

TRANSLORIAL

JOURNAL OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

THE TRANSLATOR AS A STURDY BRIDGE

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FALL 2017

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TRANSLORIAL (ISSN 2164-6120) is a publication of the Northern California Translators Association, a nonprofit professional organization for translators, interpreters, and language service providers in all languages and fields. Published in a print version and downloadable in PDF from www.ncta.org.

FALL 2017 Issue

Managing Editor

Mimi Wessling

Publications Director

Tim Cassidy

Concept

Yves Averous

Advertising Director

Marta Sprague

Printing

Sundance Press

Graphic Design

Alex Cabarga

Images

Fernanda Brandão-Galea, Audrey Pouligny, Judit Marin, Afaf and Matthias Steiert

Cover Image:

123RF.com

YOUR TURN!

Translorial welcomes contributions. Send your ideas to editor@ncta.org.

TRANSLORIAL—FALL 2017—VOL. 39, No. 2

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Contributors

Monica Lange is a Brazilian Portuguese translator and conference interpreter with an international spirit. A veterinarian with a lifelong passion for languages, Monica also studied translation and conference interpretation and has been working for international organizations in Switzerland and clients all over the world. She is specialized in healthcare translations from French and English into Brazilian Portuguese.

Jessica Levine translates literary and academic books from French and Italian into English. She is also the author of *The Geometry of Love*, a Top 10 Women’s Fiction Title in the American Library Association’s *Booklist*, and *Delicate Pursuit: Discretion in Henry James and Edith Wharton*. Her second novel, *Nothing Forgotten*, will appear in 2018. Jessica holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of California at Berkeley, where she was a Mellon Fellow. You can find her at www.jessicalevine.com.

Monique Longton, born in Belgium, moved to the United States in 2004 and now lives in Arizona. She has been working as an English, Swedish, and Danish > French freelance translator for almost eleven years, specializing in legal, financial and accounting translation. She has a Master’s Degree in Translation and a Post-College Degree in Economics. As a translator, she is regularly asked to assess translations.

Michael Schubert is an ATA-certified translator of German to English specializing in information technology and corporate communications. Michael studied at California State University and the University of Heidelberg in Germany, earning degrees in German Language and Music Performance. He worked as a professional orchestral flutist in Germany for ten years before moving to San Francisco. He has worked as a full-time independent translator since 2000. Since 2015, he has also taught translation at the Middlebury Institute for International Studies in Monterey (MIIS).

Thilo Ullmann-Zahn was born in Spain of German parents. After completing a degree in Hotel Management in Lausanne, he has worked as translator and interpreter in Europe and the USA. Thilo started by translating Günther Blöcker from German to Spanish, and spent half a lifetime translating commercial literature for the various companies that employed him as export director. He supervised the translation and interpretation services for the Socialist International during their 1980 meeting in Madrid. Thilo worked as a freelance conference interpreter in Madrid, Geneva, and Brussels. He now lives in the Bay Area, specializing in medical translation.

Rebecca J. Verhoek enjoys venturing throughout the compelling field of linguistics. She is a graduate of San Francisco State University (B.A. Spanish Language & Literature) and has earned a certificate in Health Care Interpreting from City College of San Francisco. She interprets and translates ENG < > SPA, and finds that providing language access enriches cross-cultural understanding. Contact her at: rjv263@gmail.com

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

2261 Market Street, #160, San Francisco, CA 94114-1600
www.ncta.org | Twitter: @NCTAorg | LinkedIn | Facebook/NCTA.org

Administrator/Telephone Referral Service

(510) 845-8712
administrator@ncta.org

Online Referral Service

www.ncta.org
 Click the *Find a Linguist* tab to search individual members;
 Click the *Find a Corporate Member* tab to search for LSPs and educational/publishing entities.

Officers

President; ATA Certification

Michael Schubert
president@ncta.org
certification@ncta.org

Vice-President

Isabel Pouliot
vicepresident@ncta.org

Continuing Education

Judit Marin
events@ncta.org

Secretary

Peg Flynn
secretary@ncta.org

Treasurer

Kåre Lindahl
treasurer@ncta.org

Directors

Events Co-Directors

Fernanda Brandão-Galea
 Audrey Pouligny
events@ncta.org

Marketing and Public Relations

Scott Ellsworth
marketing@ncta.org

Membership

Mimi Wessling
membership@ncta.org

Publications

Timothy Cassidy
publications@ncta.org

Website Administrator

Isabelle Pouliot
webmaster@ncta.org

Ethics

Carola Berger
ethics@ncta.org





From the President

ATA58 IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

BY MICHAEL SCHUBERT

It's that time of year again, when we all escape our home offices, break out of our daily routines, and head to the mother of all networking and continuing education opportunities: the annual ATA Conference. This year's gathering in our nation's capital (October 25–28) promises to be as mind-expanding as always, with a full slate of 15 three-hour seminars on the “Advanced Skills and Training Day” followed by three heady days filled with nearly 200 sessions and special events from dawn to dusk and beyond. For complete information, visit www.atanet.org/conf.

ATA is “capitalizing” on this year's host city by offering a “T&I Advocacy Day” on October 25. Participants will strategize and rehearse in working groups in the morning before heading to Capitol Hill in the afternoon to advocate for the interests of our profession and the foreign-born residents we assist. It's the perfect opportunity for anyone who wants to turn genuine concern into concrete action in the building where our country's laws are written!

NCTA is well represented among ATA58's featured presenters. The

association will also be present with a chapter table to raise awareness of our special Northern California community and the local events we offer. I hope to see many of you there!

For those of you who can't make it to Washington, we've got plenty of action for you here under the San Francisco fog layer! Our dynamic duo of Events Directors, Fernanda Brandão-Galea and Audrey Pouliot, launched a special page early in

2017 on the social networking platform Meetup (<https://www.meetup.com/Linguists-Translators-and-Interpreters-in-the-Bay-Area>) to serve as a hub for Bay Area activities of interest to our international community of linguists. Here you can read about events past and future, set up a profile, network, share pictures, and more. Join up, and please post and cross-post using the hashtag **#nctasocial!** 🌐



Isabelle Pouliot, who has contributed in so many ways to NCTA—including acting Website Administrator and sponsoring the pre-GM snacks through her company DESIM Linguistic Services, has moved back to Canada. We are so grateful to her, and we will miss her so much!



From the Managing Editor

THE TRANSLATOR AS A STURDY BRIDGE

MIMI WESSLING

A wake-up call to translators arrived with the May issue of *The Economist*, a magazine respected for its coverage of international, economic, and technological issues. One of the lead articles announced the bad news that many translators can verify through recent experience: relentless price pressure pushing our incomes downward. The alleged driving force is machine translation, especially as deep neural networks have improved the accuracy of CAT results. Not only have incomes been affected, but also the satisfaction of having dealt with an intellectual challenge and feeling rewarded by having done that.

The author who calls himself only “Johnson” does make the point that literary translation has not undergone the same downward pressure, yet it was never the most lucrative side of the profession to begin with. As any literary translator will tell you, the final step is rewriting to achieve the intended sense and meaning, bridging the author’s and the reader’s cultures.

Yet another market is for “transcreation”, translating that involves rethinking a message written in one cultural context into another. This penultimate paragraph in Johnson’s article led me directly to a more recent article in the September issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: it described how mistranslation of a think tank report concerning the Iran nuclear controversy actually threatened the ongoing negotiations. One very serious mistranslation was a statement that Iran had produced advanced centrifuges, which would be a serious breach of the nuclear deal. The corrected translation was that Iran has the *know-how* to produce advanced centrifuges—

which is no surprise to anyone following the ongoing reports. The *Atlantic* article lists two more instances of mistranslations about Iran’s intentions.

But worse yet was the look-back into history at the nuclear attack on Japan that ended World War II with an unconscionable loss of life and long-term damage to those who managed to survive. Historians still debate whether a mistranslation of a Japanese word meaning “to reserve comment” at the Potsdam Conference was reported to President Truman as meaning “ignore”, moving the US further along the path to the atomic bomb.

What does all this mean to us as translators? Of course, the heightened competition for translation jobs at a certain level can be handled more efficiently with the assistance of CAT tools. In particular, those using neural networks will indeed narrow the market for some types of translation. Yet on another level, completing a translating job should provide a heightened sense of the importance of our profession and of the necessity to come as close as possible to the perfect translation. To do this, only a human neural network will suffice: One that takes into account context, culture, and subtleties of meaning.

Here’s where NCTA comes in to help, and the contents of this issue serve to illustrate how. We have our workshops that concentrate on skills, we have our meet-ups that concentrate on improving our spoken language, we have meet-ups that provide sociability and contacts with other professional translators and we have General Meetings that introduce us to ideas and activities that

we haven’t encountered elsewhere.

In this issue of *Translational*, all this is brought into view in the wonderfully illustrated article by our Events Coordinators, Fernanda Brandão-Galea and Audrey Pouligny. Our lead article by Monique Longton provides a way for those early in their career to develop accurate and meaningful translating skills, and in essence, her seven-step procedure is a guide for even the most experienced among us.

Our Marketing Director Scott Ellsworth is still analyzing the results of the recent membership survey, helping us to make decisions about where to focus our energies and financial resources to best help our members to be the best translators they can be! His interim results, reported at our September Board meeting, are already validated by the comments at the new members’ meeting before the September 9 GM: how to we find new clients, how do we best focus our skills?

Peruse the articles in this issue with a view to what NCTA can provide to help you become the translator who, no matter what the field, is a sturdy bridge between languages and cultures.

I close with a first line from an article in the September 15 *ATA Newsbriefs* that should provide ample evidence of the indispensable role of interpreters in times of crisis: “During the past three weeks, emergency management organizations have found their resources severely tested, especially when it comes to providing crucial information to those who do not speak English.” 🌐

BOARD REPORTS

NCTA's Board of Directors meets on the first Monday of each month.

No meeting is held in July. Here is a summary of recent board meetings:

2017

April

Welcomed new Events Directors to the Board.

Discussed Administrator hours, duties, and compensation.

Reviewed membership statistics and discussed outreach efforts, including the NCTA listserv and LinkedIn group.

Finalized May General Meeting and brainstormed on future speakers and workshop topics.

Discussed member survey questions and marketing plan.

Discussed forthcoming Translorial content, publication schedule, and ad rates.

May

Discussed use of Constant Contact and social media for publicizing events.

Reviewed updated balance sheet and workshop revenue.

Discussed efforts to increase membership via outreach to ATA members who attended the ATA convention in San Francisco last fall, as well as to schools offering translator training.

Discussed recent changes made to the website and the possibility of streamlining event announcements.

Planned future Meetup events and promotion, as well as General Meeting sponsorship and Continuing Education interpretation workshops.

June

Discussed Translorial distribution and readership issues.

Reviewed membership statistics and recent steps taken to answer member queries. Discussion of declining corporate membership and how to attract younger members.

Discussed upcoming events and workshops.

Reviewed feedback on June simultaneous interpreting workshop and planned August workshop on sight translation.

Advance discussion of fall workshops. Workshop registration and payment procedures were revised.

Discussed marketing survey progress and implementation.

Reviewed Translorial coordination and publication schedule.

August

Discussed changing GM doorprize to headshot.

Discussed NCTA Administrator report, including issue of lapsed members. Diana finding 2-hr workday sufficient.

Discussed Treasurer's report, which showed better workshop profit and \$8k above budget.

Discussed Membership report, new members down, why many ATA members not NCTA members; more extensive planning on increasing membership.

Reviewed marketing survey results; Marketing Director plans further analysis.

Reviewed Webmaster report; discussed finding new host for Translorial.com.

Discussed new approach to events planning, meetups via platform.

Reviewed plans for upcoming workshops (Netflix Nov. 4—how to plan); approach for Sight Translation Workshop to increase attendance using lowered rate and giving as many continuing ed credits as possible. Plans for September 16 computerized ATA exam; proposed holding another in Spring.

Discussed issues with publication of Translorial: generating mailing list, staying with printer; finding new person to do advertisements.

General discussion about finding volunteers for Board.

September

Compared and analyzed NCTA's revenue and expense categories.

Discussed recently completed market survey to gauge what members and potential members expect and value from the association.

Discussed how to boost membership numbers in light of insights from market survey.

Finalized plans for the imminent General Meeting.

Discussed issues relating to our merchant services from PayPal.

Discussed allocation of new roles in emerging new board of 2018.

Finalized content for October Translorial.



From the Events co-Directors

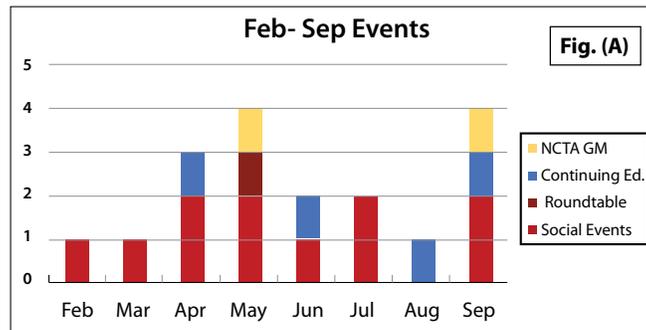
MEETUPS, THE TRIPLE APPROACH Language, Professionalism, Fun Together

AUDREY POULIGNY & FERNANDA BRANDÃO -GALEA

As you may recall from the Spring 2017 Translorial, NCTA President Michael Schubert in his opening commented on “The Value of Community”. We would like to let you know what we have been doing since we joined the Board of NCTA as Events Co-Directors, and we invite you to take an active role in your association, joining us for upcoming events or bringing your ideas to be implemented. We are all ears!

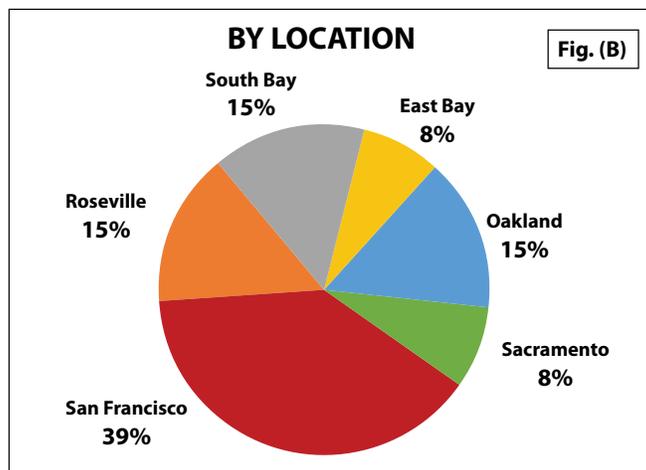
For our readers who do not know us, we are Audrey and Fernanda, two San Francisco-based translators working with French and Portuguese, respectively. Starting in February of this year, we’ve experimented with a new platform that allows us to connect with and engage other translators from our local area. That platform is called Meetup, an online social networking tool that facilitates local in-person group meetings. Meetup allows members to find and join groups unified by a common interest, and therefore it can help NCTA broaden its reach to pull in language professionals, students, and enthusiasts who may not yet be aware of us.

The Meetup group we created boosts our NCTA membership, creates greater visibility for the association, and therefore strengthens the network from which every member can draw. We encourage our members to network locally in every part of our territory, while Meetup provides a ready-to-use



tool to organize, promote, manage reminders, share event pictures, message attendees and alert them for last minute changes. If you have not yet tried out the Meetup tool as an attendee, please do, because it will make your event organizer’s day much smoother. Follow this link: <https://www.meetup.com/Linguists-Translators-and-Interpreters-in-the-Bay-Area> to join us and over 224 language lovers.

As of September 2017, we have created 19 events promoting social and continuing education gatherings. We try to make



it easy for all members to engage, no matter their location, schedule, or interests.

Figure A shows the breakout by type of event and month. We’ve seen participation throughout Northern California. Figure B shows our chart of events by location.

The events season kicked-off with a brunch social in North Beach that was so much fun that we had to have another the next month. Not to be outdone, our friend Javier Moreno across the Bay in Oakland, followed-up with his gourmet pizza and beer social (make sure to save room for pie). Afaf and Matthias Steiert boosted the East Bay tally with a couple of lunch meetups. Carolyn Yohn hosted coffee gatherings for members in the Roseville and Sacramento area. It’s not all socials and festivities; we also get down to the serious work of practicing our languages: four language-focused meetings allowed us to speak French, Spanish and Portuguese. We held a roundtable to discuss our personal finances as freelancers. We invited FiClub.org coaches to facilitate the discussion and provide helpful tips and tricks. The 2-hour capacity crowd meeting at the San Francisco Public Library covered the group’s concerns across business development, record-keeping and retirement savings. An interesting effect of focusing people on dollars and sense was that three participants decided to join NCTA

see page 8



1



2



3



4



5



6

Photo Captions: 1. Lunch in Oakland—Matthias Steiert, Alexandra Wahl, Afaf Steiert, Fernanda Brandão-Galea, Halidi Foutouhat, Monica Lange • 2. Personal Finances for Freelancers—Frank Galea, Raymond Krein, Audrey Pouligny, Marc Vincent, Heidi Smith, Sebastian Mirolo, Charlotte Giovangrandi, Karl Stellrecht, Olga Byvaltseva, Carolyn Quintella, Sharlee Broadley, Andrea Pollock, Jisu Kim, Abner Morales • 3. Pizza in Oakland—Javier Moreno, Leah Dong, Fernanda Brandão-Galea and others • 4. French Meetup—Coleman Foley, Trudy Obi, Thilo Ullman, Audrey Pouligny, Fernanda Brandão-Galea, Marc Vincent, Frank Galea • 5. East Bay lunch—Matthias Steiert, Flemming Larsen, Trudy Obi, Afaf Steiert, Anne Peattie, among others • 6. Meetup em português.—Monica Lange, Susan Howard, Zeze Di Amoure, Valdete Cooper, Fernanda Brandão-Galea

COMMUNITY

after attending. Please welcome Olga Byvaltseva and Jsiu Kim, when you have the opportunity.

The Meetup tool is also used to promote the continuing education workshops. Please remember that these events require prior registration.

Okay, so back to the fun... we also had a wine tasting event in Corralitos, courtesy of our NCTA Membership Director Mimi Wessling.

If you would like help in organizing an event, please contact events@NCTA.org so we can get you started. Fernanda and Audrey will be happy to walk you through the setup, though we've found it to be intuitive. The association, and each of us as members, benefits from keeping our network growing and engaged through these events. Get to know your fellow members face-to-face and build out your circle of trusted professionals with whom you can share experiences, advice, leads and even projects. 🌐



Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Companionship at 867 Calabasas

member benefits NCTA is working hard to promote the association and its members.

Make sure you are taking full advantage of your member benefits.

Find other members and contact colleagues	Use the search fields to find Individual members under the <i>Find a Linguist</i> tab; click the <i>Find a Corporate Member</i> tab to search for Corporate and Institutional members.
Referral service: all members are listed at ncta.org	NCTA's online referral service makes it easy for new clients to find you. Be sure to keep your listing updated, and take advantage of your listing's file upload section to post your résumé, certificates, and other files that highlight your unique experience and accomplishments. Enliven your referral service listing by uploading a photo of yourself.
Stay in touch	Be sure to join the 250+ members on the NCTA Members-only Listserv (Yahoo!™ Group email list) to quickly receive answers to your questions, exchange information, and read job postings.
NCTA social media	Participate in the LinkedIn group and Facebook page; follow us on Twitter. LinkedIn/NCTA Twitter @NCTAorg Facebook/NCTA.org
Network	Meeting colleagues in person can be invaluable. Get to know translators, interpreters and LSPs at workshops, informal social & networking events, and quarterly General Meetings. Go to ncta.org , click the <i>Events</i> tab, and mark your calendar.
Membership card	Your NCTA membership card is now available for download and printing any time you'd like. To access that feature, go to ncta.org and hover your cursor over the <i>Members</i> tab, then select "Update your info" from the drop-down menu. After logging into your record, select "Membership Info" in the blue MY PROFILE box. Simply click the "View/Print My Membership Card" link and voilà!

It's said that many hands make light work

That's especially true for voluntary organizations like NCTA! Please find sometime to help keep us a vital source of information and contacts for translators and interpreters. Email us at administrator@ncta.org.





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Translate your way

SDL Trados Studio is part of the unique SDL Language Platform, offering an enhanced translation experience for freelance translators and localization teams.

SDL Trados Studio enables you to work the way you want to.



The old London Bridge spanning the River Thames in England



The London Bridge today, in Lake Havasu City, Arizona

Photos courtesy of the Lake Havasu City Convention & Visitors Bureau

QUALITY CONTROL IN TRANSLATION

Must-Dos for Success as a Translator BY MONIQUE LONGTON

If you are considering starting—or have just started—a career in the translation industry, this article may be for you.

Here’s a challenge: if you had to choose a picture to describe the actual process taking place inside your brain when you translate, what would you pick? Personally, I would go for two pictures of one bridge: the London Bridge in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

This architectural masterpiece has a unique story: it was first built over the River Thames in London, then dismantled, shipped overseas, and later rebuilt in Arizona. Every time we start a translation project, we go through a version of this same process. We dismantle the original text, ship it to its new cultural environment with its own set of stylistic requirements and intended users, and rebuild it in that new environment with the aim of executing a faithful version of the original text.

Whatever the specifications for your bridge, you must never forget the one secret ingredient that will prevent it from falling down: quality. As a beginning translator, always keep in mind your translation will be carefully read and evaluated by the reviewer and the end client. Delivering a high-quality translation will enable the reviewer to:

- Deliver a high-quality translation to the end client.
- Give positive feedback to the translator.
- Improve his/her own translation skills.
- Meet his/her own deadlines without scrambling to beat the clock.

On the other hand, low-quality translation leads only to frustration. When faced with a translation that is substandard, the reviewer is forced to set aside the task of reviewing for that of re-translation, under much tighter deadlines than the translator had in the first place, to prevent the bridge from falling.

The practical methodology that follows is a 7-step process designed to help beginning translators build a strong and aesthetically pleasing bridge under solid, rigorous quality control. Each step has a series of quiz questions, for a total of 40 questions. If you can complete the quiz answering “yes” to all 40 questions, you will be able to deliver top-quality work. While the methodology may not apply seamlessly to all situations without exception, it should at least give you some ideas for building your own quality control procedure for delivering top-notch translations. If you decide to give it a go, let me know how it worked for you at monique-longton@msn.com.

Overview of the Seven Steps



The Detailed Methodology

1. Accepting a Translation Request

Here is your opportunity to determine whether you can comfortably take on the project or not. If you can say “Yes” to the questions below, you can accept the project. If any doubts or concerns arise, don’t be afraid to talk to your project manager about them. This sends a message to the PM that you are geared towards producing quality work.

1) Do you have access to the source material?

Never accept a request “blind” without first seeing the source text.

2) Do you truly understand the subject matter of the source material?

Be brutally honest with yourself. It is impossible to render a correct translation without a complete understanding of the subject matter.

3) Do you have the right resources (bilingual dictionaries, terminology lists, papers, books...) to translate the source material, or do you know which client website(s) or forums you can go to in order to find the information you need?

Make sure you have the right paper/electronic tools for building your translation and expressing yourself as an expert on the subject would.

4) Do you have the style manuals you need in your target language?

A mastery of your target language is a must.

5) Do you master the software tools you need to deliver your project?

If you feel you are struggling with a software program, e.g., a CAT tool or a word processor, invest a little bit of your time every day toward mastering it.

6) Do you know the country/countries in which the translation will be published?

If your client asks you to translate from English into French, is the translation for Belgium? France? Canada? Do you feel confident writing for those countries?

7) Do you know the purpose of the translation?

Knowing the purpose of the translation will help you figure out which register you should use. Ask your project manager/direct client for any in-house reference files that can help you better understand your client's preferences. In addition to industry terminology, plenty of companies in each industry use their proprietary terminology.

2. Your First Draft

Here is where you dig deeper to achieve a thorough understanding of your source text.

8) Do you follow the client's instructions?

Did the client ask to use a specific formatting style or template? Always follow

the client's instructions. Communicate with them if you have any doubts.

9) If the source file is in .PDF format, did you ask your project manager if you could run it through PDF to Word conversion software?

Special care is needed here: scanned files can require a lot of post-processing to produce an editable file you can work with and deliver to the client as a quality end product. It is sometimes advisable to translate from scratch in a word processor.

10) If you use a CAT tool, are you constantly referring to your original source file?

Sometimes, the order of the segments in a CAT tool file can be misleading. Always check the original source language file to make sure you properly understand the text structure.

11) Do you read each sentence of the source text before you translate it?

Even when you are pressed for time, read each sentence completely before you translate it. The text will sound natural in your native language and will not follow the conventions of the source language. This will save you time during the review process.

12) Are you using common sense?

For example, if you are translating "engine specifications" into French, do you know whether the author is referring to one single engine or several of them? Sometimes, you can find out with a bit of research. At other times, you can only know the answer by asking your client.

13) If you encountered any ambiguous items, did you clearly identify them and ask your project manager about them?

Research any concept you are unsure about and don't be afraid to ask your project manager any questions you might still have: e.g., do you understand all the abbreviations in your source text?

14) Are you abiding by all the conventions used in your native language?

For example, to indicate a monetary amount, English requires that you write the currency symbol first, followed by the

amount. Find out what the experts in your native language do: how do they represent amounts?

15) Did you take extra care to write all proper nouns and numbers correctly?

Use your copy/paste functions for proper nouns and numbers if you can. For example, if you translate a document for a major bank like UBS, you could easily misspell it as "USB." Your spellchecker will not catch that mistake, but chances are UBS will...

16) If the source text contains a quote, did you check whether the quote exists in the target language?

If you translate a quote from a piece of EU legislation, for example, look for the corresponding official translation of that quote in your target language.

3. Your First Bilingual Review

If the deadline allows, always perform your first review the day after you have finished your draft version.

Did you translate everything?

We are not robots: always check for missing words, sentences or sections.

Can you understand everything you wrote?

If you have to read a phrase or sentence twice to understand what you wrote, this may be an indication you need to rework it.

Do you have the correct register?

Take this opportunity to check your register.

20) Are your headings correct?

Headings can be tricky to translate. Now that you have a complete understanding of your source text, always take a critical look at all translated headings in the document to make sure your rendering is relevant in each case.

21) Did you correct any obvious mistakes?

Now is your chance to catch any obvious or glaring errors. If you've been able to postpone your review for the following day, they should jump out at you.

see page 11

22) Did you pay attention to false cognates?

E.g. “library” (English) and “librairie” (French).

23) Did you follow all standard conventions in your mother tongue?

For example, what are the conventions for writing a list in your target language, or for executing quotation marks, or for comma, period, colon and semicolon placement with respect to closing quotation marks?

24) Did you pay attention to the text layout and fonts?

Make sure you reproduce the original layout and formatting, including but not limited to fonts, font colors, point size, highlighting, boldface and italics, as closely as possible. Again, if you use a CAT tool, referring to your original text will help you quickly find any special formatting that you need to reproduce.

4. Your Second Bilingual Review

You have really mastered your subject by now. This is your last chance to check for complete accuracy between the source and target texts and make sure you have followed all the client’s instructions. While performing a complete bilingual review, focus on the next items.

25) Did you correct any minor translation errors or omissions?

You are now mastering your source text. Here is your chance to focus on the details.

26) Did you check for consistent use of terminology?

If you work with a CAT tool, use whichever consistency checker is built into the system. You can use the automatic search function (Ctrl + F keys in Windows or cmd + F in Mac OS) to identify any needed changes.

27) If you are working with a CAT tool, did you use its integrated consistency checker?

Always use all of the utilities and checkers in the software that will allow you to spot any mistake you haven’t caught before.

28) Did you run an automatic spell check?

Run a spell check in your CAT tool. If

its spelling checker is poor, copy/paste your text into another application that can check your spelling and run a spell check in that software.

29) Last but not least, did you check whether your translation contains double spaces?

Use your automatic search-and-replace function and replace double spaces with single spaces where they are inappropriate.

5. Your First Monolingual Review

Here is your opportunity to put yourself in your audience’s shoes and read your translation as if it had been written in your target language in the first place. While reading your translation, focus on the next few items.

30) If you used a CAT tool, did you preview your translation in the original file format?

Make sure all text of the target file is displayed in a legible form for your end client.

31) Does your translation sound like it was written in your native language in the first place?

Here is your chance to check you have written your translation the way a native speaker would have expressed it. If you are “out like a light” after reading your translation, chances are your audience will be too...

32) With respect to pronouns, can the reader clearly identify what they refer to?

Always check for consistency and flow from one sentence to the next, and from one paragraph to the next.

33) Is your register appropriate for the type of document you are translating?

You may have to either stick to the source text (e.g., legal texts) or brighten your style and play with the way you start your sentences and paragraphs (e.g. marketing content).

6. Your Second Monolingual Review

Here is your opportunity to catch any last-minute details.

34) Did you print out your translation and read it from the print copy?

Nowadays, most people scan texts from a computer monitor, tablet, or smart phone. Reviewing a print copy of your translation is an experiment I recommend to every translator.

35) Did you read every word of your translation?

Take your time...pretend you’re a sloth if you need to. Read every single word of your text to make sure you did not forget to write conjunctions such as “and,” or forget to insert a critical comma or delete an unnecessary apostrophe somewhere.

36) Did you pay extra attention to grammar?

In my experience, many grammatical mistakes are not detected by automatic spell-checkers. You must read every single character of the translation to find these mistakes.

37) Did you pay extra care to homophones (“sound-alikes”)?

Spell checkers don’t catch improper substitutions of “their” for “they’re,” “women” for “woman,” etc.

38) Did you use consistent punctuation and capitalization?

Checking these items in a printout of your translation makes all the difference. Your eye will catch these types of mistakes more quickly than on a screen.

7. Delivery of your Translation

Here is your last opportunity to advise your project manager with any special instructions for the reviewer/end client.

39) Did you clearly indicate any unresolved items or translation decisions to your project manager so that the reviewer/direct client is made aware of them?

If any concerns remain when it’s time to deliver the project, let the reviewer know about these items so he/she can pay extra attention to them.

40) If your project is very specific, did you indicate your research work to the reviewer?

Submitting your sources to the reviewer will show you took the time to fully understand the source text and choose the right target terminology. 🌐

QISMAT AMIN, AFGHAN INTERPRETER FOR THE US ARMY, VISITS NCTA

BY JESSICA LEVINE

We were honored to have Qismat Amin, formerly an Afghan interpreter for the U.S. Army, visit the quarterly meeting of the NCTA on May 6th, 2017. Qismat told the moving story of his professional and personal journey from Jalalabad, in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan border, to Northern California.

Amin was a child when he saw American soldiers come through his hometown in armored trucks and throw candies to groups of kids by the road. He began to wonder what else was inside those trucks. Were they filled with candy? How could he get inside one to get more sweets? Soon he was enamored of American culture, which he had learned about mostly through movies. Enterprising and curious, he began to teach himself English.

Amin was in twelfth grade when his family encountered financial problems. Fortunately, Amin's study of English would lead to paid work. He was taking a manage-



Qismat, with Michael Schubert observing, reacts to our enthusiastic reception of his talk.



Qismat Amin relates his life as an Afghan interpreter, and later as a translator of intelligence reports.

ment class in his native tongue, Pashtun, and, as an exercise, regularly translating his notes into English. One day, some U.S. troops came to the course and met him. One thing led to another . . . and soon the U.S. Army offered him a job as interpreter. At first his family didn't want him to go, because they were scared of reprisals if the Taliban found out. But Amin persisted. He took the required test, passed, and was soon working for the Army. He was only 17 years old.

His first missions, in foot patrol units, were difficult and exhausting. They involved searching houses and setting up ambushes. Although he moved in dangerous situations, Amin was not allowed to be armed.

Gradually, Amin began to serve also as a cultural advisor, which at times put him in the middle between the U.S. forces and local inhabitants. Amin was more or less contented with this role, depending on the unit he was assigned to. On the positive side, while working in the Tora Bora region, he formed a fast friendship with Captain Mat-

thew Ball, who later helped him immigrate to the United States. On the other hand, Amin sometimes found himself assigned to units that searched the homes of people who had previously helped them. In those situations, Amin was thoroughly aware of the sensitivity of what he was doing and the risks it involved. In fact, he knew many interpreters who covered their faces to protect their identities, but he himself chose not to do that.

Amin accumulated both linguistic and military skills as he progressed. While posted at the FOB (Forward Operating Base) in Mehtar Lam, he learned how to use artillery. Then he was posted at an OCC-P (Operations Control Center-Provincial) where he had a lot of paper work, including the translation of intelligence reports. By this time, he was translating in both directions and doing simultaneous interpretation.

In 2013 Qismat Amin applied for an SIV, a Special Immigration Visa, under a program designed to protect Afghan interpreters and other contractors who were in danger of being assassinated by the Taliban or ISIS because they had helped U.S. forces. However, Amin found himself without protection when he was told it would take three and a half years for his visa to come through. His

see page 14

*Amin was a child
when he saw
American soldiers
come through
his hometown in
armored trucks and
throw candies to
groups of kids by
the road.*



New and prospective members gather before General Meeting with the new and previous Membership directors Mimi Wessling and Judit Marin

situation became critical when he learned that both his name and his brother's were on an ISIS hit list. His family's home and land had been confiscated by ISIS, and he was already living in hiding. Understandably, Amin felt the U.S. had betrayed him. He contacted Captain Matthew Bell, who was now back in the States and studying law. Bell in turn reached out to the media, including the San Francisco Chronicle, in search of support. Perhaps as a consequence of this, Amin's visa was approved.

During his presentation, Amin repeatedly expressed his gratitude for Captain Bell, who paid his airfare to the U.S. and welcomed Qismat into his home once he arrived. Amin found a job at Starbucks and settled in. He spoke rather humorously about adjusting to American culture. After coming from a world where physical survival is a challenge, he is rather amused at how Starbucks customers can get upset if a drink doesn't have the right amount of milk froth or vanilla—an anecdotal reminder to be grateful not only for our liberties, but also for the material comforts

and pleasures we take for granted.

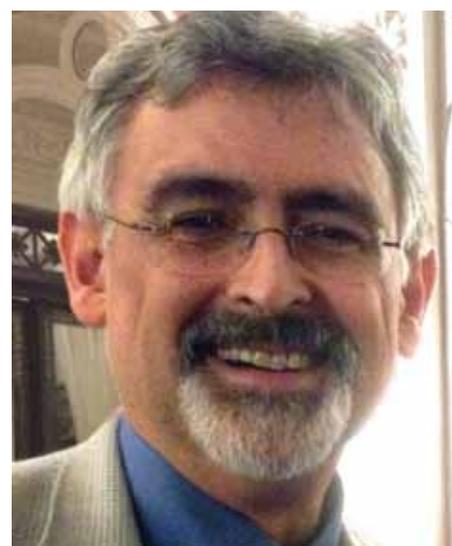
When asked about his plans, Qismat Amin expressed a desire “to do whatever can bring peace.” He is thinking of pursuing an MBA and finding some way to work between Islam and the US that will promote mutual understanding. The audience was riveted throughout Amin's talk and visibly moved by the story of this remarkable young refugee and interpreter, who served our country with enormous courage and integrity. 🌐

GENERAL MEETING: SEPTEMBER 9, 2017 BY MICHAEL SCHUBERT

NCTA's third quarterly membership meeting in 2017 began as always with an orientation session for new members, an opening networking session, and NCTA announcements and business. Then came the eagerly awaited feature presentation: **Bringing a Lost Opera Back to Life through Translation** by Joe McClinton. Joe, one of our industry's most illustrious colleagues, has been a translator of German, French, and Italian into English since 1973. Since 1995, Joe has also shared his vast knowledge with graduate-level translation students as an Adjunct Professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) in Monterey, California. Anyone who had heard one of his many presentations over the years for NCTA or

ATA knew what a treat we were in for!

Joe's presentation focused on his work translating the Italian libretto of *La Circe*, an opera with music composed (presumably) by Pietro Andrea Ziani in 1665 to a libretto by Cristoforo Ivanovich and premiered that year in Venice. Like many operas during Venice's golden age of opera in the 17th century, *La Circe* was literally shelved following its early performances and never heard from again. Until, that is, it was “discovered” in the Marciana Library in Venice by Céline Ricci, the create force behind Ars Minerva, a company based in San Francisco's Mission District dedicated to reviving just such lost and neglected gems.



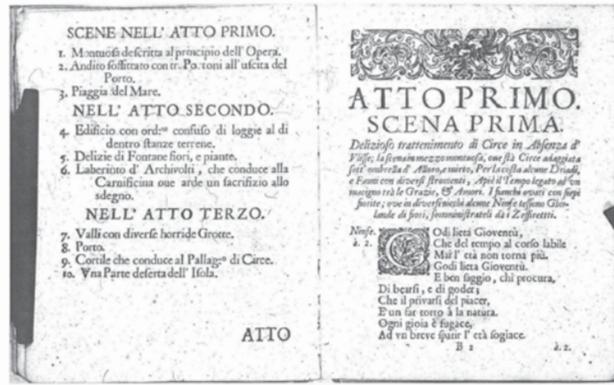
Joe McClinton

And this is where Joe comes in. Since Ars Minerva began producing forgotten operas in San Francisco in 2015, Joe has been the person who renders them comprehensible to audiences—and to the singers who must interpret them! As he explained in his presentation, this is a multi-phased challenge. First, of course, it involves understanding 350-year-old Italian—with obsolete, un-Google-able expressions and a script in which, for example, the “F” and “S” are indistinguishable. Next, the lofty style of the old literary Italian has to be recast into a more approachable form for a full literal English translation that the artists use to understand the opera. Finally, this whole translation must be condensed into concise titles that are projected above the stage to give audiences an adequate sense of the plot without demanding too much of their visual attention.

Here’s an example of the kind of challenge faced by the translator, and



Valentina Saduil, the photographer who so generously donated a headshot as a door prize for our September 9th GM, and Don Couch, the lucky winner.



the solution Joe found. Note how, in the original Italian, the singer addresses and personifies inanimate objects (in this case, his eyes):

Original Italian (sung on stage):

*Odiose pupille!
Voi che di mostro in horride sembianze
Trasformato mirate il bel, ch'adoro,
Su le morte speranze
Nel mio vivo martoro
Deh stempratevi in stille.*

Full modern English translation

(for artists to study):
*Hateful eyes!
You who see the beautiful one I adore
Transformed into the horrible appearance
of a monster,
Alas, melt in tears
For the dead hopes in my living suffering.*

Supertitle translation (for audiences to read):

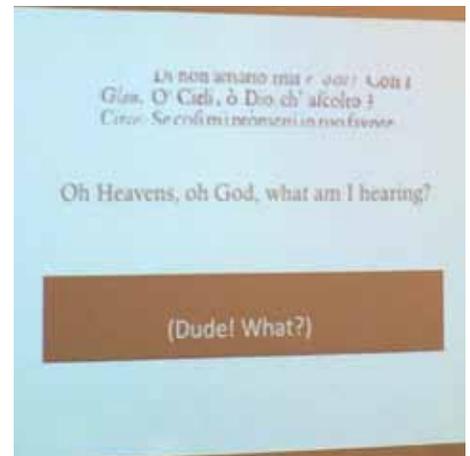
*Now I hate my eyes.
They've seen my beautiful darling*

*transformed into something vile.
Let them dissolve in tears
for my dead hopes and my living
pain.*

Now, just repeat that 570 times, and you've got yourself a three-act opera all ready to go!

Joe was also in the booth at the rear of the auditorium for all rehearsals and performances. During the rehearsals, his task was to ensure that the titles could be projected in the tempo that the sung text proceeded, to take out any passages that were cut in rehearsal, to ensure that the “register” of the translation was appropriate to the artists’ character portrayals and the creative team’s vision—and, of course, to rehearse the mechanics of the supertitle projection and make sure everything worked properly. Then, during the performances, his job was to advance the titles from his laptop at the appropriate moment in the performance, a job that requires understanding the Italian and being able to read the musical score and that, even in 2017, cannot be automated!

The large audience of 50 or so colleagues was fascinated with Joe’s presentations, and many people raised their hands during the Q&A session, including two opera singers and many opera enthusiasts. Our thanks to Joe McClinton for sharing his insights into this fascinating niche in the translation industry! 🌐



GENERAL MEETINGS



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About Kiva

We are a non-profit organization with a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. Leveraging the internet and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions, Kiva lets individuals lend as little as \$25 to help create opportunity around the world.

Kiva volunteer translators are an important part of this community, helping to change lives one loan at a time.



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The Kiva Translation Program offers a unique opportunity to make a direct contribution to Kiva's mission while gaining exposure to a diverse range of source texts, discovering a wide array of regional terminology, and building your résumé.

Kiva volunteers translate short loan profiles (200 words on average) into English on a custom-built translation platform before they are posted to Kiva's website for fundraising. The unique and flexible "closed crowd-sourcing" environment allows translators to join the team from anywhere at any time of the day or night, with access to a network of experienced and engaging fellow translators.

Who we're looking for:

- Multilingual professionals and students
- Detail-oriented individuals
- Ability to volunteer a minimum of 5 translations per week for a minimum of 6 months

Language pairs we need:

- ES > EN RU > EN
- PT > EN FR > EN



Featured in a July 2013 Common Sense Advisory report as "a crowdsourcing pioneer" in translation.

Photo captions: • **1 & 2.** The General Meeting filled the room to hear Qismat Amin, who as a teenager became an Afghan to English translator in his home country • **3.** Fernanda Brandão-Galea and Audrey Pouligny, our Events Co-ordinators • **4.** Getting organized for the raffle drawing. Where in past years the prize was a translation book; the lucky winner this year got a headshot for professional use, courtesy of Valentina Sadiul. See her website at <http://www.valentinasadiul.com/>



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TACTICS IN TRANSLATION

Preparation for the ATA Certification Exam BY REBECCA J. VERHOEK

An inquisitive crowd gathered at Golden Gate University in San Francisco on April 29, 2017 to become familiar with the American Translators Association certification exam. The attending members of the Northern California Translators Association (NCTA) welcomed Sean Dodd as workshop coach.

Participants were able to pose questions regarding exam logistics to Sean (ATA-certified, Spanish to English), discuss strategies, and (hopefully) ease any anxiety they might have felt while contemplating the upcoming exam. He encouraged these fellow translators to think of the exam as a demonstration of one's skills, or a "graduation ceremony" of sorts. This reminded us to continually hone our linguistic abilities and allow the test to validate such knowledge and experience.

Workshop, Part 1: A Rundown

During this initial part of the workshop, Sean described the exam logistics. Registration requires membership with ATA and agreement with their Code of Ethics and Professional Practice. An eligibility packet is no longer necessary. For new members, registration and payment for the exam should be submitted 4 weeks or more prior to the exam date (existing ATA members have a 2-week window).

Most testing sites now offer a computerized version, where responses are typed and saved onto an ATA-issued thumb drive. The use of technology saves test-takers from the fatigue of recording translations manually. Regardless of exam format, reference materials remain limited. To ensure an even playing field among the test-

takers, the permitted resources exclude interactive media such as chat functions and language forums. Each examinee must sign an agreement to utilize only approved materials (see https://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_computerized_resources.php). Sean warned, however, "the more you are looking up words, the less you are translating." You want to assure you are capturing the meaning of the passage while paying attention to the tone and register of the source document.

Grammar, Style, and Idiomatic Expressions, Oh my!

After a break, registrants for part 2 of the workshop transitioned into the elements of grammar and style when flowing between English and Spanish. Many of the translators referred to their pre-workshop exercises to identify any difficulties or ambiguities they had noticed in the text.

Mimicking the conditions of an ATA exam, the exercises were to be completed individually without use of interactive reference materials and within a given time frame. These language-specific exercises that Sean had e-mailed to participants before the workshop primed them to detect potential pitfall areas that may need particular focus. For instance, idioms typically do not translate literally and should be tailored with an equivalent that sounds natural to the target readers of the document. Participants who had turned in their worksheets prior to the session received individual feedback.

The room settled into a hush, with only strokes of pen on paper, keyboard entries, and labored breathing to be heard as we completed a brief practice exam. Once time was called, we were able to check in with each other, and cite our areas of concern. This was a useful exercise, because we could track our progress through a sample text. I made this "note to self" worth emphasizing: be familiar with

your keyboard, or set your word processor to the target language. You won't lose time searching for the appropriate tilde, accent, or tense indicator under pressure. ¡No les olviden, cada signo de puntuación tiene significado! Sean emphasized that each punctuation mark has meaning. This was also a helpful reminder to budget some of the exam time for quality assurances

Practice and Perseverance are Key

The ATA certification exam is one that truly requires a special form of preparation. Sean read an account of a fellow translator (whom we will call Arnold). Arnold attempted the ATA exam three times, yet found success on the fourth try. Instead of letting his marks be a deterrent, he created a new strategy for himself. Arnold reviewed his graded practice exams and focused on what he did right. Reinforcing his strengths boosted his morale before he evaluated inaccuracies. Arnold hired a few colleagues to consult about the areas that needed more attention. He targeted those linguistic pitfalls and created a checklist for himself of what to keep in mind to avoid them in the future.

Dodd encouraged ongoing skill preparation such as reading in both languages, and referencing style guides. The *Into-English Grading Standards* document at https://www.atanet.org/certification/Into_English_Grading_2013.pdf may be helpful. The current version of the exam utilizes "general" passages, so become familiar with varied genres and styles of writing (in newspaper articles, financial texts, legal contracts, science-based journals, for example).

After the session, some colleagues exchanged contact information with the goal of further exchanging information on strategies and critiques.

To register for an exam sitting, see https://www.atanet.org/certification/upcoming_exam_sittings.php—and please visit https://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutcert_overview.php#4 for any updates to exam guidelines that may have been initiated since publication. 🌐



Getting prepared for ATA certification

STRATEGIES IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING

Challenges of a necessary skill BY THILO ULLMANN

On June 3, 2017, the Northern California Translators Association convened 22 participants in a Golden Gate University classroom to hear Cyril Flerov's presentation of "Strategies in Simultaneous Interpreting." Flerov (AIIC, TAALS), a San Francisco resident, is a Russian conference interpreter with wide experience in the field.

Conference interpreting as a specialized profession developed in Europe earlier than it did in the US. During the 19th century, the diplomatic language was French, and an understood prerequisite for becoming a diplomat was fluency in that language. Most diplomats came from the upper social groups of their countries and had been educated in famous old universities. The First World War (1914 to 1918) shook up this custom, as it did everything else. British intervention on European soil for the first time since Waterloo (1815) brought to the Flanders fields military men like Sir John French, who knew not a word of French. President Wilson relied on his advisor, Colonel House, for his exchanges with European statesmen.

The establishment of the League of Nations in Geneva after 1918 brought to the fore the linguistic differences between representatives of the member states. The United States under Woodrow Wilson, promoter of the idea of an international body to mediate disputes that might lead to a repetition of the catastrophe, never ratified nor participated in the League. But the League established the first standards of interpretation and the oldest school for conference interpreting—now part of the University of Geneva. Not surprisingly, many of the terms used to define interpretation practices and theory are French.

What does a conference interpreter do? As Mr. Flerov puts it, s/he will "solve a text." Faced with a stream of language emanating from a speaker, the interpreter will, "like a snake charmer", render and evoke the meaning, almost in real time, to an au-

dience hooked to their earpieces.

Mr. Flerov illustrated the challenges of this task with a citation of what a flight controller does: "If you can calmly hold a constantly changing 3D picture in your mind of what's going to happen in five minutes' time based on what's happening at the moment, while at the same time talking to pilots on the radio, other air traffic controllers on the phone, and noting everything on a screen in front of you, then you've probably got the aptitude for the job (Kevin Edmunds, NATS watch manager, Manchester Airport, UK)." Sounds like a superhuman endeavor; but mere mortals do it, more or less successfully, every day.

Mr. Flerov provided us with a long list of methods, or strategies, to overcome the challenges. Among them are:

saucissonage the only way to render, for example, Chinese, is by repeating "units of meaning", like slices of a sausage, without recasting, as they are being pronounced;

décalage, the flexible allotment of time between the emission of speech and the transmission of meaning, allowing for full comprehension and rendering. "The interpreter says not what he hears, but what he has heard." This technique is particularly useful for dealing with speakers who tend to place verbs at the end of statements;

anticipation, which means that experienced interpreters are often able to produce a sentence before any equivalent constituent has appeared in the source language (SL) input;

divided attention—experienced conference interpreters clearly

demonstrate the skill of simultaneous listening and speaking. I have witnessed Amalia Alfaro, a seasoned Spanish↔English interpreter active in Madrid not only interpreting while knitting, but also while reading a newspaper.

The most representative technique, in my opinion, that Flerov described was **de-verbalization**, the lifting of the meaning of an utterance into the interpreter's mental cloud universe, leaving behind the actual verbiage to put forth that same meaning in the target language (TL) construction. According to Brian Mossop (2003), "the translator's bilingual brain automatically produces TL lexical and syntactic material based on the incoming SL forms and on the connections (whatever these may be) between TL and SL items in the 'repertoire' or mental store of language knowledge. This 'rendering' occurs beyond all conscious control and cannot be 'unlearned'. It happens automatically: bilingual brains render, just as stomachs digest incoming food."

And, as Flerov said, the most important skill of all is the creative recovery from errors.

Meetings like this one certainly justify the mission of the NCTA. Let's have more of them! 🌐

Call for Writers

Translorial is looking for writers to contribute original content or to cover NCTA events. This is an excellent volunteer opportunity that can help give you professional exposure while also earning CEU points for maintaining your ATA certification.

For more information, please email:
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DEMYSTIFYING SIGHT TRANSLATION IN THE HEALTHCARE SETTING

BY MONICA LANGE

On Saturday August 12, 2017, NCTA held another excellent continuing education workshop at the Golden Gate University in San Francisco. I arrived early at the classroom, and there she was—pretty in fuchsia. Margarita Bekker demystified not only sight translation in the healthcare setting, but healthcare interpreting as a whole. I have recently moved from Switzerland to the San Francisco Bay Area, and I am used to the conference interpreting setting for international organizations in Geneva, so this is a completely new field for me.

Margarita has an impressive resume: Core-CHI™ interpreter, educator and trainer at Stanford University Medical Center, chair of the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters, curriculum developer for Glendon School of Translation at York University in Toronto, Canada, interpreter of the year by CHIA in 2016—just to name a few of her numerous accomplishments.

During her lecture, she talked about the several types of medical and legal texts that an interpreter might encounter in a typical day at work—from health history forms, intake forms, patient educational materials, care instructions, informed consents, legal and health insurance documents—she covered them all.

Translate or sight translate? – That is the question!

As a conference interpreter, I have done some sight translations, or rather, sight interpretations of speeches when I was lucky enough get them at all beforehand, but the difficulties I had to deal with are not even close to those faced by interpreters working in hospitals or healthcare practices. The challenges here are different: in addition to the language and



Margarita Bekker

cultural barriers, there is also medical and legal terminology defining the patient's aches, pains, fears, and insecurities.

Margarita dissected the several types of documents and their characteristics, explaining which should and which should not be sight translated and, most importantly, why. She explained proper ways for interpreters to translate “on the spot”, the differences between sight translation, written translation, and interpreting, the grammatical peculiarities of healthcare documents, the importance of understanding healthcare and legal lingo, and interpreting techniques like paraphrasing and chunking. There was also a very interesting discussion on ways for interpreters to recuse themselves to sight translate specific documents, taking into account patient safety and Joint Commission directives.

After the coffee break, it was time for some “hands-on” training. Divided into groups of the same language pairs, attendees had the opportunity to sight-translate

documents and unravel some of the medical interpreting mysteries. The classroom was filled with a diverse audience—from highly experienced and skilled interpreters to those exploring this new field of opportunities and professional growth—and the exercises were dynamic, fun and, at least for me, very enlightening.

The Lady with the Lamp and the importance of certification

To wrap up, Margarita gave a very enthusiastic speech about the importance of certification for medical interpreters. Just like Florence Nightingale, the pioneer in professionalizing the nursing profession for women, Margarita is also a trained nurse. With her own lamp of knowledge and a delicate Russian accent, she talked about the importance of Ms. Nightingale's work and the power of certification.

Like many of us, I started in the translation and interpretation profession by mere happenstance—or as I like to say, fate. Some may even say it was karma! I have a degree in veterinary medicine, which—together with my lifelong passion for languages—led my way into the mysterious and fascinating world of medical translations. As years went by, and I fell in love with the profession, I looked for a formal education and became a trained professional. Certification is my next step. As mentioned by Margarita, certification elevates our profession. The more of us are certified, the more we will be perceived as a profession. Also, certification is not a one-time effort. It has to be maintained by continuous education, involvement, and—for those of us who do not like to admit it, but are somewhat lazy—it encourages us to study, to be committed to learning and becoming better professionals. 🌐





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NCTA OCTOBER 2017 TO DECEMBER 2017

OCTOBER 13	Happy Hour in Walnut Creek
OCTOBER 15	Francophone Brunch in Berkeley
OCTOBER 25–27	ATA National Meeting, Washington D.C.
OCTOBER 27	Informal breakfast at ATA58/DC–Look for the California flag!
NOVEMBER 4	NCTA Workshop: NCTA Workshop: Subtitling 101 (Gabriel Dubois)
NOVEMBER 11	Monterey area meet-up
NOVEMBER 18	Business Practices roundtable in SF (Ferry Building)
DECEMBER 9	NCTA General Meeting

For details and updates, click on the Events tab at www.ncta.org

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