

The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

THE
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Sept/Oct 2016
Volume XLV
Number 5

CHRONICLE



ATA International Conference Program
Christelle
Christelle Maignon
Working for Inclusion
18 16

TRANSLATION IN TRANSITION

A Publication of the American Translators Association



FROM THE PRESIDENT

DAVID RUMSEY
president@atanet.org
Twitter handle: @davidcrumsey

Benefits of a Diverse Crew

I managed to squeeze in an afternoon on a friend's sailboat on a rare, non-working weekend a few weeks ago. As we passed over the open waters, I noticed that the key to smooth sailing is a really good crew. And the key to a really good crew is to have a really inclusive team with different people with different skills. You need someone with strong arms to keep the sail in hand, another person with nerves of steel to hang over the side of the boat to keep it from tipping, another person up front with sharp eyes to watch for rocks, and another person to make sure everyone is playing their part and keeping us moving forward, headed in the right direction.

It's the same at ATA. One of the key strengths that has kept the Association stable has been in its diversity and inclusiveness. Any newcomer to ATA is greeted to a staggeringly wide variety of linguistic and domain specialties among our members. What few people notice is the wide variety of stakeholders at ATA, including translators, interpreters, terminologists, academics, students, language company owners, software developers, educators, and government officials. That is why we often refer to ATA as an "umbrella organization." This inclusive approach brings the Association great strength and lots of unique opportunities.

The clearest benefit of this inclusiveness can be found at ATA's Annual Conference. Since the conference relies largely on the skills and expertise of our fellow members, we are able to offer over 25 different tracks that span a wide variety of languages and domains. Veteran attendees always recommend that new attendees visit sessions that may be outside of their regular domains, or even their usual languages, so that they can learn new skills

and discover new aspects of the industry from those in the know.

This is particularly true for newcomers entering the industry. Visiting with the variety of industry stakeholders provides people, particularly students, with a better view of the various careers available in the language industry. This is something that few students learn in a university. Over the course of their careers, many people may find themselves working on multiple jobs in the industry. It's not unusual to find an ATA member who may have started as a project manager or educator, became a freelance interpreter or translator, and then branched out to start their own company, or another career combination.

Hosting several types of members provides us the opportunity to talk and learn from each other in the same room. In contrast to other associations, which may only include company owners, government workers, or freelancers, ATA is able to host events that bring all types of stakeholders into the same room. That might be a virtual room, such as one of ATA's listserves, where a variety of members can debate common issues in the industry. It might also be a physical room, such as the Brainstorm Networking event at ATA's Annual Conference, where members get to network with each other while discussing challenging working scenarios with viewpoints from freelancers, agency owners, project managers, end clients, etc.

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of ATA's culture of inclusiveness is that it helps increase our strength, impact, and clout in the face of the public. Educating the public on the existence of the translation and interpreting professions has been part of ATA's core mission since its inception. With such a wide variety of stakeholders, we can help reach a wider slice of the public and demonstrate many facets of the industry. With over 10,000 members, when ATA writes to the media or the government addressing language issues, people listen.

Lastly, as the umbrella organization for the language services industry, ATA's sheer size continues to attract new members from all types of positions and backgrounds. This not only benefits the depth of experience and knowledge at the Association, but it has been the key to the Association's staying power over the past 50 years. While other associations may come and go, ATA's culture of inclusiveness is the key to providing a skilled crew to keep the Association sailing forward. ●

American Translators Association

225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590
Alexandria, VA 22314 USA
Tel: +1.703.683.6100
Fax: +1.703.683.6122
E-mail: chronicle@atanet.org
Website: www.atanet.org

Editorial Board

Geoff Koby (chair)
Jeff Alfonso
Chris Durban
Corinne McKay
Michael Wahlster

Publisher/Executive Director

Walter Bacak, CAE
walter@atanet.org

Editor

Jeff Sanfaçon
jeff@atanet.org

Proofreader

Cathy Lada

Advertising

Lauren Mendell
advertising@atanet.org
Tel: +1.703.683.6100, ext. 3001
Fax: +1.703.683.6122

Design & Production

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ata American Translators Association
The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

Making the Most of ATA57

Whether you're attending ATA's Annual Conference for the first or the 40th time, you'll want to make the most of the experience. Attending the conference is a significant investment in terms of time and money, but attendees also tell us that the conference is the highlight of their year and that it inspires them to pursue their professional goals with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

It's always instructive to read our attendees' feedback after each conference. At ATA56 in Miami, 96% of our attendees told us they made new business contacts and 93% said they learned new professional skills. At ATA57, we expect over 1,800 attendees from 60 countries. If you haven't yet registered for ATA57, it's not too late to join us. Visit www.atanet.org/conf/2016 today to learn more.

Once you've decided to attend the conference, it's time to think about how to maximize your time in San Francisco. I attended my first ATA Annual Conference in Toronto in 2004 (and haven't missed one since!), and every year I try to add to my list of insider tips. Here are a few:

- If you're attending for the first time, make sure to visit the "Resources for First-Time Attendees" page at www.atanet.org/conf/2016/first-time. There, you'll find a free webinar presented by veteran translator and conference-goer Jill Sommer, a link to our Newbies and Buddies program, and information on how to sign up for our ATA57 Newbies listserve. All of these resources will help you learn what to expect as a first-timer!
- Start planning your schedule now. With the session and event schedule set (view it at www.atanet.org/conf/2016), it's not too early to choose your educational and networking opportunities, and then slot in some social time as well! New



While connecting with longtime friends is definitely a highlight of the conference, it's also important to expand your range of professional knowledge.

this year are our Advanced Skills and Training Day (Wednesday) and our Job Fair (Thursday), and you definitely don't want to miss Wednesday's Welcome Celebration, or the always-exciting Brainstorm Networking event on Friday.

- Step outside your comfort zone. If you're an experienced translator attending your 10th, 20th, or 30th conference, it's easy to spend all your time with people you know, attending sessions by presenters you know. While connecting with longtime friends is definitely a highlight



FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

CORINNE MCKAY

corinne@translatelwrite.com

Twitter handle: @corinnemckay

of the conference, it's also important to expand your range of professional knowledge (attend a session that focuses on an area of the profession that you'd like to explore) and help the next generation of translators and interpreters integrate into ATA (volunteer to be a Buddy, or attend Friday's Brainstorm Networking event).

- Take an active role in your association. ATA is over 10,000 members strong, and each one of you has a unique perspective to contribute. At the conference, we offer a variety of opportunities for you to give ATA's leadership your feedback and ideas for the future. To keep ATA thriving, we need to know what programs and services you enjoy the most, and what we can do to better meet your needs in the future. You can have breakfast with the Board, offer a comment at the Annual Meeting, and attend a Board meeting. Learn more about these and other opportunities to have your voice heard at www.atanet.org/conf/2016/association.
- Remember that the conference experience continues after you return home. If you're intent on making the most of your investment in the conference, you'll leave with a large stack of business cards from the contacts you made in San Francisco. During the conference, make sure to write down why you have those cards and the names of the people with whom you need to follow up. Once you're back in your office, make sure to actually write those follow-up e-mails. It's also a nice touch to write a thank-you e-mail to any speakers whose presentations you particularly enjoyed.

Happy planning, and I look forward to seeing you in San Francisco! ●



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American Translators Association

August 16

U.S. judge blocks Texas law on election interpreters

"A federal judge Friday blocked Texas from enforcing a state law that limits the availability of interpreters in polling places, ruling that it violates protections guaranteed by the U.S. Voting Rights Act."

Read more:

<http://bit.ly/ElectionInterpreters>



TOP TWEETS



The right way to increase your freelance rates without losing clients

#translator #interpreter

AUGUST 16 / @ATANET



Translators in Residence: An interview with Jen Calleja

#translator #interpreter

AUGUST 16 / @ATANET



"Going Dutch" or "having a French shower": idioms using other nationalities and countries

#translator #interpreter

AUGUST 15 / @ATANET

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AN HOURLY FEE FOR TRANSLATION?

(JOHN MILAN, MAY-JUNE ISSUE)

Even when giving an estimate for an entire project, I've usually found it necessary to use a word rate or an hourly rate rather than stating a flat fee for the project as a whole. This is because the client's initial estimate of the number of words and the other work involved is often far off the mark. If you agree to a flat fee for the project, then either the client has carte blanche to send you an unlimited amount of work related to that project, or, if you specify some maximum, then you have to renegotiate once that maximum is reached. At that point, there is often enormous pressure on the translator to get the extra work done quickly, before there is time to complete additional negotiations about the price.

I've always avoided this situation by agreeing in advance with the client that the final invoice may deviate from the estimate and will actually be based on a word rate, an hourly rate, or a combination of the two.

David McKay | The Hague, Netherlands

BIG DATA AND THE TRANSLATION INDUSTRY

"The big data and translation needs we discussed represent an opportunity for the language sector, but many translators look at the situation and worry that widespread deployment of machine translation (MT) will take work away from them. Our research estimates that translators will, in fact, lose some lower value jobs to MT, but that the total amount of work they have will increase at a steady rate for the foreseeable future."

I hope the above (taken from Don DePalma's article in the July-August issue) is read, processed, and understood by a great number of colleagues and newcomers who go into a panic every year over developments in MT and widespread usage of the various technologies.

Disruption is no longer only a buzzword. It is a reality to which we need to adapt, and that process starts with knowledge, analysis, and implementation. Specifically, knowledge of what it is, analysis of its impact, and implementation of its benefits by incorporating it into your professional toolbox. And that applies to both translation and interpreting.

Thank you for publishing this, and thank you, Don, for the well-written and supported piece.

Gio Lester | Pinecrest, FL



Board Meeting Highlights

The American Translators Association's Board of Directors met July 30–31, 2016, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Here are some highlights from the Board meeting.

- **Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Ted Wozniak reported on the positive state of the Association's finances and noted the elimination of ATA's net equity deficit. Related, the Board approved updates and revisions to the ATA Investment Policy. (The Investment Policy provides guidelines and regulations about how ATA funds may be invested.) The Policy will be available in the Members Only section of ATA's website.
- **Budget:** The Board approved the \$3.2 million final budget for July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017, as well as the draft budgets for 2017–2019.
- **Active Membership Review Audit:** The Board approved reclassifying the membership status of members who did not complete an Active Membership Review audit. The status of these 10 members was changed from Active/Corresponding to Associate. In November 2015, the Board approved and established a policy and procedures to audit members who had completed the online Active Membership Review process. This Board action is the result of the first audit that was conducted in the spring (April–May 2016).
- **Certification Program:** The Board approved eliminating eligibility requirements to sit for the certification exam starting January 1, 2017. The Certification Committee also reported that starting January 1, 2017, all exam



ATA Board of Directors: Top row, from left: Directors Christina Green, Chris Durban, Melinda Gonzalez-Hibner, Geoffrey Koby, Faiza Sultan, Frieda Ruppenner-Lind, and Evelyn Yang Garland | Bottom row, from left: Secretary Jane Maier, Treasurer Ted Wozniak, President David Rumsey, President-elect Corinne McKay, and Director Lois Feuerle

passages would be general in nature and no longer necessarily scientific/medical or business/legal.

- **Government Relations Committee:** The Board approved the establishment of the Government Relations Committee. The GR Committee will coordinate ATA's advocacy efforts with federal, state, and local agencies as appropriate. In addition, President David Rumsey was approved as the chair of the committee.
- **Ethics Committee:** The Board approved the appointment of the members of the Ethics Committee: Ted Wozniak (previously approved as chair), Odile Legeay, Connie Prener, Susanne van Eyl, Jill Sommer, Catherine Christaki, and Michael Collins.
- **Member Resolutions:** The Board approved the Member Resolutions

Policy and Procedures, which spell out the types of resolutions and deadlines for members to request that ATA recognize an individual/organization or recommend a position or an action.

- **Jamie Padula:** The Board recognized and thanked Chapter and Division Relations Manager Jamie Padula for his 10 years of service.

The Board meeting summary and minutes will be posted online once they are approved. Past meeting summaries and minutes are always posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php. The next Board meeting is set for November 5–6, 2016, in San Francisco, California. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend. ○



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WALTER BACAK, CAE
walter@atanet.org

ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

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Inside the ABRATES VII International Conference

The Associação Brasileira de Tradutores e Intérpretes (ABRATES) held its 7th Annual Conference in June, and the ATA was there looking to forge ties. This brief peek inside the conference will show you how Brazilians do it.

In June, the Associação Brasileira de Tradutores e Intérpretes (ABRATES) (Brazilian Association of Translators and Interpreters) held its seventh International Conference in beautiful Rio de Janeiro at the Centro de Convenções SulAmérica in Rio's Cidade Nova district.

Over the course of three days, ABRATES was able to bring 612 professionals and students together to hear 85 speakers from eight countries. With over 90 sessions, attendees faced some tough decisions as they tried to squeeze in as much of the amazing content as possible in such a short time.

This year, pre-conference courses were also offered. These were organized in association with *Café com Tradução* (Coffee and Translation), an initiative of a group of professional translators and interpreters to promote courses, events, lectures, and workshops for continuing education to colleagues with the support of ABRATES. Course subjects included a basic course on memoQ, a basic course on Wordfast Classic, a workshop on English>Portuguese literary translation, a course on Brazilian Portuguese grammar, and tips for booth interpreters.

ATA AND ABRATES

I had the honor of representing ATA at the conference. Since we do have members in common and ATA has held certification exams in Brazil, it was time for a formal introduction.

The ABRATES board of directors reserved a few minutes at the beginning of the conference for me to speak to attendees on behalf of ATA. After giving a brief overview about ATA, I spoke about the shared goals of both associations: to advance the translation and interpreting professions and foster the professional development of individual translators and interpreters. I also mentioned ATA's desire to strengthen ties with ABRATES and congratulated the association on



ABRATES Vice-President Renato Beninatto interviewing Cora Rónai, the daughter of ABRATES founder Paulo Rónai

its accomplishments during 46 years of activities (it was established in 1970). I then invited attendees to stop by ATA's table during the conference.

The time allotted was not enough to cover all I wanted to say, so I made myself available to answer questions throughout the conference. In addition to talking to attendees between sessions, I was also on hand at the table ATA was provided to display information. Attendees who stopped by could also leave their business cards in a bowl for their chance to win several ATA giveaways (e.g., *The Chronicle*, pens). Two drawings took place during the conference and eight ATAware items were given away.

THE MAIN EVENT

Conference sessions were organized into the following tracks: Translation into Foreign Languages, Brazilian Sign Language, Academic, Judiciary, CAT Tools, and Translation in General. Presentation topics included machine translation (MT), translation memory, computer-assisted translation, Brazilian Sign Language, pricing, interpreting practices, and professional growth in general.

The session that impressed me the most was the panel on MT by Kirti Vashee, Ricardo Souza, Ronaldo Martins, and Marcelo Fassina, which was moderated by ABRATES Vice-President Renato Beninatto. A lot of new information was provided on many fronts: the level of development of MT engines, differences between approaches in the development of MT engines, new uses of MT, and which languages are best and worst suited for use with MT (e.g., Brazilian Portuguese and Swahili, respectively).

The liveliest session I attended was the roundtable on literary translation and copyright offered by the Sindicato Nacional dos Tradutores (SINTRA), the Brazilian Translators Union. The panelists were:

- Heloisa Martins Costa (translator and former ABRATES officer)
- Ernesta Ganzo (Brazil-based Italian translator and lawyer)
- Daniele Petruccioli (translator and founder of Italy's *Sindacato Traduttori Editoriali-STraDE*)
- Renata Pettengill (executive editor at Grupo Record, a Brazilian publishing house)

Learn More about Brazil's Translator and Interpreter Community

Café-Com-Tradução
<http://bit.ly/Café-Com>

ABRATES
<http://bit.ly/ABRATES-Brazil>

ABRATES VII International Conference Closing Video
<http://bit.ly/ABRATES-closing-session>

SINTRA
www.sintra.org.br/site/index.php



- Lenita Esteves (Brazilian professor and translator of Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of The Rings*)

The moderator was Petê Rissatti, from Ponte de Letras, a well-known blog among translation and interpreting professionals who work with Portuguese.

INTERPRETING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

I consider myself a veteran of translator and interpreting conferences and other events, but the ABRATES conference offered a few novelties. One of them was the availability of free, fully equipped interpreting booths to attendees. Interpreting students and those who were curious about the profession had access to the booths, which had been placed in many of the rooms. Those who chose to use them had the opportunity to be evaluated by their peers and/or professionals. Evaluation forms were on hand, courtesy of HI²T by Versão Brasileira, a company that offers interpreting courses and specialized training in Brazil and around the world through the International Association of Conference Interpreters. The booths were also available to professionals who were considering a change in language direction, affording them the opportunity to practice. Interpreting students also took advantage of the booths to have their proficiency levels evaluated. Comunica, an interpreting services provider run by Richard Laver, was responsible for the booths and technicians. Comunica also brought a professional makeup artist, a photographer, and provided a booth

without glass for taking professional photos of attendees, all at no charge.

In addition, continuing education sessions were also offered to professional Brazilian Sign Language interpreters.

BRAZIL'S SECOND LANGUAGE SPEAKERS AND ABRATES

Though both ATA and ABRATES represent translators and interpreters, one major difference is that ABRATES also represents professional Brazilian Sign Language interpreters.

Brazilian Sign Language (Língua Brasileira de Sinais, or LIBRAS) was officially recognized as Brazil's second language by the National Congress of Brazil when it passed Law 10.436 on April 24, 2002, which was signed by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Later, in 2005, President Luiz Inácio da Silva issued Decree 5626/2005, recognizing it as a legal means of communication, a recognition that extends to resources linked to LIBRAS.

The Portuguese acronym to identify sign language professionals in Brazil is TILS, which stands for Tradutor-intérprete de LIBRAS. (This designation appears before the professional's name on business cards.)

In recognition of the important role LIBRAS interpreters play in the association, ABRATES invited a TILS to assist the board during the opening ceremony, which included the Brazilian National Anthem. TILS Paloma Bueno Fernandes accepted the challenge and also gifted us with a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem in LIBRAS. It was an unexpected and unforgettable sight!

SAYING GOODBYE IS BITTERSWEET

The event's closing was also touching. Stage actress Vera Holtz, a longtime friend of ABRATES President Liane Lazoski, was present for the closing session. Vera was on hand to celebrate Liane's accomplishments during her term as president and to help her welcome incoming ABRATES President William Casemiro, who had served as treasurer of the outgoing board.

As usual at such events, we all learn a lot, have fun, and replenish our reserves of emotions and memories of beautiful times shared with friends and colleagues. One of the highlights for me occurred just after the opening remarks, when Cora Rónai, daughter of ABRATES's founder Paulo Rónai, was interviewed by ABRATES Vice-President Renato Beninato.

Aside from the honor of representing ATA, my time at the conference allowed me to discover new software (including how to make better use of an application I have been using for some time), learn new techniques, and even develop new partnerships. I look forward to ABRATES 2017 in São Paulo! ●



Giovanna "Gio" Lester is a 36-year translation and interpreting veteran. As an interpreter at international events, she has been the voice of presidents, prime ministers, surgeons, scientists, hairdressers, entrepreneurs, teachers, students, and programmers. She served as the president (2011–2012; 2015) of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida, Inc., which she co-founded in 2009. She served on the board of both medical interpreter certification initiatives for the National Coalition on Health Care (later, the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters) and the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters. A past administrator of ATA's Interpreters Division, she is currently a contributor and the administrator of *The NAJIT Observer*, an online weekly publication of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT). She is certified by both ATA and the Associação Brasileira de Tradutores (ABRATES) as a Portuguese>English translator. In addition to ATA, ABRATES, and NAJIT, she is a member of the International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters. Contact: giolester@translanguage.net.

ATA 2016 Elections: Candidate Statements

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled elections at the upcoming 2016 ATA Annual Conference in San Francisco to elect three directors. There will also be a special election for secretary for a one-year term to complete Rudy Heller's term.

SECRETARY (ONE-YEAR TERM)

JANE MAIER

janemaier1@comcast.net



Nearly three years ago, I was elected to the Board along with my colleagues Rudy Heller and Evelyn Yang Garland. Last year, Rudy was elected ATA

secretary, but only a month later was regrettably stricken by a health issue that ultimately led to his resignation. I offered to take minutes at the January 2016 Board meeting, and in April was approved by the Board to serve as secretary until ATA's Annual Conference, when, according to our bylaws, a director who fills a vacated position must be officially elected by the membership.

For those of you who don't know me, I've worked in the translation industry for over 35 years, since graduating from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey with an MA in translation and interpreting (Spanish<->English). As an ATA-certified Spanish<->English and French>English

translator, I work primarily in the areas of international development and healthcare.

ATA's Certification Program has been my main area of focus for a long time. I've been a grader of Spanish>English certification exams for over 20 years. I serve on two Certification Program subcommittees (Candidate Preparation and Grader Training), two key areas to support potential exam-takers and ensure the success of the program.

In my 2013 candidate statement, I wrote that, if elected, I would work "to ensure the smoothest transition possible" to the critically needed computerized exam model, and would "address logistical aspects of the program to streamline the process and eliminate delays in receiving results." With this in mind and in response to many members who requested more exam preparation opportunities, I did what I could to help make it happen. The computerized exam is now a reality due mainly to the heroic efforts of Certification Committee Chair David Stephenson, and the problem of delays in receiving exam results has largely been resolved.

I also helped update the general certification presentation on ATA's website. My co-grader Holly Mikkelson

and I offered the first-ever Spanish>English exam preparation workshop at last year's conference in Miami, and will be providing a special three-hour training this year in San Francisco.

Communication with my fellow ATA members is another area of importance to me. You won't find me too often on social media, as I prefer to communicate with people directly on a more personal basis. I offer whatever assistance I can when a member contacts me, and keep my ears open at conferences and other events to address member concerns. Serving as ATA secretary since January has given me yet another way to keep members informed, by faithfully recording Board meeting minutes and promptly preparing a summary of key issues.

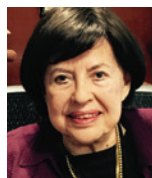
I'm pleased to have been on the Board these past three years when so many tremendous changes have taken place (i.e., introduction of the first successful computerized exam model, and getting ATA's finances back in the black).

I would be honored to receive your vote so that I can continue to act in a leadership role for ATA and contribute my many years of experience to serve you and our Association the best I can.

DIRECTOR (THREE-YEAR TERM)

MARIA BRAU

mmbrau@gmail.com



I'm currently the unit chief of the Language Testing and Assessment Unit at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). I'm also a member

of the Intelligence Community Testing and Assessment Expert Group, the ASTM F43 Executive Committee and Translation Standard Subcommittee, and the U.S. delegation to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

My focus has been translation skills assessment and the development of performance standards. I've presented papers on these topics at numerous government forums and academic conferences, such as the International Association of Applied Linguists, International Language Testing Association, and Association of Language Testers Europe.

Although I've attended ATA conferences and presented on translation assessment issues, I consider my best contribution to the Association so far to be the proposal to establish a Government Division, which was approved last November. I now serve as the division's acting administrator. If elected to the Board of Directors, I intend to continue promoting government participation within ATA through both institutional and individual memberships.

I did not always concentrate on these issues. It was not until the early 1990s, when I joined the Language Services Program at the FBI, that I became formally involved in translation. Before that time, I had devoted myself to academic pursuits: BA in comparative literature, MA in Romance languages from Fordham, MA in U.S. government, and a PhD in political theory and international relations from Georgetown University. I then became a history professor at Howard University and authored two books on Puerto Rican history published by Doubleday.

At the FBI, I was tasked with translating audio files in Spanish into written text in English and documents in both directions. Because I was trained to rate speaking proficiency, I was also asked

to rate translation exams. At that time, there were no translation assessment guidelines from the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), the group that issues skill level descriptions (SLDs) for language assessments in the U.S. government.

Throughout the 1990s I was part of the Intelligence Community Committee, which discussed the need for translation standards and formed part of the committee that approved the federal court interpreter certification exam. However, it was not until the end of the decade that the ILR established a Translation and Interpretation Committee, of which I was named co-chair. (I now serve as the committee's chair.) I then formed a subcommittee to develop SLDs for translation performance, which were approved in 2005, followed by SLDs for interpreting (2007), audio translation (2011), and intercultural communication (2012).

Based on the SLDs, I developed ILR-based translation tests in 30 languages. Additionally, I designed an English-to-English paraphrase test aimed at assessing a candidate's ability to find suitable equivalents when no translation test exists in a given language. I would suggest that this test type might prove useful for ATA, perhaps as an introductory exercise before certification.

In conclusion, as a director I will stand ready to participate in any project assignments, particularly those related to translation assessments and certification.

EVELYN YANG GARLAND

egarland@actalanguage.com



Three years ago, when I ran for the Board for the first time, my priorities were: 1) increasing our profession's visibility and influence, and 2)

cultivating professionalism among the next generation of translators and interpreters. Once elected, I wasted no time. In my first year, I led the creation of a Public Relations Roadmap, which was adopted by the Board and implemented over the following years. In my second year, however, my priorities changed unexpectedly to finance, as I discovered that unstable finances threatened our goals as an association of professionals.

Our treasurer's analysis showed that none of our four major programs (i.e., Annual Conference, certification, *The ATA Chronicle*, and professional development) were generating a cash surplus. Additionally, the financial outcome of our Annual Conferences sometimes varied significantly from our budgetary projection. Such financial risks strained ATA's ability to pay for programs such as public relations, which many members called for.

Any program, be it public relations or outreach to translators and interpreters, requires stable funding to thrive and continue. I firmly believe that two things will help stabilize ATA's finances: 1) understanding the financial implication of each program, and 2) basing each major decision upon good financial information.

Since joining ATA's Finance and Audit Committee in early 2015, I led a small group to develop a mathematical model that projects the cost of the upcoming Annual Conference in San Francisco. The first version of the model was completed this April and will be given a trial run later this year.

If re-elected, I will see through the testing and refining of the conference cost projection model. I will also lead a team to develop a second mathematical model that can help us understand the cost of future conferences in addition to the upcoming conference. This will allow the Board to be better informed when selecting the city and hotel for the conference five years into the future. More broadly, I look forward to contributing my analytical skills, developed through rigorous training in science, to support the Board in decision-making.

In short, I'm committed to building a solid financial foundation for the organization on which every member can play out his or her full potential in serving our profession.

CHRISTINA GREEN

christina@greenlinguistics.com



Last year, I was selected by ATA's Board to serve as a director. This year, I'm pledging my continued efforts to serve this great organization for a full

elected term.

When I ran last year, my goals were to increase active membership, improve our

branding, and create sustainable tools for training and certification. These goals are still as critical today as they were last year.

Since becoming a director, I've worked with the new Membership Committee, given presentations about ATA and regional chapters at conferences for interpreters, trained administrators and teachers in school districts on the importance of using qualified language professionals, and advocated for stronger branding by ATA.

Most importantly, I've met many members, listened to their ideas, and shared their enthusiasm and concerns.

I understand the comprehensive challenges we face as professionals in this industry. I also understand that as an organization, ATA must meet, or exceed, the needs of our constituents. We are not a symbolic entity. We must advocate for those things that matter to us individually and as a group. We have tremendous growth opportunities, but also face significant challenges through globalization, technology, and politics. By educating and reinforcing our individual and collective skills and expertise to the private sector and government entities, our success follows. ATA is an incredibly unifying force for all of us.

I have also come to realize that we can do much more to help those who suffer the most from a lack of equal access to language services. Individually, and collectively, our support can be invaluable to those in need. It's sad to reflect that many of us have very little voice in society, and really no voice at all when it isn't in English.

As a freelancer and owner of a small company, I've worked as a translator and interpreter, adviser, and expert witness. I've donated my services to various human rights/refugee/minority organizations and advocated passionately for those in need.

Since becoming president of the Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (MATI), ATA's Midwest chapter, in 2012, I've spearheaded the creation of a new website, implemented a webinar series, and increased donations, membership, and revenue. I also coordinated MATI's efforts at ATA's 55th Annual Conference in Chicago. These experiences have also provided me with an invaluable skillset with which to serve you as a director.

I hold a bachelor's degree in modern languages, with a minor in linguistics and a specialization in translation and interpreting, from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. I speak Spanish, French, and Italian, and have conversational skills in Portuguese.

Translation is my life's work. I've served as an interpreter and translator for over 30 years, working with (and for) government agencies, public and private sector entities, and nonprofit organizations.

I've personally sought, and vigorously advocated for, our increased standing as language professionals.

I look forward to continuing this journey. It would be an honor to continue to serve as a director for this great organization.

CRISTINA HELMERICHS D.
cristina@cristinahelmerichsd.com



I would like to thank the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee for recommending me as a candidate to the Board of Directors. It's an honor to be considered for this position.

Even as a child in Venezuela, I dreamed of becoming a United Nations interpreter, but when I moved to the U.S. my studies took me into political science and economics. Life kindly brought me back to a new version of my initial dream, and for the past 30 years I've been a happy freelance interpreter and translator.

My life experiences and participation in professional organizations have convinced me that one of the best ways to continue to strengthen and professionalize our field is through our associations. In keeping with that belief, I've served ATA as a member of the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) as both chair and as a general member. While chair of IPAC, ATA approved the identification and recognition of certain interpreting credentials in the Association's online directory search fields. I've also served on ATA's Standards Committee and am presently a member of the Interpreters Division's Leadership Council.

From 2009 to 2012, I served on ATA's Board, where I participated in ATA's adoption of the existing Code of Ethics

and Professional Practice as well as ATA's first formal Mission Statement. It was during that term that Naomi Sutcliffe de Moraes and I first presented the idea of identifying interpreters' credentials in the Association's directory. Today, that is almost a reality. Also, both the Mission Statement and the Code of Ethics and Professional Practice are now available to guide the Association, its members, and the Board in all their activities.

In a previous life, it was my privilege to represent both ATA and the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators during the European Union's Grotius Aequalitas Project, promoting the development of standards, best practices, and a code of ethics for legal interpreters.

If elected, I will use everything I've learned during my 30 years of professional experience and volunteer service to work on behalf of ATA and all translators and interpreters. I will add my efforts and experience with ASTM International (an international standards organization) to continue to work toward developing and strengthening standards for translation and interpreting practice. I will focus on not only protecting the individual practitioner's interests, but further strengthening the professionalization and viability of our translation and interpreting work.

I will endeavor to listen to the membership's concerns and to collaborate with the rest of our Board to craft appropriate responses to those concerns. I will work to ensure that ATA Headquarters, divisions, and committees continue to offer our members valuable services and support, as well as to represent the concerns and interests of our profession effectively at all levels.

I hope you will allow me to represent your voice—that of the working interpreter and translator—on the ATA Board.

KAREN TKACZYK
karen@mcmillantranslation.com



Many of us feel like ATA is our home, our tribe, and the place where we come together and meet like-minded people. I hope that as a Board member,

my efforts will increase the number of members who feel that way.

My concerns are not so much WHAT we do—I agree with the laudable goals set and achieved by the Board recently—but HOW we do it. Across my numerous volunteer roles, I have observed process issues that could, and should, be improved.

If elected, my natural inclination would be to hone in on how the Board, other volunteers, and Headquarters work, separately and together. ATA has many good people doing good work in good faith, yet it has suffered from some costly apparent failures. Recurrence can be prevented, and long-term stability secured, if we take a deep and thorough look at how we do things. That would be a substantial project. Any procedural change should also aim to increase transparency and consistency.

I have a track record of service and participation from the time I established my freelance translation practice in 2005. People who have worked with me might say that I'm organized, remain calm in tense situations, am good at building consensus, and can work productively with all kinds of people. I don't overcommit. I'm a pragmatic person. I'm motivated by the idea of developing manageable projects and achieving them by finding the right people to form teams.

I served on ATA's Nominating and Leadership Development Committee from 2011–2015. That experience has given me a good understanding of what it takes to be an effective Board member.

I was vice-president and then president of the Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association from 2007–2011. During that time, opportunities for progress and change abounded. Among other achievements, we grew the membership and became an ATA Affiliate.

I believe that divisions are the heart of ATA. I was one of three people who re-established the Science and Technology Division in 2010, and served as its administrator from that time until 2015. I have chaired the French Language Division's Nominating Committee twice. I was chair of the Divisions Committee from 2011–2015, so I worked extensively with all divisions. One of my achievements during that time was to lead a project to revamp and restructure the

existing *Divisions Handbook*, a guide for leaders on to how to get things done, and then update it annually.

I welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to ATA as a director. Thank you for considering me.

TESS WHITTY

tess@swedishtranslationservices.com



I'm honored to be nominated for a position on ATA's Board and happy to accept the challenge. During the past 13 years I've gone from a novice freelance translator to having a thriving freelance business, and have become heavily involved in the translation industry.

I know from personal experience that one of the paths to success is to get involved in professional associations. As a freelance translator, I joined ATA in 2004, attended my first conference in 2005, and have been passionate about the organization ever since. Here are some examples of my volunteer work within ATA:

- Initiated and organized the English>Swedish certification exam and served as a language chair and grader from 2011–2014, and again from 2016.
- President of the Utah Translators Association, a local affiliate group to ATA (2011–2012).
- Chair of the Chapters Committee for ATA local chapters and affiliated groups (2012–2015).
- Chair of the new Membership Committee since 2015.
- Member of the Nordic Division Committee (2012–2015).

I have a master's degree in international marketing and an MA in business communication and public relations. I'm passionate about sharing my marketing knowledge and experience as a freelance translator with other freelancers. Many freelance translators and interpreters have found my book, *The Marketing Cookbook for Translators—For a Successful Career and Lifestyle*, valuable, and it is required reading in several translation and interpreting

programs around the world. I love sharing my own and other linguists' marketing and business tips through my award-winning podcast "Marketing Tips for Translators," now in its third year, with over 100 episodes.

These are some areas I would like to develop and focus on within ATA:

1. Increase communication and collaboration between local chapters/groups and the Board and Headquarters, and ultimately increase active membership in ATA to get more freelance translators and interpreters involved. Collaboration and communication benefit members by increasing awareness of how ATA can help them in their careers, and ATA by providing information about local conditions and the needs of members.
2. Improve continuing education as a membership benefit through the Annual Conference, local events, and webinars. One of the main benefits of ATA is access to specific and professional continuing education, and I would like ATA to provide more webinars and training events focused on translation and business skills.
3. Actively communicate the value of professional translators and interpreters to the public and to linguists. This can be done through marketing and public relations campaigns by the Board, ATA Headquarters, and local chapters, but also by educating members about what it means to be a professional linguist and the value we provide to the public.
4. Help make the certification exam accessible to as many professional linguists as possible by opening it up to non-members and providing easy access to computerized exams. Also, increase recognition of the Certified Translator (CT) credential in the international business community by promoting it and educating organizations about the credential and what it means.

I would be thrilled to contribute my passion, dedication, and experience as a member of the Board.



A Tale of Two Collaborative Classrooms: Early Success and Follow-on Failure

How did two translation courses taught by the same instructor with a similar course template and teaching methods wind up with such different outcomes?

In 2013, I taught a four-credit course in which 14 rookie translation students rendered all 9,228 words of Guy de Maupassant's *Le Horla*. They did this in fewer than 15 weekly meetings, each lasting almost two hours.

My students at the New School for Social Research (NSSR) in New York City managed to complete this lengthy literary translation even though I also brought in three guest speakers, held a midterm and final exam, and administered bi-weekly terminology quizzes.

How did I manage this? I fostered grit, determination, passion for the text, and collaboration, along with relying on my own willful blindness and a touch of beginner's luck. I say beginner's luck because, as I learned later, this group of

students had a particular alchemy that helped them succeed.

WORKING WITH A COMMON KNOWLEDGE BASE

One of the most important ingredients in the class's success was that most of the 14 students had a solid foundation in French grammar, having already taken all the French-language course offerings at NSSR. This meant that I didn't have to juggle wildly disparate proficiency levels. The class included 10 undergrads, one master's candidate, one student auditing the class, and two continuing education students.

It's important to understand the particular personality of most New School students: out-of-the-box thinking

Illustration based on "Gravure sur bois de Gorges Lemoine d'après un dessin de William Julian-Damazay" from Maupassant's *Le Horla*; Source: Wikipedia Public Domain

is expected in most areas of study. Many of my students came from various university divisions, including the Parsons School of Design, Mannes School of Music, Eugene Lang College, and the School of Public Engagement.

TEACHING APPROACH/ BREAKING MY OWN RULES

My teaching methodology was well suited to this group. In four years as the translation and interpreting studies coordinator at New York University's School of Professional Studies (NYU-SPS) from 2011–2015, I reviewed instructor syllabi for the now-defunct all-online NYU translation program, which ran 20–30 translation courses per semester in eight language pairs. So, I had a pretty good idea of how to use creative methods to develop an effective course.

Then I broke my own rules. I had always advised new NYU faculty never to assign more than 500 words of translation per week because students would complain that assignments took too long. But I gave my NSSR students 700 words (or more) per week. (I've always believed in the "where-there's-a-will-there's-a-way" approach to learning.) My main mission was to make my passion for Maupassant's *Le Horla* contagious without putting students in intensive care. I'd give them the tools and resources to translate, ramp up their analytical skills, and invite them into a thoughtful conversation about literary translation.

Why did I choose this text? First published in 1886, *Le Horla*, a horror story written as a series of diary entries, recounts the unmooring of the narrator's mind as he attempts to grapple with a world that's increasingly tumultuous, absurd, and violent. I had read it as a student at the Sorbonne back in the mid-1990s and remembered it as extremely entertaining. So, in 2012, when my NSSR director asked me for literary translation course ideas, I suggested it would be a good fit for many of her former students who were planning to take my class.

WORKING TOGETHER

Over the years, I've discovered students learn as much (and sometimes more) from fellow students as they do from instructors; the shy ones finding it easier to ask questions of their peers.

I split *Le Horla* into 13 passages of roughly 700 words each: seven were assigned as homework, which students translated on their own, and six were studied collaboratively in class. For each collaborative passage, I prepared questions on grammar/syntax, terminology, research, and points of general discussion. These questions helped structure the students' thinking about *Le Horla* and stimulated discussion about the text.

In the syllabus bibliography, I included an extensive toolkit of online translation resources and a broad list of hardcopy dictionaries.

Before each class, I assigned working groups of three to four students to take on sub-passages consisting of 175 to 250 words. I grouped students according to complementary skill sets, always striving to make the more advanced translators in the class the de facto group leaders. To give the weaker students extra translation practice, I advised group leaders to be more involved in the revision process.

Although students often debated passionately about language and were extremely detail-oriented in their renderings,

they naturally reached consensus on terminology, grammar, and syntax.

We usually critiqued in-class work during the last 20 minutes of each meeting. During these critiques, the group that did the translation was not allowed to speak. This gave students the opportunity to see how their classmates were thinking.

TACKLING THE TEXT WITH GOOGLE DOCS

I encouraged student collaboration both in class and when working online. Before drafting my syllabus, I contacted the university's information technology department about the best way for students to work collaboratively. The NSSR educational technologist listened patiently to my needs and advised me to use Google Documents (GD) rather than get bogged down in wikis or virtual breakout rooms. Although I had never used GD, I was quickly sold. Some of the features I discovered were:

- All class participants can view edits in real-time.
- GD displays revision history so the instructor can get a clear idea of who contributed what, thereby making grading class participation less arbitrary.
- The software is free and highly intuitive and does not require training.
- GD is cloud-based, so students can make changes via smartphones and/or tablets.

Using GD, I could oversee student work in real-time and prevent possible mistranslations as they arose by gently suggesting that students' understanding of a term, expression, or idiom was incomplete or faulty. Whenever possible, I avoided giving students direct answers, so they worked through problems themselves. I fancied my role as that of a weight room spotter, supplying just enough force to prevent injury while allowing students to push through the translation on their own power.

SUMMARY WRITING/ THWARTING PLAGIARISM

For the first graded assignment, students wrote a plot summary in English of no more than 1,000 words based on

their understanding of the French text. I felt that if they could grasp the basic narrative structure and context, half the battle would be won. In addition, the summary gave me a good idea of their French reading and English writing skills, an insight I later used when forming translation teams.

To foil plagiarism, I decided to let my students "borrow" freely from two published translations I gave to them on the first day of class. I did, however, make their "borrowing" contingent upon citing authorship of the published translations. In addition, they were required to explain how the published version completed their understanding of the text. They, however, seldom exercised this option because they found it easier, faster, and more enjoyable to do their own work.

BALANCING THE CARROT AND THE STICK

My grading code, which was based on those I had seen in NYU syllabi and included in my own syllabus, was devised to encourage students to become autonomous learners and seek improvement rather than perfection. For example, I used the Comment function in MS Word to insert a code in a comment box in the margin of each student's document (e.g., MT for "mistranslation"), followed by a point value and an explanation of the error. Because I consider a mistranslation an egregious error, it would cost more points than, for example, a weak but accurate word choice.

Using the Comment function this way is significantly more labor-intensive than just making the changes to the text. However, I felt students should work through their mistakes and self-correct.

Given the cost of college in the U.S., it's understandable that students worry over their grade point averages and angle for higher grades. That's one reason why I allowed anyone who received a B or lower to resubmit each assignment once, after revising their translations based on my commentary, for a possible higher grade. In a field such as literary translation, which presupposes students have several skill sets—i.e., they must be strong readers in the source language,

TECHNICAL TRANSLATOR

Technical Translator wanted in Timmonsville, SC, by a Japanese translation service company. Must have a BA in translation, languages, or related fields. Requires minimum 3 years experience in the translation service industry. Provides precise translation of Japanese and English technical documents. Superior bilingual abilities in Japanese & English required.

Send resume to:

Honda Language Services, Inc.
3625 Del Amo Blvd, Suite 230
Torrance, CA 90503

excellent writers in the target, and solid Internet sleuths/researchers—I felt it best to give them opportunities to learn by self-correcting and revising.

MAKING THE GRADE

In the end, I felt three students turned in publishable work and the rest produced very coherent, readable translations of a fairly sophisticated text, which, as a teacher, gave me the greatest satisfaction. All except two students made it through all of *Le Horla*—one dropped out of NSSR and the other student was auditing the class. On the final day of class, the students gave me a rousing ovation—the most spontaneous and enthusiastic show of appreciation in my translation teaching career.

To demonstrate the quality of my students' work, I presented a slide of five translations of the same 77-word extract from *Le Horla* at the New England Translators Association conference in May. One was published on the Gutenberg Project website (www.gutenberg.org); my students translated the other four versions. I asked attendees to figure out which was the published passage. Considerable debate ensued and, to my astonishment, only one attendee chose the published version. So, perhaps there was some method to my madness.

WAS IT JUST BEGINNER'S LUCK?

And then I got my comeuppance. Fresh from my success with the literary translation class, I taught an introductory course to professional translation in the fall of 2014 using the same course template. Assignments covered a smattering of subject areas that might land in a professional translator's in-box (e.g., scientific, legal, financial, advertising, and marketing, and UN-related texts). This class consisted of 11 students: 10 undergrads and one graduate student who was auditing the class.

Because we would change subject matter regularly, I assigned students no more than 400 words of homework weekly. Before starting a given homework assignment, we would collaborate in class for at least a week so students could get a feel for the terminology. I also gave them background material on the subject area/

text we were translating so they could get a better sense of the context.

Given my many years of professional translation experience, I actually felt more qualified to teach a course geared toward professional translation than literary translation, and I started the semester with good intentions and great enthusiasm. But I soon found that these students were very different from those who had translated *Le Horla*. Most of them did their assignments and, I hope, learned something, but they showed little passion for the work. Two even failed the class.

EVALUATING WHAT WENT WRONG

What went wrong with version 2.0? I've found a few explanations. For one, since the number of registrants for the introductory course was low, the department opened enrollment to the general student population. Anyone could register, regardless of their French proficiency, resulting in a maddening hodgepodge of skill levels. In addition, a few students were marginally computer literate. For example, they peered at me blankly when I asked them to build a glossary in Excel.

I had dealt with disparate language proficiency skill levels before, but the more serious problem was that, except for three or four students, this group didn't really care about professional translation. They wanted to do literary translation. But they lacked the proficiency for either.

In addition, a computing incompatibility issue resulted in students not being able to view my comments on their work. Throughout each student's translation, I used the MS Word Comment function to leave an extensive running critique in the dialog boxes that appear in a document's margins. Then I would write only brief comments on the bottom of the final translation (e.g., "Bravo!" or "Needs work"). Everyone in this group was using a new Mac, but they did not have Microsoft Office for Mac, so I found out the hard way that the native Mac Pages program doesn't display the MS Word Comment function.

After I returned the first assignment, the silence was deafening. I surveyed the students' long faces.

"Did you read my comments?" I asked.

"What comments?" asked an exasperated student. "I don't see any comments?"

They could view only the brief comments I wrote at the bottom of the page, which made them think I was both lazy and arbitrary!

The class got back on track after we cleared up this misunderstanding, but I believe it's extremely challenging for an instructor to recover after his or her authority has been compromised. My students couldn't relate to the texts they were translating, so the course became a hoop they had to jump through to earn credits, rather than an intellectually gratifying and enjoyable task. Powerful collaborative teaching tools such as GD can't help if the text/subject matter isn't in line with students' needs and expectations.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

What lessons did I learn from my accidental triumph and my dismal failure? In the future, I will work to ensure that students have the proficiency level required for a particular class and that we are all technologically in synch. I will continue to use published translations as both a teaching tool and as a deterrent to plagiarism. I will emphasize students' specific aptitudes in forming collaborative teams. Finally, I will work to strike the right balance between challenging and overwhelming my students.

For me, translating *Le Horla* and running this course was an enjoyable side project and never felt like work. The introductory professional translation course, on the other hand, was, for everyone concerned, a misfit. ●



Steven Gendell is a freelance translator with almost 20 years of experience in a wide array of areas, although his primary focus is on French>English legal and financial translation. He worked as an in-house translator at the Permanent French Mission to the United Nations. He was an adjunct instructor at the Sorbonne in Paris (Paris II–Panthéon-Assas), as well as the translation and interpreting studies coordinator at the New York University School of Professional Studies (2011–2015). Currently, in addition to freelancing from home, he is a part-time translation instructor at the New School for Social Research in New York City. Contact: gendells@newschool.edu.



National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care

The National CLAS Standards are intended to advance health equity, improve quality, and eliminate health care disparities by establishing a blueprint for health and health care organizations.

In the late 1990s, the U.S. government became seriously concerned with the health conditions of the nation's increasingly diverse communities. Margaret Heckler, former Secretary to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), headed a task force charged with addressing this challenging issue and finding urgent solutions. After an extensive investigation and study of existing cultural and linguistic competence standards and measures, it became clear that the quality of health care services patients from low-income backgrounds were receiving was very poor, especially

among minorities (African Americans and Latinos, in particular).

As a result, the USDHHS developed an initial set of 15 health care standards to address these disparities. The first draft was presented for discussion to health institutions at three regional meetings in San Francisco, Baltimore, and Chicago. Approximately 413 health institutions and organizations reviewed this initial draft and provided feedback.¹

The findings of this study confirmed that health disparities and inequities in the U.S. were pervasive. To address this issue, recommendations were made for

the provision and application of culturally and linguistically appropriate health services through the use of standards. It was determined that offering services that are respectful of and responsive to the cultural health beliefs, practices, and needs of diverse patients could help close the gap in health care outcomes and lead to more positive results. Heckler asserted that the pursuit of health equity must remain at the forefront of efforts by health care professionals. She urged health care professionals to remember that dignity and quality health care are the rights of all and not of a privileged few.

In December 2000, the Office of Minority Health (OMH) at the USDHHS published the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care (CLAS Standards).² These standards have since provided the framework for all health care organizations to best serve the nation's increasingly diverse communities.

Health practitioners also need to keep in mind that culture determines the way that patients process and present information.

WHAT ARE CLAS STANDARDS?

The National CLAS Standards are a collective set of mandates, guidelines, and recommendations intended to inform, guide, and facilitate required and recommended practices related to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services. Although adherence to these standards is voluntary, many health organizations have committed to following some or all of the 15 standards. The standards fall under three themes:

Governance, Leadership, and Workforce: This emphasizes that the responsibility of implementing the standards rests at the highest levels of leadership at an organization.

Communication and Language Assistance: Recommends that free language assistance should be provided as needed in a manner appropriate to the

organization's size, scope, and mission. Health care organizations and providers that receive federal financial assistance without providing free language assistance services could be in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability: Underscores the importance of quality improvement, community engagement, and evaluation.

KEY ELEMENTS

To ensure the proper implementation of CLAS Standards, it's of critical importance for health care professionals and health care organizations to have a clear understanding of cultural competence and linguistic competence.

- **Culture** represents the vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies, and practices of a particular group of people.
- **Competence** is an individual's ability to interact with others in a manner that does not disrespect, demean, or otherwise diminish their group, heritage, traditions, and beliefs.
- **Linguistic competence** is the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences, including persons of limited English proficiency, those who have low literacy skills or are illiterate, and individuals with disabilities.

To assist health practitioners to become culturally competent, the following six basic steps are included in the CLAS Standards:

Step 1: Recognize and accept that all types of cultures have a profound influence on our lives.

Step 2: Be aware that oppression is pervasive in our society; that it is part of our history and affects our relationships.

Step 3: Understand that cultural differences exist and learn to accept and respect what we may not always understand.

Step 4: Accept that we cannot know everything about other cultures, and never will.

Step 5: Commit to pursue what we need to know about the groups/patients we serve and those with whom we work in every way available to us.

Step 6: Identify and confront personal resistance, anger, and especially fear, as we seek to gain insight and knowledge about a particular culture or group.

ACTION PLAN FOR CULTURAL COMPETENCE

One of the most helpful resources that I've found to assist health practitioners in developing cultural competency skills was created by Gloria Kersey-Mauriac, a professor of nursing at Holy Family University in Philadelphia and the coordinator for diversity and chair of the university's Diversity Team.³ She suggests asking the following questions:

- How much do I value becoming culturally competent?
- How much do I know about my own cultural heritage or racial identity and its relationship to my own health care belief and practices?
- How much do I know about cultural groups that differ from my own?
- How culturally diverse is my social network?
- Am I able to independently identify potential or actual problems that originate from cultural conflicts?
- Have I developed problem-solving strategies to manage cultural conflicts?

Aside from these questions, health practitioners also need to keep in mind that culture determines the way patients process (e.g., coping skills) and present information about their illness/condition. Because cultures are so diversified and changing constantly, the best way for a health professional to be competent and sensitive is to be honest (show professional humility) about his or her own lack of knowledge of the backgrounds, beliefs, and values represented by clients/patients. This attitude will offer immediate empowerment to those a provider is trying to assist. It tells the patient, "I acknowledge you as an individual. If I

value you enough, then I want you to teach me the best way to communicate with you and your family to meet your health requirements."

The successful implementation of the National CLAS Standards also requires health care organizations and providers to have a thorough understanding of the communities they serve.

The successful implementation of the National CLAS Standards also requires health care organizations and providers to have a thorough understanding of the communities they serve. This could be done through the implementation of cultural mapping, a valuable tool for investigating and creating a profile of a particular community/culture. This type of mapping encompasses a wide range of techniques and activities, from community-based participatory data collection and management to sophisticated mapping using geographic information systems. Cultural mapping will help facilitate the development of appropriate health care programs and services. For instance, it will reveal the health, nutrition, and communicable diseases prevalent in each target population served by a hospital. It will indicate the values and belief systems for each culture served. In addition, health care professionals will also learn how these values and belief systems are linked to the services they seek to provide (e.g., mental health, oral health, drug and alcohol abuse rehabilitation). Cultural mapping will also demonstrate the range of holistic traditional practices used by a particular community.

CONTINUING TO EVOLVE

In 2013, the USDHHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) released the enhanced National CLAS Standards. These revised standards provide a framework for organizations seeking to offer services that

MA in Translation and Interpreting

Specialization Tracks:

- Translation for the Professions
- Literary and Applied
Literary Translation
- Conference and
Community Interpreting

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NATIONAL STANDARDS IN HEALTH CARE continued

are responsive to individual cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy levels, and communication needs.⁴ Building on the original standards released in 2000, the revised standards employ broader definitions of culture (e.g., beyond traditional considerations of race and ethnicity) and health (e.g., including mental health and physical health). They apply to organizations focused on prevention as well as to health care organizations. To guide and encourage adoption, the Office of Minority Health released a blueprint highlighting promising practices and exemplary programs.⁵

Aside from these questions, health practitioners also need to keep in mind that culture determines the way patients process and present information about their illness/condition.

With this enhanced initiative, the National CLAS Standards will continue into the next decade as the cornerstone for advancing health equity through culturally and linguistically appropriate health services. To learn more about implementing the National CLAS Standards within your organization, visit the Office of Minority Health at <http://bit.ly/OMH-CLAS>. ●

NOTES

1. *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care: Final Report* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, 2001), 1, <http://bit.ly/national-standards-report>.
2. Ibid.
3. Kersey-Matusiak, Gloria. "Delivering Culturally Competent Nursing Care," <http://bit.ly/Kersey-Matusiak>.
4. Kohn, Howard K., J. Nadine Garcia, and Mayra E. Alvarez. "Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services: Advancing Health with CLAS," *New England Journal of Medicine* (July 17, 2014), 198–201.

5. *National Standards for CLAS in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013), <http://bit.ly/CLAS-blueprint>.



José T. Carneiro has more than 25 years of international senior management and consultant experience in the management and implementation of public health and community development programs in Africa, Europe, the U.S., and South America. As a consultant, he has provided technical assistance to foreign governments, institutions, and community-based organizations on child survival issues, health manpower development, community and institutional strengthening, project sustainability, decentralization, and social marketing. He has also been involved in the design and delivery of training for culturally and linguistically appropriate health services. He has doctor of education from Boston University and a master of public administration from the University of Southern California. Contact: Jtcarneiro24@gmail.com.

Additional Resources:

National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities
Office of Minority Health
www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov

A Patient-Centered Guide to Implementing Language Access Services in Health Care Organizations (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, 2005), 243, <http://bit.ly/patient-centered-guide>.

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Kosoko-Lasaki, Sade, Cynthia Cook, and Richard O'Brien. *Cultural Proficiency in Addressing Health Disparities* (Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2009), 433.

Tseng, W.S., and J. Sterilizer. *Cultural Competence in Health Care* (New York: Springer, 2008), 138.



The Results-Only Work Environment (ROWE): Keeping a Project Manager Sane

The Results-Only Work Environment concept allows people to work whenever and wherever. Is it a dream or nightmare? Here is a project manager's view on implementing the system.

It's an unusually dreary, chilly, and rainy day in Charlotte, North Carolina. It's the kind of day that makes you want to stay in your fleece pants and slippers, sip tea, and watch a Hallmark Original movie (I recorded 25 of them for just these occasions). Luckily, thanks to the implementation of the Results-Only Work Environment (ROWE) at our company, I can spend an occasional morning doing just that.

Since adopting the ROWE culture at Choice Translating in December 2012, the road we have taken has not been without trials and tribulations, potholes and detours, and has caused more than a few grey hairs on the head of our

fearless founder and leader, Michelle Menard. For her in particular, giving up the deeply ingrained notion that all staff members had to sit at a desk from 9 to 5 and beyond to get work done and keep clients happy meant countless bouts of anxiety attacks and sleepless nights. She worried ceaselessly that nobody would show up to work, that projects would never get delivered, and that clients would leave us in droves.

Three years later, she has come full circle and embraced the concept. She has gotten used to not knowing when and where she will see her team. She understands that, thanks to the wonders of modern technology, we're never more

than a Google Hangout or a phone call away. As a result, productivity—and the company—are thriving. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

WHAT THE HECK IS A ROWE?

Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson, founders of the consulting firm CultureRx, developed the ROWE concept in 2003. It soon gained a reputation as a solid business platform with enormous global appeal, helping to launch a contemporary work culture that infuses equal amounts of autonomy and accountability. Ressler and Thompson published the approach in their bestselling book, *Why Work Sucks and How to Fix It*.¹ (They also co-authored another bestseller, *Why Managing Sucks and How to Fix It*.²) They have appeared on the cover of *BusinessWeek*, and their story has been featured in *The New York Times*, *TIME Magazine*, and on *Good Morning America*, *CNBC*, *MSNBC*, and *CNN*.

Most people are still unfamiliar with the ROWE concept (bar pretty much every freelancer in the world), but it basically means you can work whenever and wherever, as long as your work gets done!

To this end, employees are given the freedom and autonomy to schedule their workdays while ensuring that deliverables are met. In a ROWE work culture, performance is measured not by how much time you sit at a desk, but by whether or not you meet the relevant key performance indicators that have been defined for your role. In a ROWE, there are no set hours or prescribed number of vacation days. You either get your work done or you don't.

For most employees joining a ROWE company, the idea of fluid working hours and locations takes some adjustment. In fact, even after three years, I still feel guilty if I take a two-hour lunch break.

When I tell people about ROWE, they typically question the method: "What do you mean you have unlimited vacation time?" "Does anybody ever work?" "How do you get anything done?"

MAKE IT COUNT

The concept sounds like a dream come true. And it is—with one caveat: it works only for the right type of person. Adopting the ROWE concept

is a fantastic opportunity for high performers to create their own idea of a work/life balance. Organizational skills, focus, motivation, trustworthiness, and a sense of responsibility and accountability are imperative to be successful in a ROWE.

Working in a ROWE doesn't mean you work less. It means you make your time at work count. You don't sit at your desk scanning Facebook or getting the latest scoop on Caitlyn Jenner. Instead of wasting two hours a day gossiping around the watercooler, you put that time to better use and spend it with your family or go for a jog. You work effectively and efficiently when you're the most productive. I, for example, am not a morning person. Try to wake me up to watch a sunrise and I'll punch you. I have more energy and better focus in the evenings, when it's quiet around the house or the office. So, I'll save communicating with Japan or sending purchase orders to Vietnam for these later times. No point in composing a perfect project brief for a Chinese engineering team at 11:00 AM when nobody there will be around to read your oeuvre until 10 hours later.

DOES IT WORK FOR A PROJECT MANAGER?

Being a project manager at a language services provider can be stressful at times, working long and odd hours to communicate with linguists, clients, and vendors around the world. Project managers in the U.S. tend to work over 40 hours a week, operating under tight deadlines, working through issues with clients and linguists in various time zones. Turnover is high because project managers who can't keep up with the high-pressure job tend to crash and burn.

Since the consequences of losing a project manager can be detrimental for the company—not to mention the cost involved with hiring and training new talent—managers seek to find ways to ensure that the team has a good work/life balance and gets the breaks needed to prevent burnout, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness.

The ROWE culture is designed to prevent the stress of last-minute fire drills that are so typical in our industry. With

organization, coordination, and planning, the team is able to prepare for most eventualities. And with cross-training, especially at small- to mid-size language services providers, team members can jump into other roles as needed to allow each other time off to recharge.

Sure, there are days when things are crazy and everyone is working long hours—discussing a project with an engineering team in the Philippines, holding conference calls with a client in China, or bending over backwards and begging linguists for help meeting seemingly impossible deadlines. Responsible adults should understand that on those days, it's all hands on deck. But with proper organization, communication, and foresight, those days could be few and far between, allowing project managers the great luxury of setting their own schedules and getting their work done when they feel the most productive. Many project management tasks can be performed at odd hours, even on weekends. Clients or projects are generally not affected if a project manager goes to a morning spin class. And with a typical setting of several project managers in a team, scheduling time off shouldn't cause any issues or interruptions to the workflow.

HOW TO BUILD A ROWE

But how do you do it? Becoming a ROWE company doesn't have to be an overwhelming process. Let's examine the steps you can take to make the transition successful.

Lay a Solid Foundation: This is definitely a culture shift, so you need to have everyone's support. This is why holding workshops and seminars to educate people on how the system works is important. If applicable, make sure you investigate how the transition affects the employee handbook, time-off and vacation policies, and the company culture as a whole. You might also want to ask your accountant to produce a cost-benefit analysis to see if the transition will actually save the company money. It might also be a good idea to consider hiring a workplace consultant to help you build a framework.

Clearly Define the Mission:

Align organizational goals with the company's mission. This will help you

align team competencies and resources to organizational goals. This is a useful strategy for organizations of any size.

Create Measurable Results: Once you're focused on the goals, you can create measurable outcomes that are supported with specific deadlines and responsibilities. Then, communicate expected results to team members so everyone has a clear picture of expectations. After measurable outcomes are set, it's up to the team to determine what they do on a daily basis to achieve that result.

Provide the Necessary Tools: In a ROWE culture, employees focus on achievement. Rather than worry about when and how employees accomplish work, companies should invest in technology that enables employees to achieve results.

Experiment, Analyze, Adapt: Once you have the appropriate goals, results, and tools in place, team members are ready to get things done on their own. This autonomy is a huge change and can be challenging. Therefore, feedback, recognition, and transparency is key. If results aren't being achieved, analyzing and refining both sides of the system is necessary.

DON'T SLUDGE!

One particular element that is harmful to a successful implementation of a ROWE culture is the negative language that it can foster. Statements such as "Well, look who's decided to join us" or "Another vacation? Really? How many days is that now?" are considered toxic. This so-called "sludge" is hard to shake and comes out when team members don't understand the ROWE concept, when communication among team members is lacking, or when people in different roles with different job functions collide.

Realistically, every role has different job functions and requirements. Interpreting schedulers, for example, have to be sure that the phones are staffed all day, while project managers on the translation side tend to be able to keep their schedules more fluid.

To eliminate such sludge and negativity among team members, workshops and open discussions

are needed to clarify the concept, to encourage communication, and to figure out how everyone can benefit in this culture, regardless of the role.

Here, I invite you to check out the sludge videos we made in the sidebar on the right. I promise they are short and entertaining (created using our existing film budget of zero dollars).

WHO'S A GOOD CANDIDATE?

A successful implementation of the ROWE concept in a translation production department involves not only the right motivated, overachieving, close-knit team, but also the right technology, foresight, and flexibility. In this type of work culture, team members are treated like adults, with adult responsibilities, adult accountabilities, and adult choices. They work autonomously with no other measures of performance but the results they produce. With little to no involvement from management, they coordinate time off with anyone that might be affected by their absence. While this setting may be conducive to low performers in a standard company setting, dead weight rises to the top pretty quickly in a ROWE company, thanks to continuous performance measuring.

The Internet, cell phones, Skype, and other work-sharing platforms allow team members to not only choose their most productive times to work, but also to work from anywhere they have an Internet connection. When a team is spread out all over the world and across various time zones, communication is key. And, while many meetings are optional in a ROWE, some meetings—which must show a purpose and specific goal—are important for all team members to attend (in-person or online) to ensure that nothing falls by the wayside. To this end, brief 10-minute daily huddles are suggested. These simply serve to check in and keep each other informed of priorities and potential issues for the day. In longer weekly production meetings, the week ahead is discussed and planned.

WHAT'S THE DRAWBACK?

Naturally, a ROWE works better for driven team members who can work without a lot of supervision than for those who tend to be unfocused and unorganized. To this end, every new team member must be screened carefully before being selected. Each team member also needs to be allowed to discover and work in his or her specific “sweet spot.” To ensure that the workload is evenly balanced and that there are not just one or two project managers doing the heavy lifting, coworkers should be sensitive to each other's needs. This means that time off should be distributed fairly. Asking your teammates if it's okay to take your third cruise this year while a coworker who hasn't had the chance to take any time off to unplug picks up the slack might not go over very well.

To ensure a smooth operation and company growth, personal needs and plans should be balanced with client demands. When clients call in with questions or new project requests, they expect responsiveness. As these calls most often happen during normal business hours, someone should be available to communicate with them. But this task doesn't require the entire team to hover around the phones. Since corded desk phones are a thing of the past, these calls can be taken at a coffee shop around the corner or on the beach in France.

After the initial introductory seminar about working in a ROWE culture, regular refresher workshops should be held. These serve to reinforce the personal freedom and the opportunities for growth and development a ROWE culture fosters. They also teach newer team members in detail what the concept is all about.

DOES IT WORK?

For our company, the concept has been working very well and is one of the main factors that help us maintain our productivity and sanity. This year, we'll have team members spending time in Canada, Peru, and Germany. As for me, I'm going to be spending some time in Hungary. However spread out our team is, we know we have a system in place that ensures continued productivity. ●

Check Out These References for More Information on the ROWE Concept

Choice Translating's Sludge Video 1
<http://bit.ly/2a18t9k>

Choice Translating's Sludge Video 2
<http://bit.ly/2b4faAL>

Results-Only, LLC.
www.gorowe.com

“The Results-Only Work Environment: Are You Ready?”
<http://bit.ly/2bnY5DB>

“Digital Exec 34 Misconceptions and FAQs About the Results-Only Work Environment”
<http://bit.ly/youtube-ROWE-FAQ>

“Work Sucks! with Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson, Co-Creators of the Results-Only Work Environment”
<http://bit.ly/youtube-ROWE-cofounders>

Puckett, Jenna. “How to Transition to a Results-Only Work Environment”
<http://bit.ly/ROWE-transition>

Reynolds, Michael. “How to Unlock the Hidden Potential of Your Team with a Results-Only Work Environment”
<http://bit.ly/ROWE-unlocking-potential>

NOTES

1. Ressler, Cali, and Jody Thompson. *Why Work Sucks and How to Fix It* (Portfolio, 2010).
2. Ressler, Cali, and Jody Thompson. *Why Managing Sucks and How to Fix It* (Wiley, 2013).



Heidi Lind is a senior project manager at Choice Translating, a full-service language services provider. Her experience in the language services industry spans more than 25 years

and includes working many years as a freelance German translator specializing in technical and medical projects. In her current role, she helps clients create a big-picture vision of their global communication goals and needs, offering solutions and options, and educating her clients about best practices. Contact: heidi.l@choicetranslating.com.



At left: Christelle Maignan at the BP16 International Conference in Prague, Czech Republic.

Translation in Transition

When we feel overconfident and think that we don't need to change anything about the way we work, we tend to underestimate change.

In the spring of 2015, my professional life took a new direction following a session I attended at the biennial conference organized by the Institute of Translation and Interpreting in the U.K. Dubbed the “Doomsday Presentation,” the session focused on the future of our industry and on the changes that are happening all around us. The speaker’s message was clear: we need to change because the world is changing.

The night after the session, I couldn’t sleep. However, the cause of my insomnia wasn’t fear over what I’d heard. It was excitement! A translator with 15 years of experience, I was also a trained and qualified coach with a particular interest in change management (i.e., in making change something positive and fulfilling).

I spent the night imagining how I would write a review of the session for

my blog, how it would be shared by thousands on social media, and how I would subsequently be invited to give presentations at international conferences. My ego was having a party, the way egos sometimes do in the middle of the night.

Amazingly, my review—entitled “What Does the Future Hold for Translators?”—has had over 4,000 views, indicating a strong interest in the topic. I was invited to give my first conference presentation soon after publishing it, and more invitations followed. The following highlights some of the points I discussed at the BP16 International Conference in Prague, Czech Republic, earlier this year.¹

THE TECHNOLOGICAL SIDE OF CHANGE

While many of us perceive progress as linear and the speed of change as more

or less constant, progress actually follows an exponential trend where the speed of change increases constantly. If we look at technology over the history of humankind, it becomes clear that there have been far more developments over the past 100 years than in any other century.

This exponential trend is happening in the translation industry as well. In terms of machine translation (MT), for instance, rule-based MT had many limitations initially and was hardly used. Once it was combined with statistical MT its application spread quickly across millions of users. Developers are now saying that machine learning using artificial neural networks could lead to even faster improvements in the next few years.

IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT MT

But technological progress in translation is not limited to MT. Computer-aided translation (CAT) tools are also evolving quickly. A number of applications, such as Memsource and XTM Cloud, are now taking advantage of the capabilities offered by the cloud, thus eliminating the need for installation on your computer.

High-speed Internet connections are also enabling a growing number of translators and interpreters to interact with peers, share knowledge, raise their professional profiles, and connect with potential clients via social media. Moreover, social media technologies have led to crowdsourcing, which is used to enlist the services of a large number of people who will often work for free or at a very low rate (much to the chagrin of bona fide language professionals).

Translation start-ups offering a combination of MT and crowdsourcing have appeared over the past decade to respond to a growing demand for a high volume of fast and affordable translation. Start-ups like Gengo have created apps that allow access to bilingual people anywhere in the world at the click of a button (although not necessarily to people who are professional translators).

We could call such start-ups the Ubers of translation, and while most translators won’t feel threatened by them—because

these start-ups tend to target the low end of the market—these apps could create some disruption in our industry. By automating the project management side of things, such apps could make the work of many intermediary translation agencies redundant, a phenomenon known as disintermediation.

It's important to point out, however, that a number of start-ups have the interests of translators at heart and aim to boost our productivity by putting technology at our service. For example, Lilt has developed a cloud-based translation application that combines MT with auto-adaptive machine learning to help us fulfill our clients' need for faster translations.

While many of us perceive progress as linear and the speed of change as more or less constant, progress actually follows an exponential trend where the speed of change increases constantly.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF CHANGE

Hearing about all these changes in our profession can trigger various emotions, including fear and anger. When change disrupts the way we're used to doing things, it's natural to feel threatened. As human beings, we have three basic responses to a perceived threat that we inherited from our prehistoric ancestors.

When faced with a dangerous predator, our ancestors could choose between fighting it (fight response), running away (flight response), or playing dead in the hope that it would lose interest and simply move on (freeze response). We still use these three responses today in the form of anger, fear, and denial.

The third response (choosing not to do anything about a threat or a change) is very common for two reasons. First, our modern lives can be complicated. It's often easier to ignore change and hope that it won't stick and that things will soon go back to normal. Second, when we feel overconfident and think that we

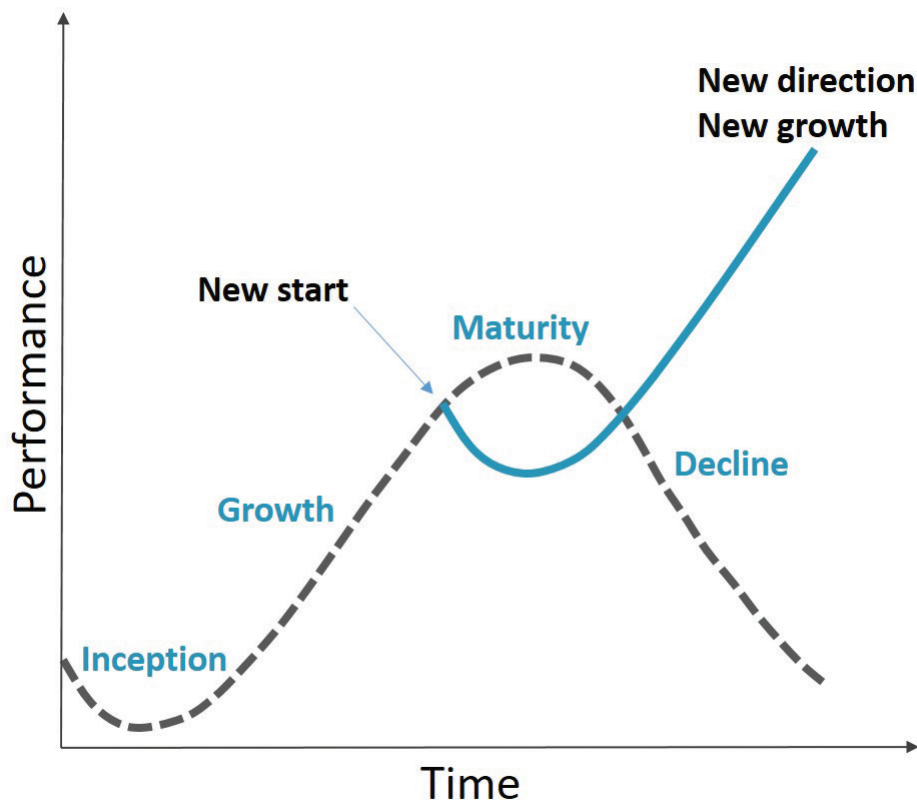


Figure 1: The Translator's Second Curve

don't need to change anything about the way we work, we tend to underestimate change. We feel complacent.

Stagnation: Complacency is dangerous in business because it leads to stagnation. When we underestimate competitors who are innovative, we run the risk of being overtaken by them. As translators, we are small business owners, so complacency is an attitude we need to avoid if we want to remain successful. There are better and more productive ways of dealing with change.

Transformation: In the worst-case scenario, if we don't like the way things change around us, we always have the option of "quitting" and doing something else. The outcome will depend largely on our attitude at the time of our decision. I know a translator who decided to quit and become a therapist. She was happy with her decision, so her transformation was a positive move.

Adaptation: If "quitting" isn't an option—and I expect it isn't for most of us—then adapting to change is the only way we can

ensure sustainability. This can be achieved in several different ways or a combination of the following:

1. **Adoption:** We can embrace new technologies and integrate them into our current practices. For example, we can use social media for marketing purposes, or create our own MT engines from our translation memories using applications like Slate Desktop.
2. **Specialization/Premiumization:** We can become experts in specific niches and target the higher end of the market where our skills as professional human translators are increasingly valued.
3. **Diversification:** We can offer new products and services through intra- or extra-linguistic diversification. For instance, online technologies have made it easier for people to create secondary or additional revenue streams, often from the comfort of their own homes.
4. **Collaboration:** We can work with developers and help them build applications that truly enhance translators' working conditions and boost productivity.

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- Medical Interpreting and Terminology
- Consecutive Interpreting (and/or)
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TRANSLATION IN TRANSITION continued

A number of start-ups have the interests of translators at heart and aim to boost our productivity by putting technology at our service.

Unlike stagnation, transformation and adaptation require that we change ourselves. William Bridges, a change management expert, calls this process transition.² Transitions are the internal process through which we deal with external change. They usually happen over a period of time.

THE BUSINESS SIDE OF CHANGE

In nature and in life, things tend to progress in cycles, which is also true in business. All businesses experience change throughout their lifecycles, which can be represented as a curve showing their performance over time.

The first phase in the lifecycle of a business is called inception. It often involves a dip in performance due to a period of learning and hard work, where an initial investment can be necessary. This is usually the case at the start of a translation business.

If all goes well, the business then enters a growth phase. As freelance translators, this is a time when we feel energized and confident as our client base expands.

The curve then reaches the maturity phase, where the momentum of the growth phase begins to slow down and energy levels begin to drop. The business gets comfortable and reaches a plateau. Things start to stagnate. As freelance translators, this could mean working full-time, with no capacity left for new clients, which means no growth.

The curve finally enters a decline phase, which can be caused by a number of factors. For freelance translators, this could mean being superseded by a competitor who charges less or uses technology that is better suited to the market's needs. A decline is not always negative. It could mean simply that the business owner is scaling back activity in preparation for retirement.

THE SECOND CURVE

According to social and business commentator Charles Handy, there is no need to worry about the decline phase, as we can always start a second curve³ with a new product or service, new business practices, or a new life project. (See Figure 1 on page 23.)

If the first curve represents our current situation, then the second curve could represent the transformation approach (a new career) or the adaptation approach (embracing technology, specializing, diversifying, etc.), as described above.

IS IT THE RIGHT TIME FOR CHANGE?

With this concept of the second curve in mind, many of us may be asking ourselves: "Should I change?" As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus pointed out around 500 BC, change is the only constant. Change happens and will continue to happen with or without us. Therefore, the question we should ask instead is: "How can I change in a way that will work both for me and for my clients?" As the world keeps evolving, we need to keep evolving as well. ●

NOTES

1. For more information, please visit bp16conf.com/video to access a recording of my presentation.
2. Bridges, Williams. *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* (New York: Gildan Media, 2nd edition, 2007), Audible edition.
3. Handy, Charles. *The Second Curve: Thoughts on Reinventing Society* (London: Random House, 2015), Audible edition.



Christelle Maignan has been working as an English-to-French translator for over 15 years, and freelancing since 2004. She specializes in psychometrics, employee training programs, and information technology. She is also a trained and qualified coach and the founder of Coaching For Translators. She helps translators and interpreters reach their goals via her blog, her online course ("The Future-Proof Translator"), and one-on-one coaching sessions over the phone and on Skype. She is a member of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting and the International Coach Federation. Contact: info@coachingfortranslators.com.

An Interview with Lynn Visson, Retired United Nations Interpreter

Every interpreter has surely had excruciating nightmares about a panicky moment at the microphone, and my guest today is no different. (In one instance, she recalls waking up clutching her pillow, relieved to find that her ghastly moment was just a dream.) She has written about her experiences as a United Nations interpreter.

Lynn Visson is a New Yorker of Russian heritage who has spent a lifetime engaged with her languages as a teacher, writer, translator, and interpreter. (Her husband was also Russian.) She has a PhD in Slavic languages and literature from Harvard University. After teaching Russian language and literature at several American colleges, including Columbia University, and freelance interpreting for a while, she became a staff interpreter at the UN in 1980, working from Russian and French into English. Retired since 2005 but still freelancing, Visson is also translating, teaching interpreting, and is a consulting editor at Hippocrene Books, a New York publisher specializing in dictionaries and language text books.

You've had a long and busy career, so let's go back to the very beginning. Did you grow up speaking Russian? Was your home life influenced by Russian culture, customs, and cuisine?

I spoke Russian at home with my parents, who always spoke Russian to each other. Russian culture played a large role in my childhood; I was raised on Russian children's stories and books. My mother did not regularly cook Russian food, but when my parents and their friends entertained, the cuisine was Russian.

Have you always lived in New York?

Yes, except for six years in Cambridge, Massachusetts—four years as an undergraduate at Radcliffe and two years in graduate school at Harvard—and a year in Moscow when I was writing my dissertation.



Lynn Visson

An interpreter is like an actor—you become the person for whom you're interpreting, you're their voice.

Where and when did you learn French?

My parents spent nearly 25 years in France after they and their parents went to Paris following the revolution, so they were totally fluent. They had many French friends. In New York, my father worked in a French art gallery and my mother in cultural services at the French Embassy. They taught me French very early on and then I studied it in high school and college.

While you were a student, you volunteered as an interpreter for visiting Soviet tourists and academics. This would have been during the Cold War. Please tell us something about that experience and what you learned from it that helped propel you along on your career path?

It was my first real contact with the Soviets, since during the Cold War there were very few exchanges. It made the Soviet Union real, not just a place we read about in the newspapers. It helped me see it as a country I could connect to—the Russia my parents talked about, the Russia of their childhood.

You have taught at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and are currently a visiting adjunct professor there. Tell us something about that environment and about the students these days. What are they looking for in a career as an interpreter?

There are students of interpreting in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Russian, French, and German. The courses include vocabulary on political issues, such as current international conflicts, disarmament, basic economics, the stock markets, inflation, and investments; social issues, such as women, youth, health (e.g., AIDS, malnutrition), and the aged; as well as parliamentary procedure needed to run a meeting, and the positions taken by major groups of countries on these issues. I teach Russian>English simultaneous interpreting. Not all students are working toward careers as interpreters. Some, for example, are planning to work for Western firms with branches in Russia.

You've said that a good interpreter knows techniques for coping with a huge variety of difficult situations, has iron nerves, doesn't panic, has a sense of style and register, finishes sentences, restructures syntax, can keep up with a rapid speaker, and has good delivery, voice quality, and intonation. This is a marvelous job description! Can you give us a few examples of the sort of difficult situations to which you refer and suggest appropriate coping techniques?

Difficult situations can arise when the interpreter has not heard or not understood the last sentence(s) of a speaker's statement. In such cases, the interpreter can sometimes wriggle out of the problem by saying, "And that is what I wish to say," as though the delegate has just summed up and concluded his statement. Another difficult situation can arise when a speaker quotes a proverb and the interpreter has absolutely no idea what it means. A coping technique in this case would be to say, "And in my country, we have a proverb that is appropriate to this occasion."

When you say that an interpreter should have a sense of style and register, what guidelines or standards are you thinking of?

When interpreting formal speeches, it's important to use the literary, formal register of the target language. This register is distinct from discussion groups, where the level of language may be quite colloquial.

You joined the UN as a staff interpreter in 1980. What do you remember about that process?

The UN Interpretation Service gave exams, as it does now. Candidates have to interpret several speeches from their working languages into their native language. In my case, I did Russian and French into English. The exams are recorded and then graded by senior interpreters.

But you weren't only interpreting in those days. You were also working in TV and radio. What were you doing there?

I interpreted for a number of Russian-American spacebridges, which were exchanges in which Russians and Americans spoke to each other on television, linked by satellite. There were a lot of these exchanges in the 1980s, including a series Phil Donahue did in Moscow with Russian audiences. I went with him to Moscow to do those.

And you've also written books?

Yes, I've written several books on interpreting and language, several books on Russian>English translation, books about the problems Russians have with English, a Russian cookbook, and a book on Russian-American marriages. I've also edited several other books, including my father's memoir of his life in Russia, France, and the New York art world.

I noticed something on your CV and just had to ask. In 1988, you consulted for Global American Television and translated Pepsi and Visa commercials into Russian to be aired on Soviet television. Please tell us about that.

These were the first American firms to advertise on Russian television. The advertisers insisted on a literal translation, but we told them that was impossible. They wanted "Visa—it's everywhere you want to be," which would have sounded

ridiculous. They compromised on "Visa—your visa to the entire world."

You interpreted for Boris Yeltsin during his visit to New York in 1989. What was it like working for him? Was he really as gregarious as he appeared in the media?

He was quite a character, very outgoing and curious about everything he was seeing. Yes, he was indeed very gregarious. I'm currently writing a book about the people for whom I've interpreted over the past 40 years, and he will certainly be in it!

Do you spend much time in Russia?

I've been there quite often, about twice a year for the past few decades, but have not been there in the past two years.

You've talked about the interpreter's experience of locking onto a speaker and feeling that speaker's entire personality vibrating inside. What was your experience, in that sense, with Yeltsin, or with Eduard Shevardnadze in 1991? Or with any of the powerful people for whom you've interpreted, especially those with whom you might have disagreed?

I certainly felt that with Yeltsin, and with Shevardnadze. "Disagreeing" with the speaker has nothing to do with that. An interpreter is like an actor—you become the person for whom you're interpreting; you're their voice. Most actors would not agree with everything their character says. Your job, as an interpreter, is to convince the audience that you're getting the speaker's message across exactly as he is conveying it.

Interpreting at the UN is also similar to acting in that there is an onstage and a backstage. In the booth, the curtain is up and the interpreter is performing. But what goes on backstage among interpreters at the UN? Can you share something about the camaraderie, the tension, and the meltdowns?

As in any organization there are friendships and cooler relationships, but basically the interpreters are a collective. You cannot work without your colleagues, and so there is a great deal of mutual support.

Speaking about English>Russian interpreting, you've said that there is no neat correspondence between Russian and

English in terms of style and register, in particular in post-perestroika Russian. What did you mean by that last thought?

In post-perestroika Russian, there has been much more of a blending of styles. Formal and informal speech, literary expressions, and slang all now seem to coexist in a kind of verbal salad. In pre-perestroika Russia, the lines were much more clearly drawn between stylistic levels, between literary and colloquial Russian.

For many people, perhaps especially those in the linguistic field, a UN interpreter is the icon of all interpreting, the most symbolic example of the craft. What is it like to work there? Please give us a day-in-the-life so that we can get some idea of what you do.

Staff interpreters work 21 hours a week: seven daily three-hour meetings, with a two-hour lunch break. The interpreter is always in a booth with a colleague and never works alone. The subjects are extremely varied: the Security Council, disarmament and arms control, speeches on sustainable development, indigenous peoples, discrimination against women, AIDS, and issues involving youth and the elderly—just an enormous range of topics.

There are six official languages at the UN: English, French, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic. The basic idea there is that interpreting should be into the interpreter's native language, so the English booth works into English, the French booth into French, the Russian booth into Russian, and the Spanish booth into Spanish. In the English, French, Russian, and Spanish booths there are two interpreters who switch out every 30 minutes. There are three interpreters each in the Chinese booth and the Arabic booth. In the Chinese booth they work from Mandarin Chinese into English and from English into Mandarin Chinese. In the Arabic booth they work from Arabic into English or French, and from English or French into Arabic.

In the English booth one interpreter works from French and Spanish into English, and the other from French and Russian into English. In the French booth one interpreter works from English and Spanish into French and the other from English and Russian into French. The interpreters in these two booths make an arrangement at the beginning of the

meeting, so that one of the interpreters with Russian will work for 30 minutes, and then the interpreter with Spanish will take over for the next half hour. As a result, if a delegate speaks Russian, he will be interpreted either directly by the interpreter in the English booth who knows Russian, or by the interpreter in the French booth, who will listen to the Russian>English interpretation and then interpret that into French, which will be rendered into English by the English booth colleague. In the meantime, the Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic booths will also be interpreting the Russian speech by listening to the interpretation from the English and French booths. This is known as the “relay system,” when the interpreter is listening to a colleague’s interpretation rather than directly to the speaker. It’s a bit like playing “telephone,” but it works remarkably well!

While the interpreter is supposed to work for 30 minutes, in the case of a Spanish or Russian speaker, the interpreter in the English or French booth who works directly from those languages will almost always keep interpreting. This is because the policy is to interpret directly from the foreign language and avoid relay whenever possible. Of course, if a delegate goes on for an hour the interpreter may have no choice but to hand the microphone to his or her partner to avoid collapsing from fatigue!

You talked about interpreters working in small cubicles. Have those conditions changed much since the 1980s? Tell us something about life in the booth. Any funny moments, uncontrollable giggles, or memorable incidents?

The booths are still there, although their size varies tremendously. The incidents that still send shivers down interpreters’ spines are when they hear someone make an unflattering comment about a delegate, unaware that the microphone is on.

You mentioned that you once tripped over your tongue and said “exhausting report” instead of “exhaustive report.” Interpreters love these stories. I once rendered “training field” into Spanish as “concentration camp.” Do you have any other juicy bloopers you would like to share?

I once interpreted “Supreme Soviet” as “Supreme Sodium.”

What sort of backlash is there for a stumble like that? You say that confusing the Republic of China with the People’s Republic of China is a serious political error. What are the consequences? Who administers those consequences?

A delegation might protest. The chief of service would explain that this was a slip of the tongue and not a deliberate statement.

If I have understood correctly, you subscribe to the idea that an interpreter is better prepared for the inevitable unknowns if he or she has mastered techniques for coping with the unexpected. So, it’s almost more of an attitude adjustment. Is this one reason some people can’t be interpreters?

No, some people can’t be interpreters because they are unable to comprehend and process quickly enough. They can’t understand what is being said, process it into the vocabulary, syntax, and style required by the target language, and deliver it in an appropriate tone of voice, all while keeping up with the speech regardless of the speaker’s speed.

What are your thoughts on being handed the speaker’s text just minutes before you have to start interpreting his speech?

I always check the first and last paragraphs because those are the ones people remember. Then I check the names, titles, and posts of the people involved.

There are many versions of an apocryphal story about President Carter telling a joke during his speech at the University of New Delhi. The crowd roared with laughter. Carter, who understood that interpreting jokes was a challenge, was curious to know how the interpreter had handled it. The interpreter explained, “I said, ‘President Carter just told a joke. Everybody laugh!’” Have you ever actually witnessed a version of this scenario? Or had a credible report of one?

I remember one case, but not at the UN, where a representative at a conference told a joke and said, “This is really funny.” No one laughed, until the interpreter said “Ha-ha-ha!” and then the whole room cracked up.

As a staff interpreter, you must have had fairly regular contact with people who had

listened to you through their headsets. Did you get feedback of any kind from them?

Yes, both from delegates and colleagues, and feedback is usually extremely helpful, since it’s hard to listen to yourself while you’re interpreting. In the training program, interpreters record themselves, which is very useful, but when you’re at a meeting the feedback can really help.

Is there a time during your career that you remember with particular fondness?

While at the UN, for almost six years, from 1993 to 1998, I was the personal interpreter for the special representative of the Secretary General for Georgia, as the UN was trying to negotiate a settlement to the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict. This involved extensive travel to Georgia and Abkhazia, as well as to other venues for the quadripartite negotiations (the UN, the Russian Federation, Georgia, and Abkhazia). It was fascinating to learn about the negotiating process.

I was also the coordinator for the UN Interpreter Training Program for several years, and very much enjoyed the return to teaching and contact with young interpreters who were just beginning their careers.

Looking back to what you knew when you interpreted for those Soviet tourists and academics some 45 years ago, compared to what you know today, what advice would you have for young interpreters just starting out?

Be sure to follow events reported in the press, watch TV, and listen to the radio in all your languages. Language is infinite; new words, expressions, and idioms are being added every minute. The Internet is a lifesaver, since there is so much information out there. Use it! And try to spend time in your relevant linguistic milieu.

Many thanks for that insider’s view of one of the more fascinating fields in our linguistic universe. ○



Tony Beckwith was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, spent his formative years in Montevideo, Uruguay, then set off to see the world. He moved to Texas in 1980 and currently lives in Austin,

Texas, where he works as a writer, translator, poet, and cartoonist. Contact: tony@tonybeckwith.com.

Curiosity as an Approach to Marketing

We've probably all heard marketing people say that we should try to write texts that spark curiosity. This is often cited as the best way to get people interested in our products and services and to get their attention long enough to read our marketing texts and website copy.

BUT WHAT ABOUT CURIOSITY AS AN APPROACH TO MARKETING?

This idea came to me recently as I was thinking about how people feel in relation to marketing. I know that, in the past, I have procrastinated on my marketing. Not because I was lazy, but because I was very attached to the outcome. I wanted to control the result. And since I obviously couldn't do this, my mind helped me out by creating a story about what was going to happen: "Nobody will read my letters. Nobody will be interested. I don't have enough experience. Other people can do this job better than me. The statistical return is only 1–3% anyway. It's a waste of time." And once that negativity creeps in, it really isn't easy to overcome. I'm pretty sure that I'm not the only one who has ever felt like that.

TURN IT AROUND

What about trying a different approach? What if we were able to completely detach from the outcome and look at marketing from the point of view of curiosity? This is not easy, I know, especially when you need clients and you need the income.

Now I know what you're thinking, "Oh it's all right for her. She already has plenty of clients. I, on the other hand, really need the clients and I really need the income." Okay, I hear you. But this is simply you attaching even more to an outcome over which you have no control—irrespective of how much you may feel you need or want to control it. And how exactly does that help you? All you are actually doing, in fact, is adding even more pointless emotional stress to a situation that is already difficult for you.

A CHANGE OF FOCUS

Now if you take the curiosity approach you could say to yourself, "Okay, I have



never done this before, but I'm going to try sending out 100 letters to potential clients and see what happens." This way you are detaching emotionally from the result and approaching the matter with interest and openness—positive rather than negative emotions, positive rather than negative energy. This will already feel like, and indeed be, a big step forward. What's more, regardless of whether the marketing measure you choose first is successful or not, you will: a) be a step closer to learning what does and doesn't work in your target market, and b) have some experience under your belt, which means that next time round the emotional hurdle won't be so high.

REMAIN CURIOUS

Perhaps next time you'll try heading to an event attended by your target clients or a trade fair for your industry. Or maybe you'll look into participating in a workshop or an event aimed at your potential clients. No, I can't tell you and you won't be able to say in advance whether these options will

be successful in terms of getting you those new clients you want and need, but you will, through curiosity and trial and error, be able to determine which marketing options are best suited to you and, if you run a survey or ask every new client who comes your way how they found you (which I highly recommend), then, over time, you will be able to ascertain which marketing methods are working best for your business. ●



Karen Rückert is a German>English legal translator specializing in commercial law. She has 14 years of experience in the translation industry, initially working in-house for a large commercial law firm in Germany before embarking on her freelance career in 2007. She is a publicly appointed and sworn translator for the English language for Baden-Württemberg, Germany. She writes the *Translator Mentoring Blog* (<https://karenrueckert.wordpress.com>), and her work has been featured in *The ATA Chronicle*. Contact: kr@legal-translations-rueckert.com.

"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.

Neural Machine Translation

Do we need to start shivering in fear when we hear folks talking about neural machine translation?

There has been much in the news lately about the next wave of machine translation (MT) technology driven by something called deep neural nets (DNN). With the help of some folks who understand more about it than I do, I've attempted to provide a brief overview about what this is. First, I need to confess that I will be trying to explain something here that I don't fully understand myself. Still, I hope that my research has helped me comprehend and communicate some basic underlying principles.

Most lectures you've listened to about MT in the past few years have likely included a statement like this: "There are basically two kinds of MT—rule-based and statistical MT—and a third that combines the two—hybrid MT." You've also probably heard that rule-based MT was the earliest form of MT in the computer age, going back all the way to the 1950s. Back then, this form of MT consisted of a set of rules about the source and target language and included a dictionary. The transfer between the source and target language in rule-based MT happens either via an "interlingua," a computerized representation of the source text, or directly between the source and target language.

Statistical machine translation (SMT), on the other hand, became all the rage in the early 2000s. (The first commercial offering, LanguageWeaver [now owned by SDL], was launched in 2002; the widely used open-source engine Moses emerged in 2005; Google and Microsoft switched to statistical MT in 2007; and Yandex and Baidu started using SMT as recently as 2011.) SMT, or more accurately for all of these implementations, "phrase-based statistical machine translation," is trained on bilingual data and monolingual data. It parses the data into "n-grams," which are phrases consisting of an "n" number of words. The same thing happens to the source segment in the translation process. The source n-grams are then matched with



target n-grams, which are then combined to form whole segments again—and that's often where things go awry. (This is why SMT can prove to be a much richer resource when using an approach that just looks for fragments rather than whole segments.) Another potential flaw with SMT is the faulty selection process when the system tries to decide which of the many possible target n-grams to use. One way to guard against bad choices is by validating them on the basis of the monolingual target data on which the system was trained, but that only goes so far. (By the way, that's why an approach that offers access to more than just one of those n-gram fragments at a time within a translation environment tool has to be one of the up-and-coming developments.)

Neural machine translation (NMT)—and let's pause and be thankful that one of this technology's first proposed terms, "recursive hetero-associative memories for translation" (coined by Mikel L. Forcada and Ramon P. Neco in 1997) did not survive—is an extremely computing-power-heavy process (which is why it didn't go anywhere in 1997).¹ It's part of the larger field of "machine learning." In 1959, Arthur Samuel, a pioneer in the field of artificial

intelligence and machine learning, defined machine learning as the "field of study that gives computers the ability to learn without being explicitly programmed."²

In SMT, the focus is on translated phrases that the computer is taught, which are then reused and fitted together according to statistics. NMT, on the other hand, uses neural networks that consist of many nodes (conceptually modeled after the human brain), which relate to each other and can hold single words, phrases, or any other segment. These nodes build relationships with each other based on bilingual texts with which you train the system. Because of these manifold and detailed relationships, it's possible to look at not just limited n-grams (as in SMT), but at whole segments or even beyond individual segments. This allows for the formation of significantly more educated guesses about the context, and therefore the meaning, of any word in a segment that needs to be translated. For instance, it's at least theoretically unlikely to have "Prince" translated as a (royal) prince by the NMT in a sentence like "The music world mourns the death of Prince," as Google, Microsoft, Yandex, and Baidu all do at the moment. (By the way, I'm mourning as well.)

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

In languages like German with separable verbs, such as *umfahren* (“run over”), there is a much greater likelihood that the system will notice the missing part of the verb at the end of the sentence if the machine doesn’t have to bother with chopping it into n-grams first. Take, for example, the simple sentence, *Ich fahre den Fußgänger um* (“I run over the pedestrian”). Bing translates it (today) as “I’m going to the pedestrian,” and Google renders it as “I drive around the pedestrian.” Only Yandex gets it right. (Baidu does not offer this language combination.)

Machine learning (itself a subfield of artificial intelligence) also comes into play as common usage gradually forges certain linguistic connections (e.g., “music world” and “Prince”; “fahren” and “um”). This means that, just as Arthur Samuel predicted, the computer continues to “learn” without explicitly being programmed.

At least theoretically, the NMT approach is very promising for generic engines like those of the search engines mentioned above (Google, Microsoft, Yandex, and Baidu). This is because “context” does not necessarily have to be specified by the training data, but can be recognized by the system evaluating the context (provided that the user supplies more than just a word or single phrase). So, you won’t be surprised to hear that all those companies have already entered the realm of NMT. Naturally they don’t reveal how much of their present system is “neural” versus “statistical only,” but chances are it’s a mix of both. And that would make all the more sense since one of the ways to use NMT is in combination with SMT—either as a quasi-independent verification process or as an integrated process that helps in selecting the “right” n-grams.

In some areas similar processes have already demonstrated remarkable success, including some that are used by search engines such as Google Image Search (which can be used very effectively for cross-language searches and be helpful in the translation process).

You probably read that Facebook launched its own MT system earlier this year specifically geared for the very casual language of its users. While that system is still mostly SMT-based, Facebook is working on an NMT solution as well. You might want to take a look at a presentation by Alan

Packer, Facebook’s director of engineering and language technology (formerly of Microsoft), entitled “Understanding the Language of Facebook.”³

One misconception in Packer’s presentation is his description of all this as a linear development. He paints SMT as more or less having run its course, now to be taken over by NMT. While I understand that someone so deeply embedded in one particular field must automatically think it the only worthwhile one, it’s really unlikely to be the case. The same was said in the early days about rule-based MT (RbMT) by proponents of SMT, and that assumption has not proven to be true. Many systems are using a hybrid approach between SMT and RbMT, and for some language combinations RbMT might still be a better solution (especially for language pairs that are very close to each other, like Catalan and Spanish or Croatian and Serbian).

But are we on the verge of a big new breakthrough overall? To answer that, you might want to look through the joint presentation by Diego Bartolome (Tauyou Language Technology) and Gema Ramirez (Prompsit Language Engineering), “Beyond the Hype of Neural Machine Translation.”⁴ Since there is no open-source toolkit for NMT, like Moses for SMT, very few companies actually offer customized NMT systems. There are components like the deep learning frameworks Theano and Torch and specific NMT software like GroundHog and seq2seq, but these are anything but user-friendly and require significant expertise. Using them to build the NMT engine takes a lot of computing power (10 CPUs or 1 GPU—graphics processing unit) and time (about two weeks of training per language pair once the training data is assembled and cleaned). Tauyou Language Technology and Prompsit Language Engineering are some of the first vendors who are working on commercial versions of NMT. (Interestingly, Tauyou comes with an SMT background, and Prompsit with a background in RbMT). While they are not actively selling the NMT solutions yet, they are doing a lot of pilots, as you’ll see from the presentation. The results of these pilots are mixed.

I already mentioned the much larger processing and time requirements. There are also limitations as far as the number of

words per language that can be trained with the processing power currently available to mere mortals (in opposition to companies like Google), the approximately three-fold time the system takes to actually translate, and the fact that retraining the system with new data would once again take two weeks. But there are some improvements in the quality—although, according to the presentation, this is not adequately appreciated by translators. (I assume this has to do with even less predictability when it comes to post-editing—and presumably even more erratic decisions when it comes to partial suggestions.) However, this is still very early in the game, so I wouldn’t be surprised to see the quality continue to improve.

So, do we need to start shivering in fear when we hear folks talking about NMT? Although I don’t completely understand the technology, I (and now you) have seen numbers showing only moderate progress. So, no, we’ll continue to be very assured of our jobs for a long time. I do look forward, though, to seeing how NMT will creatively find its way into our translation environment and improve our work. ●

NOTES

1. Forcada, Mike L., and Ramon P. Neco. “Recursive Hetero-Associative Memories for Translation,” In *Biological and Artificial Computation: From Neuroscience to Technology* (Springer, 1997), 453–462, <http://bit.ly/2b1NSOp>.
2. Samuel, Arthur, “Some Studies in Machine Learning Using the Game of Checkers,” *IBM Journal* (July 1959), <http://bit.ly/2aX2sF9>.
3. Packer, Alan. “Understanding the Language of Facebook,” bit.ly/2aelzt2.
4. Bartolome, Diego, and Gema Ramirez. “Beyond the Hype of Neural Machine Translation,” *MIT Technology Review* (May 23, 2016), bit.ly/2aG4bvR.



Jost Zetsche is the co-author of *Found in Translation: How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms the World*, a robust source for replenishing your arsenal of information about how human translation and machine translation each play an important part in the broader world of translation. Contact: jzetsche@internationalwriters.com.

ESPACENET: THE DATABASES OF THE EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE

Reviewed by Françoise Herrmann

The European Patent Convention (EPC) offers inventors a uniform application procedure that enables them to seek patent protection in up to 40 European countries. Supervised by the Administrative Council, the European Patent Office (EPO) is the executive branch of the European Patent Organization. The EPO examines patent applications and grants European patents. The EPO works in close cooperation with the patent offices of the 38 member states of the European Patent Organization and other countries around the world.

Patent Searches Using Espacenet

Espacenet is a free tool offered by the EPO that provides access to more than 90 million patent documents worldwide, containing information about inventions and technical developments from 1836 to the present. It has a user-friendly interface available in almost all European languages.

The EPO website provides cross-references and the full text of European patent laws and regulations, patent news, patent statistics, and access to patents in English, French, and German (the official languages of the EPO).¹ The upper right corner of the screen enables visitors to choose one of the three EPO official languages at any location on the site. (For example, see the orange arrow in Figure 1.) Each of the national Espacenet European patent databases is also searchable separately (e.g., all the national French patents, all the U.K. patents, or all the Italian patents).

The following is a short overview of how you can use Espacenet to find the information you need.

Links to Electronic Copies of Patents

In general, expert patent translators recommend that you always use an electronic copy of a patent.² Why? Because when you use an electronic copy, you can, for example, search the document for occurrences of terms to keep all the terminology consistent.

For inventions involving multiple parts (e.g., instrumentation patents), the drawings and figures will be numbered.

So, if you've downloaded a copy of the patent, you will be able to search the document for the numbers and then create a key for the most complete drawing with all the terminology found in the patent. This way, for example, you will always be using "tip (18)" for "pointe (18)" and "extremity (22)" for "extrémité (22)" throughout the translation. This example may sound trivial, but if the invention has hundreds of parts that are disclosed on 100 pages or more, you will definitely want to use an electronic copy of the patent with at least one keyed and glossed drawing for reference.

Searching an Electronic Patent Copy

To search for a web page or document on a web page, press Ctrl F (Windows) or

Command F (Apple) and type your search item in the pop-up window. To use your own local desktop search tools, Espacenet allows you to retrieve and download patent documents. This is where the left Espacenet toolbar starts to become particularly useful for translators.

Using the Left Espacenet Search Toolbar

The left Espacenet toolbar appears every time a specific patent is opened on the EPO website after it is retrieved from the Espacenet databases. Figure 1 shows a screenshot of this search toolbar on a page for Patent EP 2531264 ("Wheeled shoes or undersoles for enabling fast walking"). There is a yellow arrow pointing to the toolbar in question, appearing in a grey box.

Figure 1: The left Espacenet search toolbar (yellow arrow), upper right corner language toggle options (orange arrow) and abstract PatentTranslate function (blue arrow)

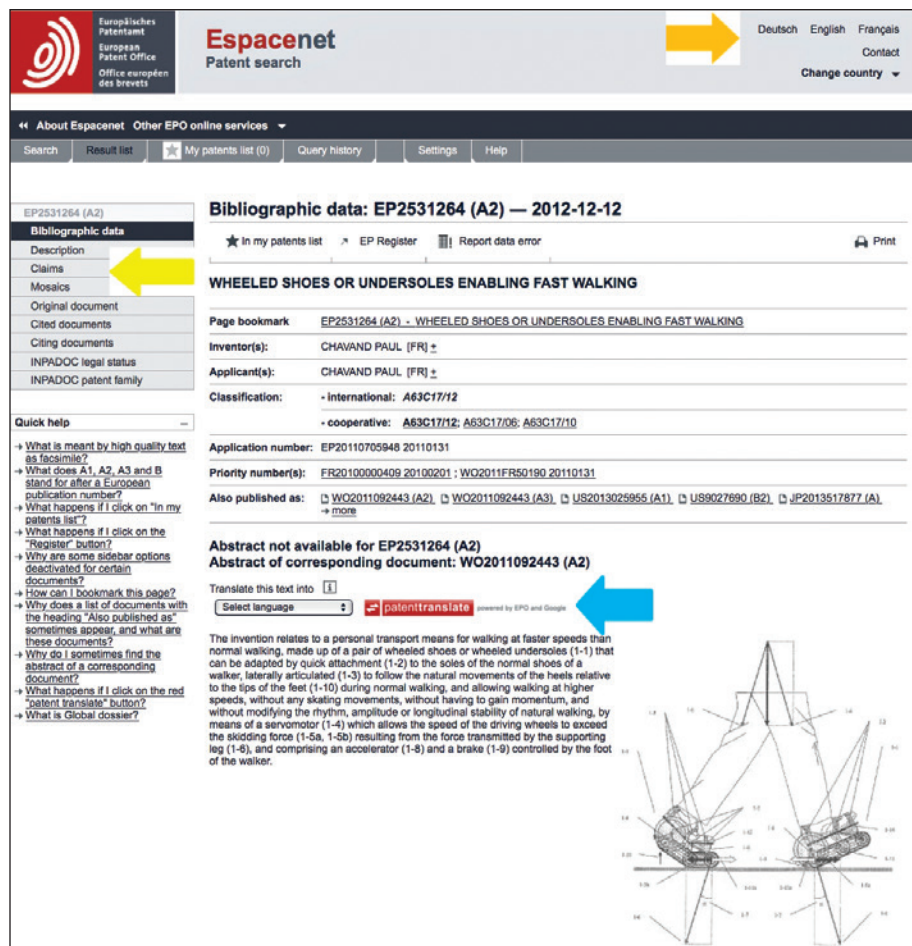


Figure 2: Espacenet Claims Tree function

The screenshot shows the Espacenet interface for a patent titled "WHEELED SHOES OR UNDERSOLES ENABLING FAST WALKING". It includes a sidebar with navigation options, a main content area with the patent title and a list of claims, and a "Claims tree" section showing a hierarchical diagram of claims. A yellow arrow points to the plus sign next to claim 1 in the claims tree.

Here is a breakdown of each of the left toolbar search options shown in Figure 1 (e.g., Bibliographic Data, Description, Claims, Mosaic, etc.):

- Bibliographic Data:** Opens Espacenet's Bibliographic Data page, where you will find a listing of the various items contained in the hardcopy cover sheet of a patent (e.g., title, publication number, application number, international patent classification), some of which are hyperlinked. The hyperlinked information includes priority publication links and links to patent family documents. These links allow you to see whether an English version of the patent you have retrieved is available. Since the patent numbers are hyperlinked, you can click to the bibliographic data of the linked patent.

The abstract also appears on the Bibliographic Data page with an EPO PatentTranslate function (blue arrow in Figure 1), allowing you to access the machine translation for the abstract and to see whether the abstract already appears in English or your target language. (The PatentTranslate function was developed jointly by the EPO and Google.)

- Description:** Opens the searchable specification section of the patent. Use it to get to the background and prior art information and to check the language in which the patent is available. Even though the title may be translated into English and the patent retrieved using the English title, the description may not always be in the same language.
- Claims:** Opens the searchable claims section of the patent. The claims are the part of the patent that define the scope of the legal protection sought for the invention.

Click on the "Claims Tree Button" to view a hierarchical tree representation of the independent claims and their dependent or multiple-dependent claims. (See Figure 2.) Click on the + (plus) sign next to the claim number (yellow arrow) to expand the claims view and see how the dependent claims are related hierarchically. You can also find the language in which the claims are available.

Pursuant to the year 2000 London Agreement on the application of Article 65 of the EPC, in some European patents, the claims are available in two languages (English and the national language of the originating country).

Related Patent Resources

- Espacenet Assistant**
<http://bit.ly/Espacenet-assistant>
- Espacenet Brochure**
 (user guide: download and PDF copy available)
<http://bit.ly/Espacenet-brochure>
- Espacenet: Introduction to Patent Searches**
 (Youtube video)
<http://bit.ly/Espacenet-YouTube>
- European Patent Convention (1973)**
<http://bit.ly/European-Patent-Convention>
- European Patent Office Inventors' Handbook**
<http://bit.ly/EPO-inventors-handbook>
- European Patent Office: Patent Information Tour**
<http://bit.ly/EPO-patent-tour>
- European Patent Organization**
<http://bit.ly/EPO-about>
- United States Patent Trademark Office**
 Guide to Filing a Design Patent Application
<http://bit.ly/USPTO-patent-design>
- World Intellectual Property Organization**
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Again, even though the patent title may be translated into English, the claims are not always in the same language.

- Mosaic:** Opens a collection of thumbnail images of the pages of a patent document containing figures or drawings. You will have the option to view the images in their original size or download them. Downloading this information is highly useful because you will be able to print the files and key the drawings with the terminology found in the description. Your annotations will then help you to keep the terminology very consistent as you translate. You might also access the drawings separately to better understand the patent, or for a quick source of documentation, without having to download and consult the entire patent.

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- **International Patent Documentation (INPADOC) Patent Family:** Returns a new list of hyperlinked Espacenet search results with the entire series of patents connected to a specific patent. This is a potentially valuable source of models and documentary information to assist you with understanding the invention or finding specific patent-related terminology.

A Great Resource for Patent Translators

Beyond the vastness of the content available on the EPO website, the ability to search for information in three languages is enough to place it on a translator's preferred list of patent resource search tools. Just toggling from one language to another will provide all translators with an amazingly consistent and user-friendly experience, complete with official translation and links to additional documentation.

The ability to search for information on patents in English, German, and French may not have been designed specifically to address patent translation processes, but this hardly matters. There are countless uses to which the EPO website, and the available functions of the left Espacenet toolbar, may be put to facilitate patent translation tasks. Just click on the links to try them yourself the next time you are translating a patent and visiting the EPO website! ●

NOTES

¹ European Patent Convention, <http://bit.ly/European-Patent-Convention>.

² Popp, Bruce. "Using Patents to Find the Terminology You Need," *The ATA Chronicle* (May 2009), 16–23, <http://bit.ly/Popp-Chronicle>.

Also see: Vitek, Steve. "Internet Resources for the Translation of Patents into English," *In The Patent Translator's Handbook* (American Translators Association, 2007), 41–48.

Françoise Herrmann is an adjunct faculty member at the New York University School of Professional Studies, where she teaches medical and patent translation. She is also a freelance translator and interpreter working in Bay Area hospitals and for the San Francisco Unified School district. She writes two blogs (one in English, and one in French): *Patents on the soles of your shoes* and *Billets techniques TRADMED*. Contact: fh35@nyu.edu.

Congratulations!

The following members have successfully passed ATA's certification exam:

English into Spanish

Maria J. Castano

Miami, FL

Federico Fuentes

Spring, TX

Veronica C. Hermida

Mexico City, Mexico

Adriana Pruneda Hernández

Mexico City, Mexico

Sonia Verjovsky

Cuernavaca, Mexico

Arabic into English

Christine J. Cuk

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

French into English

May Fung Danis

Petit-Bourg, France

Susan E. Kronenfeld

Oakville, Ontario, Canada

German into English

Ted R. Wozniak

New Orleans, LA

Portuguese into English

Alexander F. Watson

Dulles, VA

Spanish into English

Patrick B. Weill

Carmichael, CA

Upcoming Changes to ATA's Certification Program

ATA's Certification Committee is pleased to inform all members and interested persons of some important changes in ATA's Certification Program taking effect in 2017.

As you may know, to pass the certification exam and become ATA-certified, an ATA member must translate two passages (each between 225 and 275 words) successfully. That will still be required. However, the following changes will be implemented in 2017:

1. Passage Realignment: For 13 years, ATA's certification exam has consisted of three passages, referred to as A, B, and C. Passage A is on a general topic, typically a commentary or essay-type article. Passage B consists of either a medical, technical, or scientific text written by experts for a general audience. Passage C deals with legal, commercial, or financial subjects, again written by experts for a general audience.

Starting in 2017, Passages B and C will be eliminated. Only general passages will be offered on the exam. Candidates will have to score a passing grade on two of three general passages, of roughly 250 words each, to be completed in the three-hour timeframe.

There are two reasons for this change. First, those of us on the Certification Committee became aware that we were inadvertently giving the impression that we certify translators in a "technical" or "legal" field, which is not the case. (The intent of the exam is to certify that the candidate has solid translation competence. It also indicates areas where there is room for improvement.) Second, it has also been our experience that general passages are a better tool to measure core translation competence than B and C passages.

2. Eligibility Requirements: For 14 years candidates have had to meet certain eligibility requirements to take the exam. Those requirements are related to the education and/or experience the individual brings with him or her to the exam. It has

become evident that meeting those requirements does not necessarily predict a successful outcome on the exam. Consequently, starting in 2017, the only requirement to take the certification exam will be ATA membership and agreeing to ATA's Code of Ethics and Professional Practice. We hope this will open the certification doors to a lot more people who may be qualified to translate professionally.

3. Practice Tests: It has become evident that many people who aspire to become ATA-certified do not necessarily know what type of exam they will encounter. Since the actual exam costs \$300, ATA strongly recommends that candidates first take a practice test (\$80 members/\$120 non-members) to get a good idea of what to expect before signing up for an exam. Practice tests consist of former passages from the actual exam that have been retired. This provides candidates an opportunity to practice with real exams. Practice tests are graded by the same people who grade the real exam, and they use the same grading criteria. In addition, practice tests are returned to candidates with brief explanations of their errors. Consequently, the benefit of taking a practice test first cannot be exaggerated.

In the near future we will make practice tests available for download from ATA's website. This will greatly improve the accessibility of practice tests. We hope that by making these tests more readily available people will be encouraged to take them before registering for an exam sitting.

4. Candidate Preparation Workshops: These workshops are usually well received and very beneficial to the people who want to take the certification exam. They consist of a one- to three-hour presentation in which graders explain what the exam is about, what the expectations

are, and how to prepare for the exam. These workshops are also a good tool for self-evaluation. The Certification Committee is working to increase the availability of these workshops, in the form of both live sessions and webinars. ATA also strongly recommends that exam candidates participate in one of these workshops/webinars before taking the exam. Several candidate preparation workshops will be offered during the Annual Conference in November, including a three-hour English<->Spanish session on the Advanced Skills & Training Day.

5. Computerized Exam Option: As you may already know, starting in 2017, we will be working toward offering more computerized exams. Candidates will be able to bring their own laptops, electronic dictionaries, and other resources. Candidates will input their translations using WordPad (or TextEdit for Mac) onto an ATA-supplied USB drive, with grammar and spell check utilities disabled. A full explanation of this option is available on ATA's website: www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_computerized.php.

It's an exciting time for ATA's Certification Program as we continue to fine-tune the process to improve accessibility and enhance the value of the credential. ●



Mercedes De la Rosa-Sherman, who has a master's degree in medical translation, has been a professional translator for 30 years. An ATA-certified English>Spanish translator and a member of ATA's Certification Committee, she has been a grader for ATA's English>Spanish certification exam for over 10 years. She is also a certified court interpreter. Contact: delarosasherma@gmail.com.



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When in the office, NSA language analysts develop new perspectives on the dialect and nuance of foreign language, on the context and cultural overtones of language translation.

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