hay điều gì đó lớn hơn bản thân quý vị không?*" ("Do you believe in Buddha or someone or something greater than yourself?"). However, during the cognitive debriefing phase, I realized that some patients who were Christian didn't find this relevant. We ended up changing it to: "*Quý vị có tin vào Đức Phật, Đức Chúa, hay một đấng tối cao, hay người nào đó, hay điều gì đó lớn hơn bản thân quý vị không?*" ("Do you believe in Buddha or God or a supreme being or someone or something greater than yourself?").

Another example is the term "block, which appeared in the following question: "Can you walk more than one block?" The meaning is clear in English, but the literal translation of it into Vietnamese can be problematic. A cognitive debriefing revealed that while the literal translation of "block" as "*tòa nhà*" was understood by Vietnamese patients living in an urban setting, it was not understood by others living in rural areas where street blocks are generally nonexistent. For this, a culturally appropriate translation could be: "*Quý vị có thể đi được hơn 100 mét không?*" ("Can you walk more than 100 meters?").

In many cases, even a translation commonly used in mass media can offend a certain group. For example, the word "questionnaire" or "survey" can be translated into Vietnamese as "*Bản Điều Tra*" ("probing text"). This translation is not wrong, but through a cognitive

debriefing we learned that many patients found this translation offensive. Why? Since the word "*Bản Điều Tra*" can imply an interrogation, people with a medical condition would generally react negatively because they would consider this type of questioning an invasion of their privacy.

Bridging Linguistic Barriers

For patient questionnaires, ensuring that a term in the source text will be understood the same way in the target text is extremely important. A mistranslation that leads to a misunderstanding of a term could result in medical complications or the rejection of an entire clinical research project.

I find translating adverbs of frequency or adverbs of intensity from English into Vietnamese most challenging. For example, response options such as *Not at all*, *A little bit*, *Somewhat*, *Quite a bit*, and *Very much* for the question "In the last seven days, how much did mouth or throat sores interfere with your usual or daily activities?" are difficult to translate. There are Vietnamese equivalents for these words, but there's a great deal of disagreement among translators since adverbs of frequency or intensity in Vietnamese can vary from their English counterparts. For instance, the translated term "*Khá nhiều*" in Vietnamese can mean either "*Somewhat*" or "*Quite a bit*."

In this case, a cognitive debriefing is very helpful as it allows the patient's

voice to come through in the translated content and ensures that the correct terminology is used. Some companies encourage the cognitive interviewer to use a visual analog scale to assess how well the target group comprehends the translated response options. For example, a visual scale ranging from 0 to 100%, in which 0 represents *Not at all* and 100 represents *Very much*, would enable the respondent to better express the value (e.g., intensity) to each option by pointing at a place on the scale. Using a card ranking game is another useful strategy. A respondent is asked to arrange the selected response options in an order that makes sense to them (e.g., *Not at all* at the top of the page, *Very much* at the bottom, and other terms in a continuum).

Recruiting Participants

Before cognitive debriefing can begin, you or your project manager must recruit in-country for both investigators and respondents, which can prove challenging. Some projects require the recruitment of five healthy adult patients, which is generally easy to do. Other projects are more difficult because they may require five patients with a specific diagnosed condition. For example, I've had to find five patients with gastroenteritis, and a recent project required me to recruit 10 patients with blood cancer, ideally chronic myeloid leukemia.

As a general rule, the selected participants within the target countries should be diverse in terms

education level, gender, and age. In most cases, the primary selection criterion is to find patients with the required medical condition being studied.

The project manager usually allows up to four weeks for the recruitment process. I typically need to report the status of the recruitment on a weekly basis. I'm encouraged to use chat rooms, message boards, networking sites, national support groups, patient associations, professional websites, hospitals, doctors, and private practices as resources to find participants. Treatment doctors who know the patient well also serve as good contacts, but they're often busy and sometimes hard to contact. In recent years, I've found that cancer support groups and clubs (e.g., Gilda's Club) are excellent resources for potential recruitment, and there's one in most big cities. The club's chair can be the first point of contact, as they often have a good relationship with members. Members usually trust the chair and can be open to being interviewed if the chair encourages them.

From my experience, successful recruitment also depends on how well the company communicates to potential participants. One company I've worked with prepares excellent recruiting forms, including patient consent and privacy notice forms that clearly state the project's purpose, the specific things participants are expected to do, tangible benefits and potential risks, and how privacy will be

protected. All forms should be written in plain language and be translated into the target language.

Companies have different policies regarding payment for participants. As a recruiter, I've learned that companies who are willing to reimburse participants, doctors, medical personnel, or the heads of patient associations for their efforts have higher rates of success compared to those who don't. If I receive a request for cognitive debriefing from companies that don't at least mention payment for the patients, I ask the project manager if there's the possibility for compensation. Though many patients don't need it, offering a small sum is something the company can do to express appreciation for their participation. I also tell the project manager I'm uncomfortable contacting patients with a chronic disease to ask them to spend 30-45 minutes for an interview without payment. In many cases, the project manager will talk to the project lead and perhaps spend a portion of the project budget to compensate participants.

Conducting Cognitive Interviews

Companies normally provide the recruiter and interviewer with some training for cognitive debriefing. Before conducting real interviews with selected patients, companies usually ask me to complete a practice interview and record the data on a data collection form (DCF) to be sent back to the project manager. This will enable the

project manager to confirm that I'm on the right track and approve the DCF before I proceed to interview the selected patients.

There are many good tips for cognitive debriefing interviewing available online.² The general principle is that interviewers need to do everything possible to ensure that participants feel comfortable before and during the interview.

As I mentioned previously, face-to-face interviews are ideal for cognitive debriefing. However, during the pandemic face-to-face interviews have proven difficult, so interviews can be done via phone or remote video conferencing. Remote interviews can allow the interviewer to conduct the job without being in the country where the participants live. This has been good for me. When I was stuck outside my home country due to the pandemic, I was still able to call to set up interviews with people there. For virtual interviews, the interviewer needs to make sure participants receive the questionnaire, ideally in printed form, to use during the interview. If the questionnaire is online, participants are encouraged to open it using a laptop or an iPad rather than a smartphone. (I did have problems with participants who weren't able to see the questionnaire well because of the tiny screen on their smartphones.) Additionally, for virtual interviews, visual analog scales or card ranking games originally designed for use during face-to-face meetings may need to be

redesigned or customized for online use.

From my experience, patients often tend to misunderstand the purpose of the interview. Despite the availability of consent forms and other materials that clearly explain the purpose, many patients still assume they are being asked to provide responses to each question based on their own medical condition. To avoid this misunderstanding, I always tell the patient at the beginning that the purpose of the interview is not to answer the questions but *to test* if they can understand everything—every sentence, question, and response option in the questionnaire.

Some questions during an interview can also be sensitive and can make patients feel embarrassed, shocked, or upset. When dealing with sensitive questions, I often tell participants: “I know you might not want to explain this, but this doesn’t ask about your own symptoms or conditions. The questionnaire designer wants to know if you understand this word, how you say this in your own words, and there’s no right or wrong answer.”

Coping with Vicarious Trauma

Though not all questionnaires involve working with people who suffer from a chronic or a terminal disease, many do target those groups. As a result, interviewers many experience vicarious trauma, burnout, compassion fatigue, or stress from working with people who suffer long-term or untreatable diseases.


Several years ago, I contacted a patient who agreed to be interviewed when the translated questionnaire was ready. When the time came to schedule the interview, I learned that he had passed away. On another occasion, I asked a young patient after an interview if he happened to know anyone with the same medical condition who would be willing to be interviewed. Sadly, he replied that all the people he knew with that medical condition had died.

For those situations, especially when I first started conducting interviews, I had to work very hard to calm myself, and it usually took me a few days or even a week to get back to normal after hearing a tragic story. I’ve since learned that talking with friends who have similar jobs, such as a nurse working in an oncology center or a medical interpreter who helps patients in a hospital, can help because they understand better than anyone what my job entails. Sometimes I still need to hide myself in some corner and cry, but I’ve also found that taking a walk in a quiet neighborhood or sitting in a Buddhist temple for meditation or prayer, and even listening to music can help me get back to normal. I’ve also learned that declining a particularly challenging assignment or avoiding conducting too many cognitive interviews with chronic patients within a short period also helps.

But there are also many positive aspects associated with conducting cognitive debriefings with patients suffering from long-term

illnesses. Talking with people who are in a less fortunate situation can make me appreciate my well-being, my life, and the well-being of my family and friends much more, and that I shouldn’t take them for granted. Also, many questionnaires are developed to collect data that will be used to improve certain treatment strategies or therapies, which in turn will help improve the quality of the mental and/or physical health of a certain group of patients. Ensuring that patients understand the translated questionnaire is a small contribution I can make to help ease the pain in this world.

Final Note

Since COVID-19 hit the world, freelance translators might be experiencing unstable workloads. While some can stay with their regular clients and do the work they’ve always done, others need to diversify the jobs they take on to maintain an income. One thing I find interesting in the language industry is there are always more opportunities for jobs than translation per se. Cognitive debriefing may be complex and challenging, but it’s a job that involves using language, culture, and communication skills, so any experienced translator will already have the basic skills to perform the job well. 

Acknowledgement: I dedicate this in memory of my brother-in-law who helped me with many practice interviews for cognitive debriefings. He passed away on the day this article was accepted for publication.

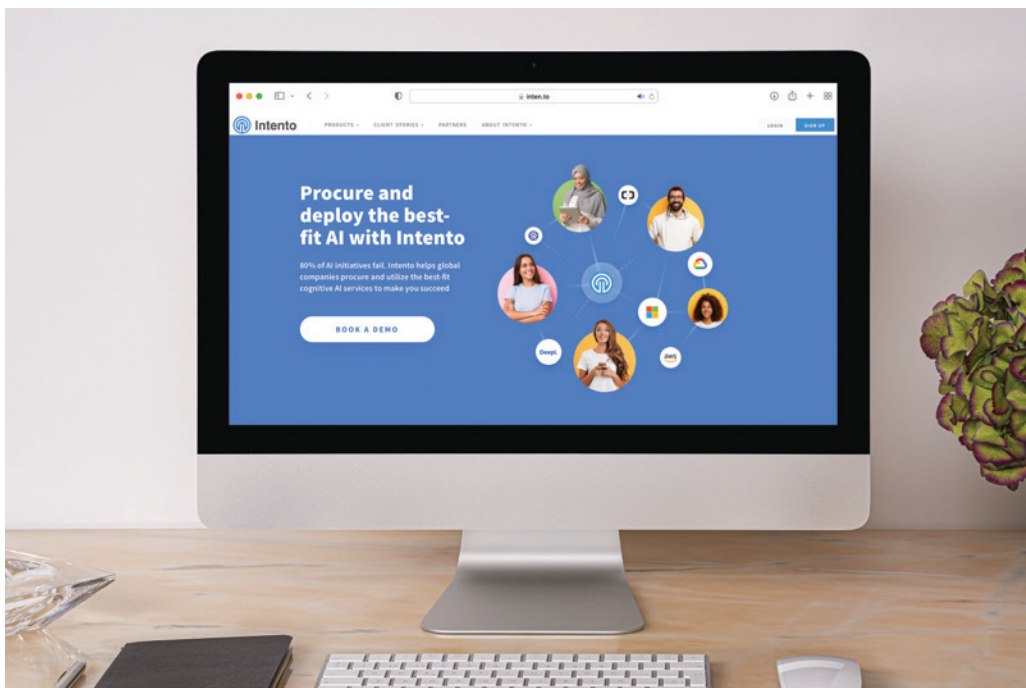
NOTES

- ¹ “Cognitive Debriefing Explained, <https://bit.ly/cognitive-debriefing>.”
- ² Richards, Anna. “7 Ways to Master Linguistic Cognitive Debriefing Interviews of Patient-Reported Outcomes,” <https://bit.ly/Richards-interviews>.



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Intento for Translators

What are the pros and cons of using a tool like Intento that allows you simultaneous access to dozens of machine translation (MT) engines? (When I say “a tool like,” I’m really not being particularly accurate because it’s actually the only tool that does what it does.) If you’ve used generic MT engines like those from Google, Microsoft, or DeepL via your translation environment, you know that it’s rather tedious to create an application programming interface (API) key on their respective websites and then enter it into the application you’re using. It might be okay if you just want to use one or two MT engines, but if you would like to access 10 or 20, this becomes a real headache (and honestly untenable—if only because you don’t even know many of these engines exist or how to jump the language barriers of the many East Asian specimens to connect to them).

Why exactly would you want to have access to so many engines? The answer to that depends on a number of variables. For instance, if you work in a language combination that’s not particularly well supported by MT engines,

the performance between different texts you translate may differ widely. The same might be true for languages that are well supported, particularly when it comes to different kinds of text or subject matter. You might be well situated if you’re already using a customizable

MT engine such as OPUS-MT or ModernMT. (And, yes, it’s also fine if you don’t use MT at all.) But for others, it might be rather attractive to have only an API-based agreement with one entity (in this case, Intento) to connect you to engines such as AISA, Alibaba,

Amazon, Apptek, Baidu, CloudTranslation, DeepL, Elia, Fujitsu, Globalese, Google, GTCOM, IBM Watson, iFLYTEK, Kakao Developers, Kawamura International, Kingsoft, Lesan, LINDAT, LingvaNex, Microsoft, ModernMT, Naver, NTT Com, Pangeanic, Process 9, Prompsit, PROMT, Rozetta, RWS, SAP, SYSTRAN, Tencent, Tilde, XL8, Yandex, YarakuZen, Youdao, or Zinrai. (I know. I didn’t know many of these MT providers existed, either.)

Clearly not all of them will be relevant (Fujitsu’s Zinrai engine, for instance, supports only English->Japanese), but there’s a good chance that some engines will be relevant for your language combination, and an even greater likelihood that there’ll be more than you think.

So, how does one work with Intento? First, you’ll need to work with either Lingotek, memoQ, Trados, Smartcat, Wordfast Anywhere, Wordbee, or XTM if you want to bring MT suggestions via Intento into your translation environment. For each of these tools, a free plugin is provided (either readily integrated or separately installable) that enables you to connect to Intento. Then you’ll need one of the plans that Intento offers to access its ready-made connectors to its MT partners. The newly unveiled plans that are relevant to individual translators include:

- **Localization Starter for \$25/month:** This will provide access to all non-customizable engines,

including the option of selecting one of 16 domains and up to one million characters per month. (All fees that are payable to the original MT providers are paid by Intento.)

- **Localization Expert for \$75/month:** This will provide access to all non-customizable and customizable engines with your own credentials, including the option of selecting one of 16 domains and up to one million characters per month with the possibility of incremental payments for overage use. (All fees that are payable to the original MT providers are paid by Intento.)

You can find the different options and offerings listed at inten.to/localization-teams.

While the second option is attractive, my sense is that the first will be the most popular with translators. Why? Because the main differentiator is access to customizable MT engines, including AutoML, DeepL (with its terminology training component), Google, Microsoft's Custom Translator, ModernMT, and many others. I have a hard time imagining a single translator building and maintaining several different MT engines that they would like to access through a tool like Intento. Although, for a small or mid-sized language services provider, the latter option might very well be interesting.

By the way, before you apply your preferred MT engine to your text, you can run a test that compares

several outputs in the Intento Console. Or you can just select the engine you might know is likely to produce the best results right in your translation environment.


The first time I wrote about Intento in my *Tool Box Journal* newsletter, I stated: "I very strongly encouraged Konstantin Savenkov [Intento's chief executive officer] to look into developing ready-made access plugins for tools like Memsourc, memoQ, and Trados." Well, Konstantin has done that and much more, and I'm glad they did. I'm thankful every time an interesting piece of translation technology becomes available not only to enterprise customers or language services providers but to freelancers as well. And there's no doubt that Intento's technology is here to stay. Pavel Doronin, the product lead at Intento with whom I talked to for this article, told me that there are 57 (!) full-time employees working for Intento around the world at this point. Also, the reports on the state of MT that Intento publishes annually on its website are required reading if you're interested in how the landscape of MT is morphing in front of our eyes.

Let me add one thing that I think is important to consider when using Intento, and then a few things I would like to see in the future.

First, it's really important to know about the confidentiality settings of the different engines. I've mentioned many times before that Google, Microsoft, and DeepL all assure us that they treat our data confidentially if we use their API to access them (which Intento does), but my sense is that these are the exceptions rather than the rule. Depending on your clients and their privacy needs, this is very important to keep in mind. In fact, it would be a very helpful service for Intento to provide clarity about the privacy considerations of their various partners.

Two other options that I would welcome are:

- The proposal of more than one engine per segment so the translator can mix and match the suggestions.
- A "smart" routing to the best-suited engine on a segment and not just on a document level.

Since I was successful with my last suggestions (though it admittedly took three years), maybe I'll be successful again. 

It's really important to know about the confidentiality settings of the different engines.



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This column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals.



Chuchotage—Separating Fact from Fancy: A Film Review from an Interpreter’s Perspective

How many hours have I spoken in these dark, tiny booths, hidden in the back of the room? I’m a man in the shadows. I’m not part of the protocol, yet here I am, interpreting politicians, tradesmen, lawyers. I’m the guardian of secrets. Countries and millions depend on me. I live by strict rules. Nothing ever puts me off. Except you.

I’ve never been so confidential with someone before. Except you...I see you’re listening to me. There are 70 people in that room, but you’re the only one hearing me. I flew over half of Europe, I got up at 4:00 a.m., landed in Prague at 7:00 a.m., and have been watching you since 9:00. Can’t take my eyes off you since then...I want to meet you. I want to see you. Up close. I want to hear your voice. For you I would step out of the shadows into the light.

—from a scene in the film *Chuchotage*

Could an interpreter at an international conference cease to interpret a speaker’s remarks and substitute their own thoughts? Of course. Would they? Never—unless

they wanted to instantly end their career in a blaze of dubious glory.

The monologue above is the heartfelt message delivered by a suddenly lovestruck interpreter in director

Barnabás Tóth’s short film *Chuchotage*, selected for more than 40 festivals, winner of more than 20 awards, and short-listed for the Best Live Action Short Film at the 2019 Academy Awards.

In *Chuchotage*, two interpreters become convinced that only one person is listening to them: a blonde woman seated three or four rows in front of them. The two set out to gain her affection through their interpretation.

The film has garnered many overwhelmingly favorable reviews, but I’ve seen none written by interpreters. One movie critic wrote: “I’ve always been impressed with interpreters and translators, particularly those people doing it live, while the person they are interpreting for is still speaking (*chuchotage* is the Hungarian term for this).”¹ Not a very accurate definition.

Chuchotage, from the French *chuchoter* (to whisper), is also known as whisper interpreting. The interpreter sits next to, or stands or crouches behind, a person or group and interprets in a low voice. Its principal virtue is that it’s cheap; there’s no need for a booth, console, or a technician. The method has various drawbacks: interpreters cannot move to a spot where the acoustics might allow them to hear the speaker better, and not everyone likes to have another human being, let alone an interpreter, in such close proximity. This technique is also particularly ill-suited to interpreting in the COVID era.

While there is no actual *chuchotage* in *Chuchotage*, one can certainly understand its romantic appeal to the film's infatuated interpreter. When asked about his choice of title during an interview for the film review website *Close-Up Culture*, Tóth had this to say:

“It sounds romantic, doesn't it? So French. Although this term exists in English as well with the same spelling. It also exists in Hungarian as *Susotázs*. Anyway, I didn't hear this word until I contacted a professional Hungarian interpreter while writing the script, and she told me about it. At first, the movie was called 'Flirt,' but after the shooting I realized *Chuchotage* is much better. Nobody knows it since it's so specific to the interpreting milieu.”²

Why See This Film?

Chuchotage came out just before the pandemic. Any interpreter who has worked in a conference setting should want to see this film, especially today, when we long for the days when such conferences were a bit more commonplace. (Now, even when there are conferences where interpreters work on-site, they do not always share the same booth.) One cannot help but view the film with nostalgia.

Tóth drew on his own limited interpreting experience for the film. “I did a conference interpreting job for one day in my entire life and it was a nightmare,” he confessed in the *Close-*

Up Culture interview.

“Fortunately, only a gentleman from Luxembourg was listening to my French channel. At the end of the day, I excused myself as I was so poor at the job.”

Tóth also conducted meticulous research for the film, interviewing interpreters, Skyping with interpreters from the European Parliament, and observing them work from inside a booth during a conference. It's clear that he understands the potential difficulty of conference interpreting. “Interpreters have to switch every 20 minutes, because your brain is so burnt out, and it's so intense,” he said during an interview at the Edinburgh Short Film Festival.³ Tóth's attention to detail when recreating the interpreting environment at an international conference is probably why the film was so well received by interpreters. As Tóth has said, interpreters are the film's biggest fans.

What the Film Gets Right/Wrong

Premise aside, the film accurately reflects many aspects of conference interpreting in Europe. First, there is the setting: a conference center with built-in interpreting booths, which actually are quite common throughout Europe. Of course, in the U.S., the United Nations has marvelous facilities, as do international organizations in Washington, DC. However, I know of no major convention center in the U.S. with permanent interpreting facilities.



Conference interpreting in the private sector in the U.S. is (was) almost overwhelmingly conducted with portable booths.

Many interpreters will also relate to the behind-the-scenes activity depicted in the film. Some interpreters arrive well in advance of the event to get documentation or speak with the organizers. Others arrive minutes before the event is scheduled to start. In *Chuchotage*, one interpreter wears a sports jacket and no tie, while the other traipses into the booth

with rain gear, a backpack, and a tray full of food. (Food issues are often a sore spot for interpreters. I quickly learned that I could eat bananas in the booth, but I had to get rid of the banana peels immediately. Apples were a no-no because the crunching sound of biting into an apple could often distract your boothmate.)

An opening pan shot shows us that the conference portrayed in *Chuchotage* has four interpreting booths, each with two interpreters. We can see one interpreter putting on makeup (I

worked with an interpreter who put on nail polish in the booth, and it was quite pungent), while her boothmate is gesticulating as he interprets. While gesticulation would clearly be frowned upon in a courtroom setting, where the interpreter aims to be as inconspicuous as possible, I often find that gesticulation helps me concentrate on the subject matter, especially if the subject is somewhat dull. (In the film, the conference touched on refrigeration and electronic waste.)

We are led to believe the two Hungarian interpreters in the film are pros. They have fantastic diction and a very pleasant style, even when dealing with a less than scintillating subject and non-native English speakers perorating in Eurospeak. (One speaker begins his remarks by saying, “I am Paolo Falcioni.” A native English speaker would have said, “My name is Paolo Falcioni.”)

In the midst of a dense presentation on recycling electronic waste, the two interpreters manage to play tic-tac-toe with each other. While I can imagine two very cocky interpreters doing this, I’ve never seen it (fortunately). I have seen colleagues receive phone calls while interpreting. If they do answer, they usually mute their mics, pick up the phone and say, “I’ll call you later,” release the mute button, and resume interpreting. However, such multitasking is counterproductive and is best avoided. No matter how experienced the interpreter,

you’ll likely miss part of a sentence or various sentences.

Which brings us to the heart of the film. As the two interpreters strike up a competition to see who can win over their sole listener, they repeatedly turn each other’s microphone off and start interpreting. This is a no-no and a basic violation of booth etiquette. The person who is interpreting determines when to stop and then signals to the other interpreter to begin. I’ve witnessed interpreters cut their boothmates off, and it definitely does not work wonders for booth morale and team spirit.

It’s very understandable that an interpreter would want to know if anyone is listening to them. If you’re absolutely sure that there’s no one listening, maybe you can stop interpreting. (The jury is out on that one—you might be sure no one is listening, but halfway into the conference, a new attendee might walk in, turn on your channel, and hear nothing.) A good, although not infallible, way of knowing who is listening, or if anyone is listening, is to ask over your channel, “Is anyone listening to the Hungarian interpretation? If so, could you please raise your hand?” This is a fairly accurate way of ascertaining one’s audience, a technique not followed by the interpreters in the short. Had they done so, the director wouldn’t have had a film.

Which brings us to the major sin of both interpreters. They try to seduce their one-person


female audience over the headphones: one rather coarsely, and the other somewhat poetically. Obviously, this is a film, and the director is entitled to cinematic license. I know of no interpreter who would seriously entertain the possibility of doing something that might get them blacklisted in perpetuity. However, what has happened, on more than one occasion, is that interpreters continue to talk in the booth during breaks and sometimes forget to turn off their mics. When this happens, information they thought was for their ears only might be inadvertently broadcast to anyone who has their headphones on. One interpreter at a conference on ceramic tiles told his colleague that the English spoken by a Japanese delegate was incomprehensible. (He was removed from the conference.) Another commented on the physical appearance of someone in the auditorium. (He was

also kicked out.) Sometimes the conference technicians realize the interpreters are discussing “sensitive” information on air and quickly alert them that their mics are live. But not always.

For Those Who Wonder “What if...?”

This is a film that gets all the details right. It’s realistic down to the minutiae, even showing the coffee breaks with participants talking on cell phones. Starting from a very realistic setting, the film takes off on a flight of fancy. What actually happens in the film would never happen with veteran interpreters.

But for any interpreter who has ever wondered, “what if...?” this film provides a most entertaining interlude.

Chuchotage (2018, 18 minutes) is available for rent (\$4.50) or purchase (\$7.00) on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/chuchotage>. For the moment, at least, it’s also available on YouTube for free at <https://bit.ly/Chuchotage-YouTube>. 

NOTES

- 1 Sarah. “*Chuchotage* (Short Film),” Caution Spoilers (January 16, 2019), <https://bit.ly/Chuchotage-review>.
- 2 Prestridge, James. “Interview: Barnabás Tóth’s Short Film *Chuchotage* Brings Laughs and Love to the Translation Booth,” *Close-Up Culture* (January 11, 2019), <https://bit.ly/Close-Up-Culture>.
- 3 You can watch the Barnabás Tóth interview for the Edinburgh Short Film Festival here: <https://bit.ly/ESFF-Tóth>.



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Setting Goals for Your Freelance Business: An Important Job Satisfaction Tool

The following was originally published on Next Level: The ATA Business Practices Blog. This initiative by ATA’s Business Practices Education Committee provides information for both freelancers and company owners to use in all aspects of their careers, from improving their privacy protections to planning for retirement. Visit: www.atanet.org/career-education/next-level.

I’ve been teaching business classes for freelance translators for about 15 years, so I’ve seen “under the hood” of many freelancers’ businesses. The truth is, when we talk about goal-setting in our freelance businesses, many freelancers have amorphous goals (“earn more money,” “find better clients”) or no goals at

all, because their business management strategy consists of two steps:

- Translate what falls in the inbox
- Hope that, at the end of the year, that work adds up to enough money

This sounds like an extreme example, but I can assure you it’s not. Most

freelancers are not actively pursuing work they enjoy and are good at; nor do they know how much money they need to earn per hour or per day to meet their financial goals. Just by reading this column, you’re ahead of the vast majority of what one of my former students called “rudderless” freelancers, so let’s dive into the process of

freelance goal-setting! Now is a great time to look ahead as the economy, at least in the U.S., appears to be picking up as the pandemic winds down. I’ve had a significant uptick in work over the past few months, and I’ve heard similar reports from many of my online course alumni.

Goal One

Your Income

Hopefully you enjoy your work as a freelancer. I’ve been a freelancer since 2002, and I feel more excited about the job now than when I started. However, the main reason I freelance is to make money, so my first freelance goal is to earn what I want to earn.

On this goal, it’s easy to get tripped up before you begin: you can’t meet your income goals if you don’t know what they are. I use a simple worksheet¹ with students in my classes to help them determine the gross (total) income level they need to achieve and how many billable hours they anticipate working. I think that every freelancer’s goal should be to achieve a similar level of financial security to someone with a salaried job. If you’re not there yet, it’s important to acknowledge and make your peace with how much you need to earn to get there. The worksheet should help you do that.

You can set various types of income goals:

- Increase your total income.
- Increase your income from a specific type of client:



Whatever you do, it's important to acknowledge your efforts before you move on to goal-setting for the upcoming year.

direct clients in a specific sector, agencies in a specific country, etc.

- Earn the same amount of income while working less. This is a goal for a lot of freelancers who are working so much that they're at risk of burning out.
- Increase your income from a specific aspect of your business. For example, the year after I earned my court interpreter certification, I set an income goal specifically for interpreting.

Goal Two

Who You Work for and What Kind of Work You Do

When freelancers ask me for big-picture business advice, the first question I ask them is, "Are you earning what you need or want to earn?" (See goal one!) The second

question is, "Are you doing work that you enjoy and are good at, for clients you enjoy working for?" To answer this, use some objective data. Start by ranking your clients:

- A-list: Clients you love working for, both in terms of rates and the work they send you.
- B-list: Clients who have one "strike" against them (e.g., they don't pay well, they are high-maintenance to work with, or you don't really enjoy the work that they send you).
- C-list: Clients with multiple strikes against them, who you only work for when you have no other work.

This exercise serves two purposes: it helps you know what kinds of clients you would like more of (the A-list), and what kinds of clients you would like to discontinue working with (the C-list).

Goal Three

Plan to "Clone" Your A-List Clients

"I need better clients" is too amorphous of a goal for most freelancers to really take action on. A better option is to ask yourself, "What are the specific characteristics of my favorite clients, and how do I find more clients that also have those characteristics?" Here's an example: one of my direct clients is a European business school that hired me to help them prepare their application (which had to be in English) for an international business school accreditation. Their application was successful, and I've continued to work with them on French>English translations because they're now actively recruiting international students for their programs taught in English. I theorized that they must not be the only business school in a French-speaking country with this type of accreditation, and I was right. That motivated me to develop an email and LinkedIn marketing campaign aimed at other business schools in French-speaking countries that have, or might be seeking, this particular accreditation.

Goal Four

Identify a Rose and a Thorn

To set goals for the new year in your business you need to take a big-picture look at what's going well and what's not going well.

Both are important: you can't build on your strengths unless you know what they are, and you can't remedy what's unsatisfying unless you identify it. A good, non-punitive way of thinking about this is a rose and a thorn: what's something that went really well in your business this year, and what's something that's bugging you?

When you do this, really try to make observations rather than judgments, especially when it comes to the thorn. Saying, "I didn't work hard enough" is unlikely to motivate you to do better. Instead, drill down into what's not going well: "I'm having a hard time staying motivated because I don't enjoy my specializations," is more helpful. In my own business, my rose is that my overall income has been relatively unaffected by the pandemic, and I'm in a master's in conference interpreting program that I love. My thorn is that I really need to broaden my base of interpreting clients once I'm done with my graduate program.

Goal Five

Set Some Benchmarks for the Year


Wrap up the goal-setting process by asking yourself where you would like to be at this time next year. Be as specific as you can: Pass the ATA certification exam? Find at least one direct client? Learn a new translation memory program? I think that identifying around three

You can't meet your income goals if you don't know what they are.

things that lend themselves to a specific action plan is a good idea. Then, make at least a mini action plan (e.g., "I will form a study group of colleagues who are all preparing for ATA's certification exam in my language pair, and we'll plan to meet at least once a week for an hour.").

Finally: Congratulate Yourself!

Now that 2020 is well behind us, here's a huge thing you need to do (for real!): congratulate yourself for surviving it. The Year Like No Other posed many challenges to freelancers, and many ATA members found themselves combining freelancing with homeschooling their kids, taking care of older relatives, anxiously tracking the news,

and generally trying to stay safe and stay sane (thanks to my podcasting partner Eve Bodeux for that motto!) in a truly crazy time. And you made it. Your track record for pushing through hard days is 100%, so make sure to give yourself credit for that. In my business, I like to give myself a year-end bonus, just as a good boss would do for a valued employee. Some years I buy a new computer, or even something non-work-related like a musical instrument. This year, because I'm in graduate school and on a tighter budget, I gave myself a partial day off and a trip to my favorite bakery. Whatever you do, it's important to acknowledge your efforts before you move on to goal-setting for the upcoming year. 

NOTE

¹ "Deciding What to Charge," <https://bit.ly/What-to-charge>.



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"Business Practices" will alternate in this space with "The Entrepreneurial Linguist." This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors.



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ModernMT

In the January/February 2021 issue I wrote about the surprising quality and ease-of-use of the OPUS-MT and OPUS-CAT products.¹ When I interviewed developer Tommi Nieminen, an experienced professional translator and MT researcher, about the OPUS tools, he said—much to my surprise—that according to his testing, his products (the locally installed MT and the connector to CAT tools) are as good as or better than any other trainable machine translation (MT) engine.² Except one: ModernMT.

ModernMT is a cloud-based adaptive solution for neural machine translation (NMT), just like a number of other systems (including the above-mentioned OPUS tools). Interestingly, though, the adaptive part of the technology is fundamentally different than its competitors because there are actually no changes in the base engine happening at any time. Instead, the system uses a technology called “instance-based adaptive NMT.” This consists of the translation request first being sent to a translation memory (TM) layer (which can consist even of a relatively small TM as long as it’s highly tuned). With similar segments found in that TM layer, the NMT engine’s “hyperparameters” are adapted on-the-fly so that a more suitable suggestion is generated.

The base engine, which is hosted in a number of data centers, including in Rome and San Jose, is trained in 46 languages (see the list at the homepage www.modernmt.com) on the large data sets collected by Translated, the Italian language services provider

and tech developer of the massive MyMemory TM. (Translated also owns a majority of the shares in ModernMT.) And while the base engines are retrained once or twice a year, your data effectively sits in the middle and adapts the MT suggestions to your style and terminology.

The benefit is that you don’t ever need to actually train a specific MT engine, but you can instead use a large generic engine whose suggestions are specialized by having the query parameters adapted as the translation is happening.

When ModernMT was first released as a commercial product in early 2019 it had two major problems: it was outrageously priced and used a completely outdated privacy concept that used customers’ data for general training purposes.


After being nailed with criticism from many sides (as well as little customer support), they completely overhauled both their pricing and their privacy considerations. There’s no longer any cross-training, and any data that you upload to enhance your own MT will

be strictly used by you alone. Kind of what you would expect from a paid product these days.

The pricing is also in line with other tools. You pay by the number of characters as a language services provider or translation buyer (between \$8 and \$50 per million characters, depending on whether you want to train the engine as you translate or queue documents for a batch translation) and a monthly fee if you’re a freelance translator (\$25).

You can use ModernMT via its website, but as a professional translator you would be more likely to use it via their application programming interface through a translation environment tool. Presently, you can use it directly within Trados Studio with an app you can download from the RWS app store, with memoQ through an already integrated plugin, and of course with MateCat (“of course” because MateCat is also owned by aforementioned Translated). Presently, the ModernMT team is working on a Chrome extension as well, which should allow for the

use of any browser-based translation environment and ModernMT.

There is a free 30-day-trial period you can access at modernmt.com/pricing/#translators. And unlike with other products, it might actually make sense to try it out first because, again, there is literally no setup aside from connecting to the MT and choosing a well-suited TM to “sit in the middle.” 

NOTES

- ¹ Zetzsche, Jost. “(More) Advanced Human-Computer Interaction For Translators,” *The ATA Chronicle* (January/February 2021), 30, <https://bit.ly/Zetzsche-Chronicle>.
- ² Zetzsche, Jost. “Any Artistic Work, Especially One on a Large Scale,” *The Tool Box Journal*, Issue 21-4-324 (April 2021), <https://bit.ly/Zetzsche-ToolBox>.



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Remember, if you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail Jost Zetzche at jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.

Practical Tips for Taking ATA's Certification Exam Online

You can now take ATA's certification exam online anywhere, but how does it really work? As a past exam taker, I would like to share some practical tips for those preparing for the online exam.¹

Prepping for the Exam

- Familiarize yourself with ATA's explanation of error categories, the flowchart for error point decisions, and framework for standardized error marking (<https://bit.ly/ATA-exam-grading>), and its list of authorized online resources (<https://bit.ly/ATA-resource-list>) in advance.
- Take a practice test or two (<https://bit.ly/ATA-practice>) in the weeks leading up to your exam and reflect on the feedback you receive from the grader. While current practice tests do not replicate conditions for the online exam, they do provide a feel for what the passages will be like and how they will be graded.
- Participate in a study group to prepare for the exam.

Testing Environment

- Make sure you meet the necessary technical requirements to take the online exam before registering (<https://bit.ly/requirements-online>).
- Set up your workspace, computer, and smart phone for the exam in advance.

- Double check that the ExamRoom.AI app—the testing platform—is installed and opens on your smart phone and that your phone is fully charged before the exam.
- Turn off all notifications and reminders and exit email programs, Slack, etc., on your computer and smart phone to avoid distractions and/or grounds for disqualification.
- For those with partners, kids, and/or pets, try to have your home to yourself on exam day.
- Even though you hopefully have your home to yourself that day, choose a quiet room where outside noises (e.g., lawnmowing, dogs barking, etc.) won't distract you.
- Type up any notes you want to use and print them out in advance. (Loose pieces of scrap paper and Post-Its are not allowed for the online exam.) You can write notes on a whiteboard but will be asked to erase them and show the whiteboard to the proctor before ending the exam.
- Have physical dictionaries and printouts set out on your table or desk.
- Have online dictionaries and resources such as websites bookmarked and tabs open on your computer before logging in for the exam.
- If working into English, have the PDF version of ATA's Into English Grading Standards downloaded and open on your computer before onboarding so you can quickly search the PDF for ATA's style preferences if necessary during the exam. (<https://bit.ly/into-English-standards>).
- Open multiple tabs in Chrome for web searches during the exam. (Internet Explorer is not allowed.)
- Have laptop and smart phone chargers readily available with outlets nearby.

Onboarding Process

On exam day, you log onto the ExamRoom.AI website to be guided through the onboarding process, which includes verifying your identification and showing a scan of your surroundings.

The details for onboarding are included in the instructions sent after registration.

- Before onboarding, use the link in the ExamRoom

confirmation email to run a system check.

- Begin the onboarding process at least 20 minutes before your scheduled exam so it doesn't cut into your exam time.
- Have your photo ID ready to show the onboarding agent.

Exam Itself

- Once the exam interface is open, the three-hour timer begins its countdown.
- Read all three passages available for translation and choose the two you will translate. (You are allowed to change which passages you translate once you begin.)
- You can toggle back and forth between the three passages using arrows on each screen.
- Once you decide which two passages you'll translate, type "This Passage Not Translated" in the text box of the passage you won't be working on.
- Use the Escape button to minimize your browser to access your electronic dictionaries and other authorized resources on your computer.
- Your computer screen will be recorded and room activity monitored, but you'll not see a proctor during the three-hour exam. The only time you'll interact via webcam with the onboarding agent is during the initial onboarding process.
- You will not hear the proctor at all unless you ask

to speak live with them. You may also raise your hand while asking the proctor a question so they quickly identify you and answer your question.

- You may not read the passage or your translation aloud to yourself at any time.
- When you're finished, tell the proctor you're finished and they will walk you through submitting your exam.
- Be sure to log out of the ExamRoom.AI app on your phone or tablet to completely sever the recording of your exam.

Resources

- While I had all my dictionaries in the room with me, I mostly used the *Lexibase Collins English-Spanish* electronic dictionary, the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*, the *BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English*, the *Glosario internacional para el traductor*, merriam-webster.com, rae.es, google.com, linguee.com, and ATA IEGS.pdf and felt they sufficed.
- I also had printouts of ATA's list of authorized online resources and its framework for standardized error marking, flowchart for error point decisions, and explanation of error categories. Although I didn't refer to them during the exam, they were still great resources when preparing for the exam.

NOTE

¹ Michèle Hansen provided an excellent overview of the process in her article "The Online Exam Is Here!" in the July/August 2021 issue of *The ATA Chronicle*, <https://bit.ly/ATAonline-exam>.



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