ATA CHRONICLE

September/October 2024 | Vol. 53 No. 5

A Publication of the American Translators Association

Can Someone Please Tell Me to Get to Work?

If you've found yourself putting off the most boring project in the history of project-kind, why not schedule a coworking session? Doing so could be a game changer.

ata American Translators Association

The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

Contents

September/October 2024 • Volume 53, Number 5

Connect with ATA

- www.atanet.org
- www.twitter.com/atanet
- http://bit.ly/ATA-Facebook
- http://bit.ly/ATA-Instagram
- http://bit.ly/ATA-LinkedIn
- http://bit.ly/ChannelATA
- http://bit.ly/ATA-Pinterest

See more from this issue at *www.ata-chronicle.online.*

Features

7

ATA 2024 Elections: Candidate Statements

Calling all Voting members! Participating in ATA's annual elections is your opportunity to help shape the future of the Association. Learn what this year's candidates for ATA's Board of Directors have to say. The Annual Meeting of Voting Members and Elections will be held October 31, 2024.

14

Can Someone Please Tell Me to Get to Work? The Power of Virtual Coworking Sessions

ATA's Business Practices Education Committee has been hosting "Power Hour" coworking sessions since the spring of 2023. Email invites are sent every two months to the Business Practices Community, which any ATA member can join for free. The mutual accountability of these sessions can serve as a powerful source of motivation, allowing linguists to stave off distraction and instead focus on deep (or deeply tedious) work.

16
Be the B: Building a More Sustainable Future through B Certification
Ensuring our future prosperity as language professionals will require us to rethink how we do business. Part of the solution could lie in higher consideration of people and the planet.

19
Reframing What It Means to Mentor: Moving Beyond Traditional Mentoring Methods
This article redefines mentorship within the interpreting community, emphasizing trust, professionalism, and holistic growth, while challenging outdated practices that lead to burnout and disillusionment.

21
Thoughts on Medical Terminology Termbase Mapping and Term Storage
Here's an overview of things to consider when planning termbase mapping and term storage in the corporate context. Read on to learn the common features of termbases and their usefulness for translating medical documents.

24
The State of Standardization and Professionalization of the Vietnamese-Language Industry
This article explores the Vietnamese translation market, both within Vietnam and overseas, particularly in the U.S. It also highlights linguistic and cultural differences between variants of the language, offering insights into their unique potential. Specifically, the Vietnamese market faces significant challenges, including inadequate practical training, lack of certifications, the absence of professional associations, and poor pay rates. By addressing these issues, the article presents actionable recommendations for fostering a more professional and competitive translation industry in Vietnam and other overseas communities, aiming to enhance the quality and recognition of translators in both domestic and international contexts.

Columns

4
From the President

5
From the President-Elect

32
Certification Forum

Make sure to check out the Chronicle-Online website for online extras and bonus features, such as Humor and Translation and important announcements. Visit *www.ata-chronicle.online*!

For submission guidelines, click here.

ata American Translators Association
The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

American Translators Association
211 N. Union Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel: +1-703-683-6100
Fax: +1-703-778-7222
chronicle@atanet.org • www.atanet.org

Editorial Advisory Board
Lois Feuerle, Ben Karl, Geoff Koby, and Barbara Inge Karsch

Publisher/Interim Executive Director
Adrian Aleckna

Editor
Jeff Sanfacon • jeff@atanet.org

Advertising
advertising@atanet.org
Tel: +1-703-683-6100, ext. 3007
Fax: +1-703-778-7222

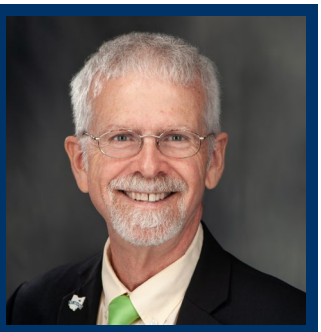
Design & Production
Blue House DC • www.bluehousedc.com

The ATA Chronicle (ISSN 1078-6457) is published six times per year by the American Translators Association, 211 N. Union Street, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA.

The American Translators Association (ATA) was established in 1959 as a not-for-profit professional society to foster and support the professional development of translators and interpreters and to promote the translation and interpreting professions. A subscription to *The ATA Chronicle* is an ATA member benefit. Statements of fact or opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply an opinion on the part of the officers or the members of ATA.

Reprint Permission
Requests for permission to reprint articles should be sent to the editor of *The ATA Chronicle* at jeff@atanet.org.

©2024 American Translators Association



GEOFF KOBY
president@atanet.org

Moving into the Future: Welcome Adrian Aleckna, ATA's New Interim Executive Director!

ATA's officers and Board continuously review a variety of initiatives to make ATA stronger as we move into the future.

There's an old saying, variously attributed, that says that the most dangerous statement is "We've never done it that way before!" This is sometimes taken to mean that if you do the same thing repeatedly, you won't get new results, or conversely, that if you want to get different results, you need to do something you haven't been doing—or you've never done before. In a word, change happens!

One of those changes is in personnel. As was announced in September, Kelli Baxter is no longer the executive director of ATA. The Board of Directors extends its thanks to Kelli for all her work on behalf of the Association.

In September, the Board appointed Adrian Aleckna to serve as ATA's interim executive director. Many of you are already familiar with Adrian through her work at ATA Headquarters as director of professional development and events. Even before she joined the ATA team, Adrian worked with ATA leadership to ensure the success of our annual conferences. Overall, she has worked with ATA for 17 years, with the past seven as an ATA employee. Please join me in welcoming Adrian to her new role!

Rest assured that Adrian and the rest of the team at ATA Headquarters will continue to work during the coming year to make your membership experience the best it can be.

Adrian Aleckna

ATA is moving into a future that is in many ways uncertain. Some of the ways that we've worked in the past might not be the best choices for the future. ATA's officers and Board continuously review a variety of initiatives to make ATA stronger as we move into that future.

As I wrote last month, one of those initiatives is our strategic planning process. Other initiatives include task forces on diversity, on AI, and for our virtual conference project. ATA needs to ensure we have a strong financial basis on which to take action, which means finding new sources of revenue as well as reviewing costs and making sure we're not overspending. For instance, the new database at ATA Headquarters (variously called "the AMS" or "Nimble") has been costly to get started but promises to result in better management of the Association and lower costs down the road.

ATA's officers and the Board look forward to working with Adrian. Her extensive experience in conference planning, as well as over a decade of experience as an assistant executive director of another association, will help take ATA into the future with three key areas of strength: our members, our conference, and our Certification Program. We're confident Adrian will be a positive force for change.

ANDY BENZO
president-elect@atanet.org

ATA65: An Investment in Yourself

When you invest in yourself, you'll get the highest return on investment because it directly enhances your skills, knowledge, and personal growth, all of which have lasting effects on your career and well-being.

In this crucial election year, keep in mind your most important vote. Attending ATA65 means voting for you! When you invest in yourself, you'll get the highest return on investment because it directly enhances your skills, knowledge, and personal growth, all of which have lasting effects on your career and well-being.

Attending ATA's 65th Annual Conference is not just a professional development opportunity; it's a necessity for language professionals who want to stay competitive and thrive in this dynamic environment. Here are some reasons you should attend:

First and Foremost, the Human Aspect: In an era dominated by AI and bots, there's nothing quite like coming together to celebrate our humanity. I've described ATA's Annual Conference as a Disneyland for Linguists. It's the only place where you can meet a thousand people eager to discuss a comma placement or the many nuances of a word for hours. The energy and excitement you feel during the entire conference lasts just long enough until the next one.

We start with the Connect and Celebrate Welcome Reception, a time to meet old friends and make new ones. We follow it with the Keep Connecting and Celebrating with Divisions and Special Interest Groups event, where you can meet the people with whom you've shared many Zoom calls. These events are a chance to mingle and be merry! (For a quick overview of everything ATA65 offers, visit the *"Schedule at a Glance"* page on the conference website.)

Networking: This is absolutely crucial at conferences. In Portland, you'll have numerous opportunities such as Buddies Welcome Newbies, Stronger Together Networking, Brainstorm Networking, and themed tables at breakfast (e.g., ChatLTD "Breakfast Club," Student Breakfast Meetup, Mentors and Mentees, etc.). Seize every opportunity available to network! You'll find the *full list of networking events* on the ATA65 website.

Professional Development: With over 168 hours of professional development, spanning a wide variety of language pairs, specializations, and industry trends, ATA65 promises something for every language professional. We have language- and subject-specific tracks with plenty

Conference Links of Interest

ATA65 Conference Website

ATA65 Schedule at a Glance

ATA65 Conference Sessions and Events
(Full schedule of sessions, searchable by topic, including session abstracts, speaker bios, and event descriptions)

ATA65 Continuing Education Credits

ATA65 Distinguished Speakers

ATA65 Exhibit Hall Information

ATA65 Networking Events

How to Ride TriMet
(Portland's Public Transportation)

Oregon Society of Translators and Interpreters (OSTI)
(ATA's local affiliate)

OSTI Visit Portland During ATA65 Guide

Travel Portland
(Official Tourism Site for Portland, Oregon)

of sessions to interest you. Specialized training in areas such as legal translation, medical interpreting, localization, and literary translation ensures that you can deepen your expertise.

You can build your schedule to prioritize what you want to do. There will be 30- and 60-minute sessions as well as 15-minute ATA Microtalks. Let the *Distinguished Speakers* inspire you, come sharpen your skills by signing up for the *Advanced Skills and Training Day courses* (additional fees apply), and earn *continuing education credits* approved by ATA and various interpreter credentialing organizations. Visit the ATA65 website for a *full schedule of conference sessions and events*.

Stay Tech-Savvy: The rise of AI, MT, and natural language processing tools has significantly impacted the language services industry. While some professionals may feel these technologies pose a threat, they are here to stay and we need to understand how to use them. Technology is a tool, not an end. ATA65 will feature in-depth sessions on how to integrate these technologies into your workflow. You'll gain practical insights on how to make AI work for you, not against you, ensuring that your human skills remain at the forefront of the profession.

Be Resourceful: The *Exhibit Hall* will offer a wide array of new resources and tools for you to explore or expand your knowledge of the ones you already use. Staying informed about the latest developments is crucial for keeping ahead in your field. Also, make sure to visit the *T&I Book Resource Fair*, where you can connect with authors, book translators, podcast hosts, bloggers, and professionals who provide valuable resources and training opportunities.

Advocating for the Profession: Language professionals face increasing pressures to defend the value of their work. With the proliferation of MT and AI tools, clients may undervalue human expertise. ATA65 will include sessions focused on advocacy, raising awareness about the importance of our profession, reinforcing the value of quality over quantity, and, most importantly, ensuring and demanding ethical behaviors.

Remember to Recharge

It's always important to get tips from the locals when visiting a new city. That's why members of ATA's local affiliate, the *Oregon Society of Translators and Interpreters (OSTI)*, have prepared a document with details on how to ensure you have the best experience when visiting Portland. In the *Visit Portland During ATA65 Guide*, you'll find a list of must-visit sites, hidden gems, and local favorites. The guide is divided into sections: Work Hard, Play Harder; Eat Your Way through Portland; Music to Your Ears; A City of Readers and Writers; and Do Some Shopping: Oregon Is a State with No Sales Tax. I want to express my gratitude to all OSTI members and contributors for creating this magnificent guide.

Wrapping Up

As we wrap up another inspiring ATA Annual Conference at the Closing Session, there's only one fitting way to celebrate and unwind: the Dance Away! Join us for an evening of fun, music, and camaraderie as we close out this memorable event. It's the perfect chance to let loose, connect with colleagues in a relaxed setting, and make lasting memories. So, put on your dancing shoes and get ready to end this incredible conference on a high note. See you all in Portland!

ATA 2024 Elections:

Candidate Statements

The Annual Meeting of Voting Members and Elections will be held Thursday, October 31, 2024.

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled elections at the upcoming ATA 65th Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon, October 30–November 2, 2024, to elect the following:

- **PRESIDENT–ELECT (one unexpired position to be filled for a remaining term of one year).**
- **DIRECTOR (three regular positions, each for a three-year term).**
- **DIRECTOR (one unexpired position to be filled for a remaining term of one year).**

President–Elect | Remaining One-Year Term

VIKTORYIA BAUM
vbaum00@gmail.com

I've worked as a translator and interpreter between English, Russian, Polish, Belarusian, and Ukrainian for over 22 years. I've lived in multiple countries and multiple U.S. states, which has helped me understand cultural diversity and shaped me as a professional and a person. For the past three years, I've served on the Leadership Council of ATA's Language Technology Division. I believe in progress and strive to have a forward-thinking approach, welcoming new challenges and learning to navigate them.

I've worked across multiple sectors, including aerospace, government, health care, and the courts. My experience with high-profile organizations such as NASA and the Department of Defense has given me a comprehensive understanding of the varied landscape our profession operates in and cemented my ability to handle complex, high-stakes projects.

I've been at the forefront of technological integration, overseeing office-wide implementations of new CAT tools and staff training in the private and public sectors. I've also been involved in researching and experimenting with generative AI to gain more insights into how we can utilize AI's potential while preserving the irreplaceable value of human translators and interpreters.

If elected, I plan to focus on several areas:

1. **Professional Development and Member Care:** I'll work on expanding training opportunities in areas that complement AI capabilities, such as post-editing, cultural consulting, and specialized subject-matter expertise. I feel there is a strong need to enhance existing

mentorship programs and develop new ones to support all members of ATA, especially those who may be struggling in their day-to-day operations, feeling threatened or intimidated by technology. This mission is critical and will be my key objective.

2. **AI Integration, Education, and Ethics:** We need to maximize outreach to educate members about AI tools and how to incorporate them into workflows to enhance productivity while maintaining quality. We must push for strict guidelines on the ethical use of AI to ensure the highest standards of professionalism.
3. **Certification Standards:** As a certified court interpreter and U.S. Department of State-certified translator, I understand the importance of maintaining high professional standards. I'll work to ensure that ATA continues to be a respected body, adapting our certification processes to reflect the evolving nature of our profession in the age of AI.
4. **Industry Collaboration and Advocacy:** I pledge to continue strengthening partnerships with T&I associations domestically and internationally to share best practices and create a unified approach to address the challenges and opportunities presented by AI, including greater engagement with policymakers and industry leaders so that the role of human translators and interpreters is recognized and valued.
5. **Recruitment and Member Retention:** As an ATA member since 2013, I'm keenly aware that our ranks have been dwindling. Some experienced professionals have left (or are thinking of leaving) the organization, while younger ones have their doubts about its relevancy. I recognize that. Whether you're an existing member, a former member, or are unaffiliated, I want to hear from you. Working together, we can build and reshape ATA to be a better and stronger community.

ANDY BENZO, CT
andy@andybenzo.com

In October 2022, after 23 years as a member and having served in many different volunteer positions, I was elected to ATA's Board of Directors. Your vote of confidence honored me. One month later, on November 30, 2022, ChatGPT, an initial version of artificial intelligence (AI) for mass consumption, was released to the public. I don't have to explain how this was a major disruption to our profession.

In February of this year, we were saddened that our President, Veronika Demichelis, resigned for health reasons. As a result, Geoff Koby became president and I was honored and humbled by the Board's vote to appoint me president-elect. I'm now running to fill the remainder of that term.

I've witnessed firsthand the incredible resilience and strength of our Association—a strength that stems from the passion, dedication, and expertise of each and every one of you.

Throughout my journey with ATA, I've seen our community come together to overcome challenges and seize opportunities with an unwavering commitment to excellence in our craft. Today, as we stand on the brink of a new era shaped by AI and other disruptive technologies, I believe it's more important than ever to harness the collective power of our membership.

Rapid advancements in technology present both challenges and opportunities for our profession. I know we can navigate these changes together, ensuring that our voices are heard and that our skills remain indispensable. I'm committed to fostering an environment where innovation and tradition coexist and where we can continue to elevate our profession while embracing the tools that can enhance our work.

As president-elect, I will focus on:

Empowerment through Education: We need to be masters of our craft to demonstrate that AI is a tool that by itself cannot and should not replace competent professional translators and interpreters. The focus of the next conference will be advanced learning in our languages, subject matters, and technology. It's time to reskill and upskill.

Communication: We need to communicate to stakeholders the risks of using AI without human supervision. ATA translators and interpreters are bound by a code of ethics. We bring to the table accountability, cultural sensitivity, and professional integrity. Human translators and interpreters are ambassadors of cultures.

Community and Collaboration: We need to strengthen the bonds within our ATA community through networking among divisions, holding division meetings, and encouraging collaboration with other associations. This is the time to unite efforts. We are all facing the same issues. Collaboration is crucial because it brings different perspectives.

Our Association is strong because of you—the passionate professionals who are the heart and soul of ATA. Together, we can face any challenge that comes our way and continue to shape the future of our profession with confidence and integrity.

I like to end my talks with an inspirational quote, generally from Dr. Seuss, but this time it's from Stephen Hawking: "Let us work together to make the future a place we want to visit. Be brave, be determined, overcome the odds. It can be done."

I'm grateful and honored to be part of this community and I would be privileged to serve as your president-elect. Thank you for your support.

Director | Three-Year Term

ISABEL ASENSIO

asensio.isabel@gmail.com

I'm sincerely grateful for the opportunity to be considered for a position on ATA's Board of Directors. It would be an honor to serve ATA members in this capacity.

I have a PhD in comparative literature from Vanderbilt University and an MA in audiovisual translation (localization, subtitling, and dubbing) from the University of Cádiz, Spain. As a freelance translator and interpreter and a university professor with over 20 years of experience, I've been deeply involved in promoting language studies and the language services industry. Notably, I served on the Utah Foreign Language Association Board of Directors for over a decade, including two years as president. Additionally, for the past six years I've organized the annual Translation Week at Weber State University, featuring a week-long series of activities, webinars, and roundtables to raise awareness and promote the dynamic fields of translation, interpreting, and localization.

In recent years, I've volunteered for ATA in several roles. As a member of the Audiovisual Division, I serve as the LinkedIn coordinator, helping the division connect with other translators and interpreters and share the latest news. Within the Educators Division, I serve as assistant administrator (2022–2024), collaborating with colleagues to provide support and resources to members. Through these roles, I've learned from working with exceptional colleagues and leveraged my background as an experienced university professor to contribute to discussions and initiatives. I'm eager to bring this perspective to ATA's Board of Directors.

I believe the current Board is doing an excellent job, and, if elected, I aim to contribute to the following areas:

Training and Professional Development Opportunities: Expanding meaningful opportunities for training and professional development will enhance the value of ATA membership and attract new members.

Exposure and Visibility: Raising the profile of our members and Association will bring greater recognition to the fields of translation and interpreting, especially in our rapidly changing world.

Student Outreach: Engaging with high schools, colleges, and universities will attract younger generations to our profession and Association. As a language and translation faculty member, I understand the importance of educating students about the translation and interpreting professions and the skills needed to succeed. This will encourage more individuals to pursue studies in translation and interpreting, securing the future of our profession.

Collaboration and Communication: Fostering collaboration and communication among divisions, their administrators, and assistant administrators will address common concerns effectively.

Leadership Opportunities: Expanding opportunities for members to serve in ATA leadership roles will allow for more diverse perspectives and experiences.

I'm grateful for your consideration and hope to serve as a director, contributing to the continued success and growth of ATA.

JASON JOLLEY

JasonJolley@missouristate.edu

It's an honor to be nominated for a position on ATA's Board of Directors. I would like to share how my background and experience in language education, professional translation, higher education leadership, and nonprofit service have positioned me to give back to an organization that has benefitted me so much over the years.

I define myself as a language educator with a focus on translator training. I've taught Spanish at the university level for over 25 years, developing and teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in translation. As a researcher, I've authored and co-authored several peer-reviewed articles on the intersection of machine translation and language teaching. I've also worked extensively as a Portuguese>English and Spanish>English translator in the investor relations segment. This experience, along with ongoing professional development from ATA and my regional chapter, has helped me understand and respond to the evolving needs of students interested in careers in the language services industry and the dynamics impacting university language and translation programs.

In addition to my language teaching, research, and translation work, I have extensive leadership experience in the higher education and nonprofit areas. As an associate dean and department head at a large public university, I've navigated the complexities of higher education, contributing to strategic initiatives that drive institutional growth. In the nonprofit professional development arena, I've chaired the board of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, served as treasurer and board member of the Mid-America

Chapter of ATA (MICATA), and collaborated with leaders from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. These opportunities have honed my skills in strategic planning, budget management, personnel oversight, and collaborative vision-setting.

My commitment to ATA is underscored by my participation on the Education and Pedagogy Committee, where I've contributed to initiatives aimed at enhancing educational resources and professional development opportunities for translators and interpreters. I've also shared my insights through articles in *The ATA Chronicle* and presentations at the conferences of both ATA and MICATA, emphasizing practical, hands-on approaches to translation education and practice.

If elected to the Board, I would happily serve in any capacity. However, given my experience and background, I would be especially interested in helping to:

- Provide high-quality resources for translation and interpreting educators and students in training programs of all kinds.
- Enhance mutually beneficial connections between ATA and professional associations for language educators.
- Promote ATA-backed research that explores the evolving roles of generative AI and machine translation in the language services industry.

I'm enthusiastic about nurturing the next generation of language services professionals, ensuring they have access to robust professional development and mentorship opportunities. If you agree my experience as a translator, language educator, university administrator, and nonprofit board member would help ATA continue to pursue these and other important goals, I would be most grateful for your vote.

JESSIE LIU
jessieliu28@yahoo.com

This past year serving on the Board has not only provided me with invaluable insights into the inner workings of our leadership and the intricate operations that sustain our Association, but I've also gained a deepened understanding and appreciation for the vision and mission that ATA, as a professional association, tries to achieve in this everchanging T&I landscape. Additionally, my time on the Board has really put in perspective for me the extraordinary commitment and dedication of ATA's volunteer family that our leadership counts on. Before anything else, please allow me the opportunity to express my gratitude to you all.

Last year, my passion for advancing our profession and supporting our members put me here. While that enthusiasm has never been stronger, this past year serving on the Board has inspired me to have specific ideas on translating that passion and support into concrete and tangible benefits for our members.

I continue to actively participate on ATA's Strategy Committee, offering actionable advice to the Board on various critical issues, including ways to approach AI, possible changes to ATA's conference model, and the importance of reaching out to younger members through concrete means. On the Membership Committee front, besides periodically hosting the membership benefits informational session, I'm proud to have been among the contributors behind the guidebook for starting out as an interpreter. I also collaborate with ATA's Education and Pedagogy Committee on two important initiatives: general T&I school outreach and conference-specific outreach.

While we continue to pave our path as empathetic, valuable, and professional human translators and interpreters in a world filled with new technologies springing up like mushrooms after the rain, client education is of paramount importance. The volume of our collective voice has never been in greater need. We can't expect to be valued by the relevant stakeholders unless they first understand the magic we do, whether they be our clients, policymakers, collaborators, etc. We can't expect them to understand the magic we do unless we show them. If elected, client education will be another priority of my work on the Board.

I'm honored to have the opportunity to run for a full three-year term and eager to continue contributing to our collective success, ensuring that our Association remains a vibrant, resourceful, and forward-thinking community. Together, we can build on our achievements and drive our profession toward new heights of excellence and recognition.

Thank you for your support.

MARCELA RENNA, CT
marcelarenna@gmail.com

It's an honor to be nominated to run for a position on ATA's Board of Directors. It would be a distinct privilege to serve ATA's membership in this new capacity.

I'm an ATA-certified English>Spanish translator and a federally and state certified court interpreter. My educational background includes a bachelor's degree in Spanish and English education and a master's degree in education with an emphasis on English-language learners. I worked as an English teacher in

my native Argentina and as a Spanish teacher in a full-immersion program in the U.S. before making the transition to the T&I field. After more than 20 years as a freelance translator and interpreter in the Kansas City, Missouri, area, I currently live in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where I'm employed as a staff interpreter for the U.S. District Court of New Mexico.

As a highly motivated former independent contractor with over 20 years of experience in the T&I fields and currently a part-time freelance translator, I would bring a unique perspective to the discussions. As a fellow entrepreneur who understands their needs firsthand, I would advocate for my peers in all areas of T&I, including health care, law, and education.

During the freelance stage of my career, I served as a board member and president of the Mid-America Chapter of ATA. This experience provided me with direct knowledge of the inner workings of ATA, the needs of its T&I professionals, and the benefits of membership. I also had the opportunity to work with extremely qualified colleagues, learn from their perspectives, and advance the objectives of our local chapter and ATA.

During that time, and as a result of my passion for education and interpreting, I designed a legal interpreting certificate program for a community college in Kansas, where I was one of the instructors for about 10 years. As someone particularly interested in language access and language justice, I was a member of the Language Access Committee for the state of Missouri. More recently, I've become acquainted with, and wholeheartedly embraced, the promotion and understanding of standards, qualifications, and certification requirements for translators and interpreters who work in the educational field. These efforts serve to advance bilingualism, student achievement, and better home-school connections.

In closing, I'd like to add that I understand the unique challenges T&I practitioners face, as well as the pivotal role ATA can play to support and encourage best practices, professional development and training, and strong professional standards. I'm adept at working as part of a team to set and accomplish short- and long-term goals, and, if elected, I look forward to working with fellow ATA Board members representing other languages and regions of the U.S. I would like to ensure that ATA has a seat at the table as our professions undergo increasingly rapid change as we face the challenges that AI and technology bring to our daily work.

Thank you for your consideration! I hope to get your vote and look forward to serving ATA's membership and advancing the T&I professions.

JAIME RUSSELL, CT
russell.jaime@gmail.com

I'm an ATA-certified Spanish>English translator, a certified Spanish health care interpreter (Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters), and a licensed interpreter trainer. I recently launched my own business, Amethyst Language Solutions, LLC, to focus on interpreting, translation, and training. Originally from the Washington, DC, metro area, I lived in Argentina for 15 years (where my T&I experience began) and currently reside outside Raleigh, North Carolina.

I divide my time between freelance work and being the interpreter services education specialist at UNC Health, the largest health care network in North Carolina. At UNC Health, I develop in-house training for staff interpreters, language access education for hospital employees, and language vetting protocols and assessments for providers. In 2023, I presented sessions at the annual conferences of both ATA and the California Healthcare Interpreters Association. I'm preparing to take the North Carolina court interpreter oral exam at the end of 2024, which, hopefully, will serve as the start of my legal interpreting activities. I also spent many years working in nonprofits and philanthropy, so I'm well aware of the ins and outs of that sector.

In terms of my involvement with ATA, I currently serve on the Board of Directors, filling an unexpected vacancy that occurred in February 2024. I also serve on the Finance and Audit Committee (independent from the Board position). I would be honored to be re-elected to my position on the Board, which is why I decided to run for a complete three-year term during this election cycle. I'm already fully committed to the Board activities. It would be a true privilege to continue to be a part of this extremely hard-working, dedicated group, which diligently strives to protect and advance the interests of translators and interpreters.

I'm a member of ATA's Spanish Language Division, Interpreters Division, and Medical Division. I also serve as treasurer on the board of directors of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters, an ATA chapter. I believe strongly in the power of professional associations and know that without people advocating for our professions and carrying out such important work, our professional standing in the sector will suffer, especially in light of recent technological advances.

It's critical that we continue strengthening and broadening the support ATA offers its members and related professionals, as well as increasing the visibility of our professions. ATA truly is

the voice of translators and interpreters, not only in the U.S. but around the world.

In my personal life, I'm a wife, mother of two human children, and chief of staff to one feline diva. I love having breakfast on my patio, and spending an entire day exploring the woods is the closest thing to heaven I can imagine.

YASHA SAEBI

yashasaebi@gmail.com

I'm so honored to be nominated to run for a position on ATA's Board of Directors. If entrusted with this role, serving ATA members and my co-workers would be a privilege.

I've been a freelance certified medical interpreter and translator for 25 years. I have a bachelor's degree in translation, a bachelor's degree in biology, and a master's degree in forensic science. I've also been certified as a health care interpreter (CCHI-P™) by the Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI), and proudly serve as a CCHI commissioner.

As a dedicated language access advocate, I've worked both on-site and remotely as an interpreter, translator, grader, recruiter, and quality assurance specialist. I also have more than 10 years of experience as a health care provider (clinical staff) working directly with patients. Currently, I'm a member of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC), the International Association of Identification (IAI), and serve on the SAFE-AI Next Steps Committee.

I joined ATA in 2014 and have been volunteering and serving in several capacities ever since, including on the Nomination Committees of the Interpreters, Medical, Law, and Science and Technology Divisions. I'm currently a member of the Leadership Councils for ATA's Government and Medical Divisions. I've also been a member of the National Capital Area Translators Association (NCATA), my local ATA chapter in Washington, DC. I've been attending ATA's Annual Conference since I joined (with the exception of the pandemics years).

I had the honor of serving as the administrator of ATA's Medical Division (2019-2023). As the administrator, I successfully organized and oversaw the division's activities and events during each conference and moderated the Medical Division Forum session at the Miami conference. I initiated and promoted the free educational webinars and networking events within the division. Through my leadership, the Leadership Council provided medical translation resources through the division's social media as a way to compile resources for our members, enrich their skills, encourage continuing education, and enhance the culture of excellence.

As a member of the Leadership Council of ATA's Government Division, I promoted and started a free webinar series to help ATA members explore their options within their profession to prepare them to handle the fluctuations in demand that we may face with AI entering our world. I also proposed the first Government Division Forum, which will be presented at ATA65 in Portland. I believe that as an ATA director I can encourage a new generation of freelance translators who are government contractors to join ATA and advance our cause.

The invaluable experience I gained while serving as administrator of ATA's Medical Division has equipped me with a profound understanding of the challenges our members, Leadership Councils, and administrators face. I'll use insider knowledge as my asset to better serve as an ATA director. I aim to leverage this expertise to continue strengthening and broadening ATA's benefits for members, related associations, and other stakeholders. I'm deeply committed to continue working with ATA's leadership to contribute to our continued success. I'll remain dedicated to promoting diversity, transparency, and accountability.

MARIFER SAGER

marifer.sager@gmail.com

Having been a proud member of ATA since 2018, it's an honor to run for a position on the Board of Directors. If elected, I'll focus on strengthening our Association in three key areas: translation and interpreting in K-12 education, advocacy and policy, and enhancing language access and equity.

Growing up in Mexico, I was immersed in an environment that required constant code switching and bicultural negotiation. After emigrating to Canada and the U.S., I began my career in translation in my mid-20s while working full-time in the nonprofit sector. My passion for the field led me to seek additional training and professional development opportunities. In 2017, I joined Portland Public Schools as the head of the Language Access Department and became actively involved with ATA.

Currently, as the director of strategic communications and public affairs for the Multnomah Education Service District (MESD) in Multnomah County, Oregon, I serve as part of the superintendent's cabinet. I also lead the development and implementation of effective multilingual

communications, outreach, and engagement strategies to support the district's strategic plan.

I'm deeply committed to language access and language justice as key components of racial equity in education. I've been recognized nationally for my work and impact in this area, receiving the 2024 Award of Excellence for our MESD branding and the National School Public Relations Association's 2024 Award of Merit-Marketing Material. In 2023, I was shortlisted for the Think Global Awards under the category "Language Industry Person of the Year." I received *EdWeek*'s "Leaders to Learn From in K-12" award in 2022 and the Language Access Visionary Award in 2021.

With a law degree and post-graduate certificate from Mexico and a certificate in brand management from the University of London, I bring a combination of education, passion, and professional experience I believe will benefit ATA and its members. The Association has provided me with a vital sense of community and connection with fellow professionals and I'm eager to contribute to its continued success.

As a Board member, my priorities will include:

Strengthening ATA's Educators Division: Expanding membership and offering more educational and networking opportunities while fostering cooperation and information exchange among members.

Policy Advocacy: Engaging with policymakers to advance legislation that supports language access, justice, and fair practices, especially in light of emerging technologies.

Enhancing Language Access and Equity: Implementing initiatives that ensure equitable language access across fields. This includes developing comprehensive language support resources, promoting multilingual communication, and addressing barriers faced by non-English speakers.

It would be a privilege to represent ATA members on its Board of Directors. Thank you for your consideration.

ROMINA MARAZZATO SPARANO

romina@languagecompass.com

While you may know me as a plain language advocate, my professional journey has taken many twists and turns. (And since you're at ATA, chances are your journey has as well!) I'm running for a director position on ATA's Board to help members like you stay relevant in today's ever-evolving language services landscape through systems, education, and networking.

Whether you're a student, newbie, or experienced professional, I want to help you work smarter, learn better, and network stronger to transition into a new career stage or niche.

How? First, by listening to your needs to guide ATA's resource development. Second, by continuing my work toward professionalization in three areas: credentialing, standards, and legislative action. Third, by fostering a culture of innovation to help you implement evidence-based practices through continuing education on our craft and business, stay abreast of industry trends through expert presentations, and connect with one another through diverse networking opportunities on and offline.

Let me share a bit about myself. My professional journey began in science, transitioned to translation and interpreting, then to medical localization, and is now focused on communication strategies and artificial intelligence (AI). I also layered teaching into my practice, including launching an innovative program at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, co-founding the award-winning multilingual Plain Language Academies, and developing a brand-new AI in Writing program. And I'm constantly learning! Along the way, I got married, had three kids, moved across countries and states, and learned to dance tango!

This experience of growth and rebirth makes me a candidate ready to serve you. I've had to adapt to new environments, find ways to make complex information accessible to diverse audiences, learn and implement new technologies, and synthesize diverse experiences to propel clients, organizations, and my family forward. This is what I want to help you do.

My leadership experience includes serving in various roles at ATA: as a member of the Nominating Committee for ATA's Spanish Language Division, Twitter (X) admin for the Science and Technology Division, and the Basic Credential Committee (ad hoc) and Standards Committee at the association level. I've also served at organizations such as The Institute of Localisation Professionals, ACES: The Society for Editing, Plain Language Association International, and International Plain Language Federation.

I believe systems like standards and legislation are key for professional excellence and growth. I've helped develop language standards at the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and ASTM International. Since participating in Language Advocacy Days before Congress to promote multilingual education, I've continued working with my congressional representative to strengthen language-related laws.

In all these roles, I've served alongside dedicated, talented, and passionate colleagues, agreeing and disagreeing but always listening to each other, learning, and sharing ideas to better serve our communities.

If you choose me as Board director, I aim to serve and support you in an environment of continuous growth to help each other become the best translators and interpreters we can be. Thank you for considering me as your candidate.

The Power of Virtual Coworking Sessions

Can Someone Please Tell Me to Get to Work?

If you've found yourself putting off the most boring project in the history of project-kind, why not schedule a coworking session? Doing so could be a game changer.

By Danielle Maxson and Laurie Bennett

I work in the same space each day, but I'm not always the same person. Some days I enter my home office, smile, and get right to work, rejoicing that I don't have a commute. Other days I huddle in my desk chair, filing papers and doing busy work to avoid the job I just don't want to tackle. On those days, I can admit to myself that I need someone looking over my shoulder and telling me to get to work.

—Business Practices Power Hour attendee

We've all been there: the office is empty except for us, the day's work is not as exciting as we'd like, and the refrigerator full of snacks is temptingly close. Those of us who work from home, as many language professionals do, may have fought boredom and distraction for years with no one around to help. In 2020, the rest of the world joined us as the pandemic shut down businesses everywhere and remote work became commonplace for large groups of people who were used to a company office environment.

Fortunately, as virtual work became the norm, innovative solutions were born along with new routines. One of these solutions is virtual coworking. The concept is simple: two or more people sign into a virtual platform from their own workspaces, wherever they may be. They meet online for a predetermined amount of time to work, independently, on whatever project they choose. There isn't much more to it, but simple as it is, virtual coworking can be a game changer for participants.

This is why ATA's ***Business Practices Education Committee*** has been hosting "Power Hour" coworking sessions since the spring of 2023. Email invites are sent every two months to the ***Business Practices Community***, which any ATA member can join for free.

How Do Virtual Coworking Sessions Work?

We start the meeting with a quick round of introductions, tell our colleagues what task we each plan to tackle, then turn off our microphones and work independently for two 35-minute sessions with a five-minute stretch break in between. To finish off the Power Hour, we briefly check in about our progress and have a quick chat.

Why Attend a Virtual Coworking Session?

The goal of these coworking meetups is twofold, as described by Elizabeth Eckardt, one of our regular attendees:

These sessions are great for boosting productivity, whether you're tackling backburner tasks or working on a translation project. But what I love most about them is the chance to connect with colleagues.

As event organizers, we have also relished this opportunity to regularly check in with fellow translators and interpreters. It's like getting a coffee with a colleague. In fact, for language professionals—especially freelancers—these coworking sessions can serve as an effortless networking tool, a space in which ATA members can meet new colleagues and maintain existing relationships. Boosting productivity at the same time is a bonus for some of us, while for others the dual-purpose sessions are a lifeline.

Studies have repeatedly shown the disadvantages of multitasking, and we all know how easy it can be to become distracted when working alone. Coworking helps participants avoid the disadvantages of multitasking and prevents distraction by providing a structured environment and encouraging *time blocking*. Setting aside a chunk of time to focus on a specific task can boost productivity, and completing that task while on a video call with colleagues provides accountability and lessens the chances you'll get sucked back into your email inbox or wander off for yet another snack.

Coworking can be an especially effective tactic for neurodivergent linguists to maintain focus. People with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often employ the technique of body doubling, which means they have someone nearby while they complete a task. Just being able to see another person in the same space can help control the distractibility people with ADHD must learn to manage. Fortunately, the body double doesn't always need to be in the same room. Many people find a video link works well for them, and *users with ADHD* have welcomed the rise of online coworking platforms.

Of course, you don't need to be neurodivergent to benefit from body doubling or the other features of coworking. Anyone can benefit from knowing that colleagues are working while you are. As Andie Ho, another regular participant, explains:

The Business Practices coworking sessions are an opportunity to force myself to complete tasks that I've been putting off. Being in an online meeting creates just enough peer pressure to keep me focused and prevents me from wandering off to procrastinate yet again.

In short, the mutual accountability of these sessions can serve as a powerful source of motivation, allowing linguists to stave off distraction and instead focus on deep (or deeply tedious) work.

Which Tasks Are Best Suited for a Coworking Session?

Participants have used past meetups to file their dreaded taxes, send reminders for outstanding payments, chip away at a graduate thesis, do a six-month business review, complete online course content, and, of course, translate. If you've found yourself putting off the most boring project in the history of project-kind, why not schedule it for the next coworking session? To access the next Power Hour coworking session, *join the online ATA Business Practices Community*.

A Few More Free Networking and Business Development Tools

In addition to coworking sessions and the online Business Practices Community, the Business Practices Education Committee offers a range of free networking and business development resources for ATA members. This includes the *Mastermind and Mentoring* programs, Virtual Brainstorm Networking sessions, *The Savvy Newcomer* and *Next Level* blogs, as well as *model contracts* for translators and interpreters. We also host an annual in-person Brainstorm Networking session at ATA's Annual Conference. (Brainstorm Networking at *ATA65* will take place on Friday, November 1 from 12:45 p.m.–1:45 p.m. Join us!)

Danielle Maxson has been translating since 2009 and specializes in medical translation with a focus on patient records. She is an ATA-certified Portuguese>English and Spanish>English translator and chair of ATA's Business Practices Education Committee. Before focusing on translation, she worked as a Spanish teacher and medical interpreter. *dmaxson@dmaxsontranslates.com*

Laurie Bennett is a volunteer member of ATA's Business Practices (BP) Education Committee and the host of the BP Power Hour coworking session. She is a French>English translator, certified in Canada, specializing in agriculture, gardening, and action sports. Find her on LinkedIn at *linkedin.com/in/laurie-m-bennett*

BE THE

Building a More Sustainable Future through B Certification

Aligning with the pillars of what it means to be a Certified B Corporation could be part of what ushers language professionals into the future.

By Jeffrey D. Stewart

Today's global landscape is changing before our very eyes. Consequential questions around climate change and human rights, among other contemporary challenges, have become central missions of many initiatives throughout the world. Nowhere are these efforts more urgent than in the world of business, where a historically hallowed devotion to shareholder primacy—that is, maximizing profit for owners, come hell or high water—exposes and only further intensifies the pressing issues of our times. It's time to recognize that people matter, and the well-being of the planet matters. To put it plainly, the blatant disregard of these stakeholder groups in business operations is no longer tenable.

Today, consumers want to patronize companies that align with their values—companies that invest in their local communities and generate positive social and environmental impact through their operations. With shareholder primacy now seen as an untenable option, a different way of doing business has emerged in its place: the decision to use business as a force for good. It's for this reason that Certified B Corporations are considered a trailblazing alternative to shareholder primacy. These companies run a different playbook, one that puts people and the planet on an equal playing field with profit. This playbook is sometimes called "stakeholder capitalism." But what do these shifts mean for the T&I industry?

One of the things on our minds as language professionals is how to build a sustainable future for our careers. The advent of artificial intelligence and the passing of the baton in a globalized race to the bottom on the rates we charge have led some of us to an inflection point in our careers. Will we even have jobs as translators and interpreters in the coming decades? While I don't have a blanket solution to these concerns, what I do have is a proposal that could grant us some assurance about the future.

Building a sustainable future starts with ensuring that there even is a future at all. We have only one planet, and its current inhabitants are packed with potential to preserve it for the coming generations. Building a sustainable future means shifting our mindset and framework for doing business. Certified B Corporations personify the push toward a sustainable future by embarking on a journey of continuous improvement in social and environmental performance to institute economic inclusion and equity. Aligning with the pillars of what it means to be a Certified B Corporation could be part of what ushers language professionals into the future.

What Exactly Is a B Corp? And What's the Other B Corp?

You'll often hear the term "B Corp" used to loosely refer to both a Benefit Corporation (or a Public Benefit Corporation) and a Certified B Corporation. While the "B" in both instances stands for "benefit" (to simplify matters), these two B Corps are not the same.

The first "B Corp," a Benefit Corporation, is a legal structure available in most U.S. states. Think of it as one of the incorporating options available to you, along with the Limited Liability Company (LLC) and the C Corporation, among other forms.

The other "B Corp" is a Certified B Corporation. This B Corp is not a legal status; rather, it's a for-profit entity that adheres to a few key tenets:

- A legal structure or governing mandate that calcifies the company's mission to include generating a positive impact on society and the environment. (For some companies, that could mean converting to a Benefit Corporation.)
- Completion of the ***B Impact Assessment***, a digital tool that can help measure, manage, and improve positive impact performance for the environment, communities, customers, suppliers, employees, and shareholders. Receiving a minimum verified score of 80 points on the assessment is the first step toward B Certification.
- Maintaining a minimum level of performance throughout an in-depth audit conducted in accordance with the standards set by B Lab Global, a nonprofit global network recognized as a leader in economic systems change dedicated to transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet through the creation of standards, policies, and tools for business. As part of this mission, B Lab Global certifies companies as B Corps.
- Commitment to transparency of the company's performance in its B Directory listing. (The B Directory lists all the companies that are certified. You can search by business name, keyword, location, or industry.)

Whether we have our own companies or seek more fulfilling employment, adopting a triple-bottom-line approach to doing business (that is, people, planet, and profit) could be part of how we future-proof our careers and foster abundant longevity.

So, being a B Corp doesn't automatically make you a B Corp. Electing B Corp as a legal status, however, could be part of what's required for your company to effectively become a B Corp. All clear?

But then, how do companies reach and maintain the required level of performance in the B Impact Assessment? This threshold is met by measuring companies' positive impact across five key impact areas. Among the questions addressed in each area are the following:

Governance: What portion of the company's management is evaluated in writing on their performance with regard to corporate, social, and environmental targets?

Workers: What percentage of the company is owned by full-time workers (excluding founders/executives)?

Community: What percentage of management is from underrepresented populations? (This question includes women, minority/previously excluded populations, people with disabilities, and/or people living in low-income communities.)

Environment: Does the company monitor and record its universal waste production?

Customers: How does the company verify its product improves the impact of its client organizations?

This review process really gets under the hood of what companies are doing. That's why it's so relevant for a sustainable future. It fosters a deep dive into how we can better align ourselves with the shifting needs of the 21st century.

Building a sustainable future means shifting our mindset and framework for doing business.

The B Factor of Attraction

With now over 9,000 Certified B Corporations in the world, what's certain is that we're not going back. We can no longer afford business as usual. Certified B Corporations are winning the favor of many stakeholder groups. But don't take my word for it. Let the numbers speak for themselves. According to data analyses conducted by B Lab U.S. & Canada, in comparison to non-certified companies:

- Certified B Corporations are *1.1 times more likely* to pay 100% of their employees a family living wage.
- Certified B Corporations are *2.4 times more likely* to donate more than 1% of top-line revenue to charity.
- Certified B Corporations are *4.5 times more likely* to use 100% renewable energy.
- Certified B Corporations are *4.2 times more likely* to have supplier diversity policies or programs that give preference to suppliers with ownership from underrecognized populations.

The Certified B Corporation intellectual property (that "B" you see on many a product pack) has also proven to be a differentiating factor. B Lab U.S. & Canada further reports that, for medium-sized Certified B Corporations in the food industry, 80% of potential customers affirm that B Certification is a strong deciding factor in their purchasing decision.

The Relevance of Certified B Corporations for Language Professionals

As entities and individuals that are for-profit, it's important to maintain good financial health to remain viable. After all, financial viability is what allows us to generate positive social and environmental impact in the world. Whether we have our own companies or seek more fulfilling employment, adopting a triple-bottom-line approach to doing business (that is, people, planet, and profit) could be part of how we future-proof our careers and foster abundant longevity.

Certified B Corporations are bound by a *Declaration of Interdependence*, meaning that only through reliance on each other can scalable transformation occur. As such, Certified B Corporations have a heightened enthusiasm to work with each other and with values-aligned, mission-driven companies in general. This element is most salient when it comes to vendor relationships, because part of being a Certified B Corporation means rethinking the supply chain. Being able to recognize the "B" logo may direct the attention of language professionals everywhere to certain partnership possibilities they know will benefit the world.

Strengthening the alignment of language use will also be essential as the B Impact Assessment becomes more refined and malleable across different markets and cultures. As translators and interpreters, we have a unique value to offer in this area. The B Impact Assessment was created in English, with versions currently available in French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. Achieving a more sustainable future means having buy-in and participation beyond the Romance family of languages. And it doesn't stop there. Not only is it vital to expand language availability, but it must be accompanied by accurate cultural context. Part of this movement's growth potential lies in making the B Impact Assessment and its standards more accessible on these fronts. With greater access comes more conversations, and more conversations beget more collaboration among nations and cultures. It's at these junctures that language professionals are in their prime.

What began as a single spark in 2007 has since ignited a brilliant fire of creativity and sustainability development. Yet, from a general awareness angle, Certified B Corporations have flown somewhat under the radar throughout the years. One thing for language professionals to consider in building a more sustainable future is how we show up. Shifting our mindset to contemplate the benefit of a wider group of stakeholders will be paramount in those considerations. ATA

Jeffrey D. Stewart, CT joined ATA in 2020 and has never looked back. As an ATA-certified Portuguese>English translator who also works from Arabic into English, he founded Enharmonic Encounters LLC in 2021, a Certified B Corporation. In tandem with his sustainability research as a Global Reporting Initiative-certified sustainability professional, his consulting expertise covers the entire B Certification review process, having personally conferred B Certification to hundreds of companies as an analyst at B Lab. He currently serves as a member of ATA's Ethics Committee and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging (DEIAB) Task Force, as well as blog administrator of ATA's Portuguese Language Division. *jeffrey.ds@enharmonicenc.com*

Reframing What It Means to Mentor:

Moving Beyond Traditional Mentoring Methods

What if we could reimagine mentorship and harness its transformative power to create a stronger, more supportive community?

By Shawn Norris

Throughout our lives, we encounter individuals who, knowingly or unknowingly, shape our perspectives and behaviors. These mentors, often unsung, wield significant influence over us. One's upbringing, for example, is peppered with moments where a parent's gait, unbeknownst to us, becomes our own. This mimetic learning, often overshadowing formal instruction, emphasizes the vast sea of influence surrounding us. But what if we could reimagine mentorship and harness its transformative power to create a stronger, more supportive community?

To do that, we first need to address a more unsettling aspect of mentorship. Within the American Sign Language interpreting community exists a concerning sentiment: We eat our young. While this might not be exclusive to our field, the fallout is undeniable. Alarmingly high burnout rates. Professionals, still standing, bearing the scars of trauma or disillusionment.

There's a misplaced belief that by relentlessly grinding down newcomers, they emerge resilient and more adept. It's likened to the transformative process of river stones, evolving from jagged rocks to smooth pebbles. But what if the process is so aggressive that instead of polished stones, all that remains is fragmented sand at the river's base? There's a blurry line between honing and debilitating.

Such treatment isn't mentorship; it's outright abuse—a manifestation of toxic and manipulative horizontal violence. Erroneous justification for this behavior often stems from inadequate training, misguided precedents, or flawed rationale such as, "This approach builds resilience," or "It expedites learning." Let's clarify: Being direct is not synonymous with being harsh. Sadly, I've witnessed instances where the mentor-mentee dynamic spirals into a distasteful act of domination, driven by misplaced authority. This is unacceptable.

Alliant

The More Rewarding Way to Manage Risk

Professional Liability Insurance

Designed Specifically for Translators and Interpreters

ATA MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

Professional Liability (E&O)
General Liability
Cyber Liability

SCAN HERE FOR

YOUR FREE QUOTE

alliant.com/ata | 1-855-663-2282

CA License No. 0C36861
© 2023 Alliant Insurance Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

So, How Should Effective Mentorship Manifest?

The foundation lies in exemplifying professionalism, which is about effort and genuine concern, not just mastering every intricacy. We need to emphasize both soft and hard skills.

Build and sustain trust. By actively listening, consistently engaging, and understanding their aspirations, you can truly guide mentees.

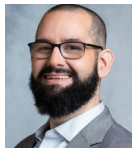
Show, don't just tell. Provide rationale for your approaches. Encourage mentees to grapple with challenges, stepping in sparingly, just enough to maintain momentum. Think of interpreting as a muscle, honed by consistent, real-world practice.

Regular dialogues are crucial. Choose conducive environments for feedback, like a relaxed café setting. Delve into a mentee's reflection and foster introspection. Ask questions like, "How do you think you did?" and "What do you think you could have done better?" Celebrate their achievements before offering constructive criticism to promote growth without denting confidence.

While the idea of mentorship might seem daunting to some—fearing inexperience or lack of time—it's imperative to realize that mentorship isn't just academia's responsibility. If we recognize a dearth of language services professionals, by extension, there's a mentorship deficit. Overcoming this requires cultivating a "mentoring spirit."

Think holistically. Throughout life, mentors arise, guiding us in various spheres, not just professionally. It's the same in language services. Leverage different expertise, from business acumen to linguistics. Share your strengths, be it impeccable organization or niche knowledge. A brief chat, a forum post, or sharing experiences can be invaluable. The joy you derive from helping others is an unmatched reward.

Embodying the mentoring spirit means proactively uplifting others, sharing experiences, and perpetuating growth. Let's redefine mentorship, challenging archaic practices and embracing a holistic, everyday approach. It's about being more than just mentors; it's about personifying the very essence of mentorship.



Shawn Norris is an experienced language access leader, holding key roles such as president of the Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and commissioner for the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters. Raised by Deaf parents, he's a passionate advocate for the Deaf community with over a decade of experience in the interpreting field. He founded a local agency in Jacksonville, Florida, enhancing language accessibility, and is now the chief operating officer of AI Deaf, focusing on advancing video remote interpreting services. He's also developing Hello Interpreters, an online community for language professionals. *shawn@hellointerpreters.com*

Thoughts on MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

Termbase Mapping and Term Storage

By Marion Lemari

If done right, a properly designed termbase can be quite a powerful tool that goes way beyond what a simple bilingual glossary can do!

Have you ever tried to translate a medical report that includes handwritten notes by a doctor? If so, you may have already experienced what it means when you have the fear of the translation god put into you! Ultimately, patient records translation is a world where precision meets chaos and ancient wisdom finds its way into modern technology!

Medical translations generally require understanding contextual clues and working out abbreviations and acronyms or even just barely minimal codes from official classification and nomenclature systems or healthcare software. It's a world of prefixes and suffixes, of eponyms and toponyms, and the result of a constant flow of re-translations or back translations over the course of centuries.

Therefore, medical termbases (and really termbases for any technical subject!) must provide options for terminologists to handle the semantic features of a vast amount of challenging terms for optimal organization and retrieval later on.

It's not surprising, then, that termbase users and creators, such as language service providers and translators, understand what a difference a well-constructed termbase can make when it comes to consistency, accuracy, and overall translation quality. They also know how complicated terminology work can get or how quickly termbase management can become a significant project on its own, requiring additional resources and expertise.

Then, there's always the human factor that determines how terms are collected, stored, and used. Many, if not most, translators are not trained terminologists and use an ad hoc approach when collecting, storing, and managing terms. This can result in vague or confusing entries or inconsistent approaches, especially when multiple users are involved in the term recording process.

If done right, however, a properly designed termbase can be quite a powerful tool that goes way beyond what a simple bilingual glossary can do! Using medical translation projects as an example, a correctly thought-out termbase makes the process of translating medical documents, with their many acronyms, abbreviations, complex terms, and established phrases, a lot easier, especially when the source texts include content from different medical specialties, which is often the case with patient medical records.

Creating Termbases: Getting Started!

A good starting point when thinking about term storage and termbase mapping (termbase setup) is how the termbase can be included in existing processes and systems and during the translation and review steps. An evaluation of the systems and processes currently in place and what different CAT tool providers have to offer are two out of many options to consider. (Note that this article refers to termbases that can be integrated into CAT tools and translation processes and not necessarily standalone terminology management products).

Patient records translation is a world where precision meets chaos and ancient wisdom finds its way into modern technology!

An internal server-based solution, for example, may require the assistance of IT staff while file-based or cloud-based termbases from CAT tool providers may come as ready-to-use solutions and even include predefined termbase templates that can be customized as needed. Some CAT tool providers even specialize in offering customized solutions based on a company's linguistic needs. These solutions only serve a very specific purpose.

Aside from any technical aspects and what languages to include, the time and effort it takes to manage a termbase may also be an important factor to consider along with what type of term information to record to achieve consistency throughout the termbase entries. This is especially true if multiple terminologists manage the termbase and make changes to the entries on a more regular basis when new information becomes available.

Termbase Structure

In its simplest form, a bilingual glossary includes a source term and a target term in alphabetical order and maybe a few notes on usage. While helpful, this format doesn't provide the full picture. On the other hand, termbases, which often have a multi-level "tree-like" structure, can provide so much more information that can aid in selecting the correct terms for a specific context.

CAT tool termbase templates may seem overly complex to new users. As such, these users may not realize that guidelines established by reputable organizations around the world have found their way into these templates since terminology as a science (and an art!) offers many theoretical and practical approaches and solutions.

Terminology work in its most basic form includes the identification of terms in context, but this can mean different things to different people, not only for terminology research but also for recording terms in a termbase.

One common termbase structure, the default structure in Trados Studio, for example, includes an *entry level*, an *index level*, and a *term level*. All these levels allow for various additional descriptive fields that can be useful not only for a translation-oriented termbase intended to guide and assist the translator in the translation process by providing information on a term's meaning and usage, but also for additional review and verification steps. A well-planned termbase can reduce terminology errors and ensure consistency.

Termbase Entry Level: At the entry level, most termbase templates include an entry identifier, a field to specify the subject area, and options such as the term's source, the term's status, and a notes field in the event it becomes necessary to provide additional information about the concept at hand at the entry level (e.g., for other users).

In general, a termbase creator can choose between different descriptive field options, such as picklists, text fields, number fields, calendar features, Boolean parameters, and so on, for various fields at all termbase levels.

In addition to following a concept-based approach at the entry level, in an online or server-based termbase this section can also serve as an opportunity for effective communication not only with the translators through clearly establishing the relationship between terms and a concept based on the medical specialty, but also with other stakeholders who may assist with the recording of terms. By default, templates may have a notes field or another way of leaving comments, but thinking about additional fields that can be used solely to communicate with other parties can streamline terminology work and bridge time zone and location differences.

A term status field, for example, allows for the creation of filters. This can be helpful for filtering terms that need to be reviewed by a second terminologist, for example. Other useful options can include time stamps that clearly show at a glance when a term was last updated. Sometimes, certain metadata is recorded automatically for retrieval later on, but in other instances, it makes sense to adjust basic formats according to one's more immediate needs, such as clearly highlighting who has made changes to an existing term entry.

Concept Fields at the Entry Level: Concept fields, such as definitions or concept notes, can either be included at the entry level or at the index or language level depending

on the complexity of the termbase and the number of languages used. For a medical termbase, specifying the medical specialty and even the subspecialty should always be part of the entry level.

Index or Language Level: The index or language level displays the languages of a termbase through the language identifier. At this level, context information, such as a broad definition of the concept at hand, images, links, etc., highlighting information relevant for all languages can be included.

Sometimes, this level also includes notes pertaining to situations where more or less distinctions between sets of unique characteristics for a concept need to be made in a termbase, such as a particular note about a local health issue. Highlighting differences at this level is also useful for cultural concepts, for example, although more specific distinctions are usually made at the term level.

Term Level: At the term level, termbases include the option to add the terms in the languages specified at the index or language level.

For medical purposes, the entries at the term level can include multiple terms that apply to the same concept (e.g., medical abbreviations or expansions and even codes).

Now, there may be instances where it makes sense to add a source term but not a translation. For medical terminology, this may include certain general elements of medical terminology, such as Latin and Greek prefixes or suffixes and their translations in a definition field rather than in the target-language term record. This means they can be referenced through the termbase's search field but won't necessarily show up in the term recognition or during verification steps. Adding terms without translation can aid the translator in getting a general idea about what a term could mean that consists of a prefix, suffix, and their combining term.

Medical termbases (and really termbases for any technical subject!) must provide options for the terminologists to handle the semantic features of a vast amount of challenging terms for optimal organization and retrieval later on.

At the term level, we usually find more definition and context fields to assist in describing semantic features. These are of particular importance with concept characteristics that apply only to one of the languages used in the termbase but not to others. An example would be a term that exists as a generic or broad idea (hypernym) in one language but requires more distinctions in another (hyponyms). Contextual information can include a noun's gender or notes on usage, common collocations, or even further definitions if needed. Synonyms are added as well, although in a medical context, translators tend to deal more with terms of partial equivalence and their correct usage (quasi- and pseudo-synonyms). Other than that, the entries can consist of simple terms, complex terms, and even entire phrases.

Effective Planning = An Effective Outcome

My approaches on termbase mapping and storage are just suggestions based on my experience in the language service provider setting that includes large volumes of medical translations. Every project is different, and the beauty of a termbase with this type of structure is that it can be customized to get the best results regardless of the subject! As a final thought, I want to highlight that it's always advisable to refer to existing standards and publications that provide a more systemic description and best practices for terminology research and term storage solutions to ensure translation quality, consistency, and accuracy.

In summary, the effective planning of termbase storage and mapping can improve translation outcomes and ensure better patient care or better communication between healthcare professionals while also facilitating communication and collaboration between terminologists and the termbase end users (translators!).

Finally, reviewing all the options available for termbase mapping and storage should include considerations regarding the integration of termbases into existing systems, potential future trends, such as planned upgrades of systems, the human factor, and overall, how collaborators work together. In addition, a well-planned termbase may allow for the optimization of internal processes, compliance, transparency, and accountability.

Marion Lemari is a German-language quality lead for The Language Doctors, a language service provider specializing in medical translations and patient records. In her role, she develops quality plans according to client requirements and implements improvement strategies for systems, processes, and people. This includes conducting quality assessments, creating training materials, and providing feedback to vendors. She is also responsible for termbase and translation memory management and adjusting processes throughout different departments if needed. She has an MA in translation and interpreting from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. She previously served as the director of communications for the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA), an ATA affiliate. *marion.lemari@gmail.com*

The State of Standardization and Professionalization of the VIETNAMESE-LANGUAGE INDUSTRY

Overall, there's still much work to be done in terms of building a professional infrastructure that will make a significant difference in the Vietnamese-language markets in Vietnam and overseas.

By Lan Bao Hoang

Vietnamese, the name of a language and ethnicity that has historic connections with the U.S., is spoken by about one hundred million Vietnamese people living in Vietnam and by approximately five million people living abroad. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the Vietnamese American population in 2024 is around 2,347,344[1], which means that Vietnamese Americans make up almost half the total global population[2] of Vietnamese living overseas.

Coming from different waves of immigration, older generations of Vietnamese Americans tend to have a lower level of education and language proficiency than the overall Asian American population. Literacy and education levels are generally better among the younger generation of U.S-born Vietnamese Americans, but almost two-thirds of foreign-born Vietnamese Americans (who became U.S citizens due to their direct relationship with Vietnamese American citizens) are still not proficient in English.[3] Together with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on national origin, and Executive Order 13166 in 2000, which affirms Title VI's meaningful language access requirement, the Vietnamese market in the U.S. has a lot of potential due to the large population of Vietnamese Americans in need of language services, which probably explains why Vietnamese-language services are increasingly in demand.

Market awareness is key when defining realistic expectations in the design of translated and localized services and products. Companies producing and organizations purchasing Vietnamese-language services need to be aware of the historical context for these services and the differences between the domestic market in Vietnam and markets overseas. This article will provide an introduction to the Vietnamese translation markets inside and outside Vietnam. Project managers and vendor managers who understand how the Vietnamese language has evolved can more accurately determine the variant that is most appropriate for a specific region and chose the most appropriate translators and interpreters for the job.

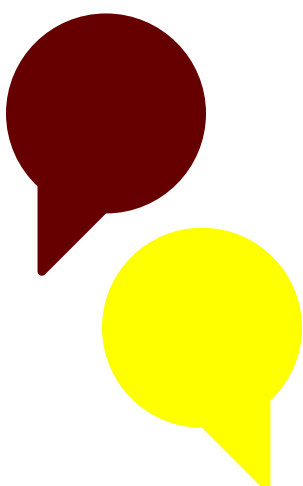
This article will also summarize some key differences between the Vietnamese variant currently used in Vietnam and the variant used in many diasporas, including the U.S., that translators, project managers, vendor managers, and companies should know about. When recruiting, training, and assigning projects and evaluating the practitioners who provide translation and interpreting services, managers need to be aware of the landscape for professional and academic training in Vietnamese. The following addresses the progress and challenges and solutions to the standardization of this underdeveloped market.

The Vietnamese-Language Services Markets Inside and Outside Vietnam

The Vietnamese market can be divided into the market in Vietnam and the overseas markets in the U.S., Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The U.S market is the largest overseas market. War officially ended in Vietnam in 1979, and the country opened its borders in 1986. This means that Vietnam's language industry is young. However, over the past 20 years, the worldwide translation market has grown tremendously. In Vietnam, economic integration and international cooperation have brought many business opportunities for companies and businesses. Strong growth in publications, goods, services, as well as business deals with foreign countries in general, have further spurred the growth of the Vietnamese translation market. According to average estimates, the value of Vietnam's language services market could reach almost one billion USD if it achieves its full potential and is standardized properly.[4]

Vietnam has become a dynamic and friendly player in terms of financial and business development due to the economic reforms adopted in 1986.[5] This environment has led to an increasing demand for translation and interpreting (T&I) services, mainly from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), companies, and governments that want to connect with and do business in Vietnam. The current capital of Hanoi and the past capital of Saigon (now officially referred to as Ho Chi Minh City) are especially active submarkets for language services. While the number of Vietnamese people in English-speaking countries like the U.S., Australia, Canada, and New Zealand has increased since 1975, most people of the first generations of Vietnamese diaspora have limited English language proficiency. As such, T&I services for these Vietnamese communities tends to be conducted primarily within the subject areas of civil and criminal law, health care, law enforcement, and immigration due to the historical events of these nations and the requests for language services made by governmental entities for events and informational content to the general public.

Generally, the Vietnamese T&I market in Vietnam is more extensive in quantity, but professionalization, standards, and regulations are lacking. Translations originating from this market are sometimes of poorer quality. Also, translators originating from Vietnam tend to be paid much lower rates. Freelancing rates are significantly lower than that of the Vietnamese markets overseas.[6] Except for the projects affiliated with the government, ministries and departments of foreign affairs, and NGOs, the majority of projects paid at higher rates are managed by foreign companies. The reasons for this include the lack of professionalization among Vietnamese translators and interpreters, the lack of professional



Several efforts have been made to support a standardized Vietnamese-language services market, both academically and professionally, within and outside Vietnam.

associations, and the lack of governmental regulations.[7] The Vietnamese government has not yet established a T&I organization with the authority to standardize rates, requirements around qualifications, and many other issues. In Vietnam, negative societal attitudes also adversely impact professionalization.

Some domestic and international customers are attracted to work within Vietnam because of the so-called affordable (i.e., cheaper) T&I services available there. For these entities, calls for the need to standardize the Vietnamese language are construed as exaggeration. Translation is understood as a bureaucratic step from an administrative perspective. In contrast, many competent translators are unaware of the international rates for their services and often offer substantially below-market rates, which contributes to confusion among customers.

The case is different for the Vietnamese markets overseas. Here, the foundations for language services are stronger, thanks to professional societies, including ATA in the U.S., the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI), the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIoL) in the U.K., and the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAAIT) in Australia, along with government regulations with stricter and clearer requirements for the T&I professions. Within the overseas markets, projects are paid at better rates and accredited certificates and credentialed academic and professional programs exist. However, the Vietnamese variant spoken in these overseas markets differs greatly from the one spoken in Vietnam. Due to the differences between dialects, the relationship between T&I professionals in Vietnam and those of Vietnamese diasporas is often critical. The lack of unity between T&I professionals in the domestic and overseas markets is further problematized by the lack of certifications and credentials specific to the language pair. The lack of official Vietnamese certifications has also contributed to a weaker basis for negotiating rates in cases requiring stricter requirements.

Language Evolution: Vietnamese Variants and Appropriateness

Vietnamese has two major variants: the Vietnamese spoken in Vietnam and the Vietnamese spoken by diaspora populations, primarily in the U.S. The development of these two variants is tied to legacies of colonialism and war. Vietnamese was historically written using the Nôm Script, a logographic system that used Chinese characters to represent Sino-Vietnamese (Chinese-Vietnamese) vocabulary and some native Vietnamese words, together with many locally-invented characters to designate other concepts.[8] At the time the Nôm script was used, it was customary for only the educated and elite to be literate. The French colonial rule of Vietnam from the 19th century to just before 1945 led to the official adoption of the Vietnamese alphabet, which is based on the Latin script. Because of this, Vietnamese became a language with a Chinese structure and vocabulary but with a Latin pronunciation and writing system.[9]

During the Vietnam War (1954 to 1975), "pure Vietnamese" (non-Sino-Vietnamese) was adopted in the North so that the government could teach "simplified" Vietnamese to the people there, the majority of whom were illiterate. In the meantime, people kept the same Sino-Vietnamese vocabulary they had used before 1945 with the Latin script in South Vietnam.[10] After the fall of Saigon in 1975, differences formed and developed between the way the Vietnamese language was used by "Southern Vietnamese," the Vietnamese migrants and refugees in the U.S., Australia, Canada, and older generations in New Zealand, and the way the language has come to be used in present-day Vietnam under a communist administration. Under this administration, the Northern Vietnamese dialect is considered the standard dialect.

Table 1: Comparison of present-day Vietnamese spoken in Vietnam and the Southern Vietnamese spoken by diaspora communities in the U.S., Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (Note: The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcription of the word is provided after the dash.)

	English Equivalent	Present-Day Vietnamese Pronunciation	Pre-1975 Southern Vietnamese Pronunciation	Chinese Pronunciation of Southern Vietnamese in Pinyin
Vocabulary	Airport	Sân bay–ʂəŋˀˀ ɓajˀˀ	Phi trường–Jichǎng	飛機場–Fēijī chǎng
	Year	Năm–Năm	Niên–Nien	年–Nián
	Amendment	Bản sửa đổi–Ban ʂɯa doi	Tu chánh án–Tuchinh àn	修正案–Xiūzhèng àn
Names from Foreign Languages	New Zealand	New Zealand–New Zealand	Tân Tây Lan–Tántàilán	紐西蘭–Xīnxīlán
	Afghanistan	Afghanistan–æfˈgænɪstæn	A Phú Hãn–Āfúhãn	阿富汗–Āfùhàn
Grammatical Phrase Structures	White House	Nhà Trắng (House White–Nhà: House, Trắng: White)	Bạch Ốc (White House–Bạch: White, Ốc: Building/House)	Báigòng (Bái: White, gòng: Building/House)
	National Memorial Hall	Đài tưởng niệm quốc gia (Hall Memorial National–Đài: Hall, Memorial: Tưởng niệm, National: quốc gia)	Quốc lập kỷ niệm đường (National Memorial Hall–National: Quốc lập, Memorial: Kỉ niệm, Đường: Hall)	Guójiā jìniànguǎn (National Memorial Hall–Guójiā: National, jìnián: Memorial, guǎn: Hall)

Vietnamese as it's spoken in the now-unified-geographically country of Vietnam includes much less Sino vocabulary and has new grammatical structures, while the South Vietnamese spoken by Vietnamese migrants and refugees abroad uses much more Sino-Vietnamese vocabulary and grammatical structures.[11] Many people in the U.S. still use the South Vietnamese variant, including its pronunciation. The differences between present-day Vietnamese spoken in Vietnam and the South Vietnamese spoken by diaspora communities are mainly centered around the use of Sino-Vietnamese vocabulary, the transliteration of names from foreign languages, and grammatical phrase structures. These differences are illustrated in Table 1.

From Table 1, we can see that present-day Vietnamese is less similar to Chinese in terms of vocabulary, the way foreign countries and places are named, and grammatical structures, while

the pre-1975 Vietnamese is more similar to Chinese in terms of its vocabulary, the transliterations of foreign-language names, countries, places, etc., and grammatical structures. (See the IPA transcriptions after the dashes in the table.) The pronunciation of words in the pre-1975 Vietnamese (U.S version) is very similar to that of Chinese while the modern one is less so or not at all.

If you weren't previously aware of these differences between variants of the Vietnamese language, you probably are beginning to understand why defining the audience and selecting the appropriate translator or interpreter to perform Vietnamese-language services is so important. For example, translation, interpreting, and localization specifications for Southern Vietnamese will ideally not only name one of two variants but also include the intended region (e.g., U.S., Australia, Canada, New Zealand). As mentioned in the introduction to this article, New Zealand and the U.K. tend to have younger generations of Vietnamese speakers, while older generations tend to be found in the U.S. and Australia. Therefore, the specific audience will also influence the appropriate level of formality provided by any Southern Vietnamese-language services.

Approaches to Translation and Interpreting: Challenges and Achievements

Several efforts have been made to support a standardized Vietnamese-language services market, both academically and professionally, within and outside the country. In the domestic market, conferences and seminars on T&I are being hosted by universities, organizations, companies, and even individuals more regularly. These efforts have significantly raised awareness of the importance of language services among the general public in Vietnam, including future (student) translators and interpreters. For example:

- As national universities have organized seminars and conferences on linguistics, some have added T&I to the agenda, or at least introduced T&I into the topics of discussion.
- Many professional seminars and conferences on T&I have also been organized by companies and foundations to bring attention to the quality of T&I.
- Third, private centers for T&I training now exist for the purpose of educating new and junior translators and interpreters.

As for the markets overseas, the Vietnamese-language market now has a better position in Australia and the U.S., where there are official trainers for interpreters and translators from accredited training centers and organizations. Vietnamese T&I programs are now available in Australia and New Zealand. In the U.S., Vietnamese T&I professionals can also participate in language-neutral academic programs. In the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand, the requirements to be a T&I professional also demand professional training and often certification, which

leads to a higher level of ethical awareness and the best translation and interpreting services for all stakeholders.

Despite such efforts, there are still many gaps to overcome. In the Vietnamese market specifically, while it's a positive development that educational programming now includes topics on T&I, many of those lecturing on these topics in Vietnam are not professional translators or interpreters, nor have they worked in the T&I industry. On the surface, it also seems to be a positive sign that some T&I training centers have been established, but the courses they offer are entry-level and participants are awarded non-accredited certificates. Some criticize these courses for their fluff and the lack of depth of the programming. Most importantly, while most of Vietnam's current programs, seminars, and conferences are academic and theoretical, they lack the practical instruction needed (e.g., panel discussions, training, or webinars on business practices in the T&I industry, financial practices for translators and interpreters, CAT tools, and client negotiations) to standardize linguistic requirements and translation quality.

The outlook is better for the Vietnamese markets outside Vietnam, although a community of professionals still needs to be brought together there as well. Many Vietnamese translators and interpreters working overseas are bilinguals who have not been formerly trained due to a lack of standards and credentialed training programs. While efforts to establish informal groups of T&I professionals for the purpose of sharing knowledge and building community are underway, the overseas markets still lack a formal organization through which professionals can represent themselves in the industry. These are indirect actions in the establishment of a standardized market and the creation of credential programs and training opportunities for Vietnamese translators and interpreters. Overall, there is still much work to be done in terms of building a professional infrastructure that will make a significant difference in the Vietnamese-language markets in Vietnam and overseas.

While it's a positive development that educational programming now includes topics on T&I, many of those lecturing on these topics in Vietnam are not professional translators or interpreters, nor have they worked in the T&I industry.

Further developments should be centered on the need for unity. First, professionals in Vietnam and overseas should unite to create a Vietnamese T&I organization with a base within and the support of existing international organizations such as ATA, NAAIT, CIoL, or NZSTI. Second, professional and academic training offerings should be unified in the incorporation of opportunities to learn practical skills. From a very big-picture perspective, Vietnamese T&I programs need to be developed at all levels, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies. Third, we need to be united in saying "no" to unacceptably low rates, which requires us to have an awareness of what different Vietnamese markets are facing within the larger industry. This requires that rather than thinking of the current Vietnamese markets as being in opposition, we shift to viewing all Vietnamese variants as part of one language family deserving of respect and an open mind. Finally, we need to unite in a call for the Vietnamese government to establish an organization for T&I professionals in Vietnam.

As for ATA, it would be great if members could work together with the Certification Committee to establish a certification exam for the English>Vietnamese language pair. In the U.S., Vietnamese-language professionals can only take the medical interpreter or the court interpreter certification exams at the federal and state levels. There is no written translation certification exam for professional Vietnamese translators in the U.S. In a wider context, only NAATI at the national level, or some provinces of Canada at the provincial level, have English>Vietnamese

The Vietnamese government has not yet established a T&I organization with the authority to standardize rates, requirements around qualifications, and many other issues.

translator certifications. Therefore, ATA has an opportunity to support existing and potential ATA members in the English>Vietnamese language pair from the domestic Vietnamese market and the markets overseas.

Patience Comes with a Big Payoff

When working toward the goals of professionalization and standardization, we need to remember that Rome wasn't built in a day. Such goals include:

- Establishing uniform quality standards.
- Increasing credibility and trust.
- Improving accountability.
- Ensuring fair compensation.
- Fostering collaboration and networking.
- Protecting clients and practitioners.
- Enhancing career development.

Long-term goals need to be identified and broken down into achievable steps that are carried out according to clear timelines. Such goals include:

- Global recognition of professional standards.
- Universal adoption of certification systems.
- Integration of advanced technologies.
- Sustainable career growth.
- Widespread industry regulation.
- Establishment of ethical frameworks.
- Strengthened collaboration between industries.
- Elevating the profession's visibility.

That underdeveloped markets need time to establish themselves is normal and requires patience as we work toward addressing big issues. It's important to recognize that these efforts benefit everyone's business. For practitioners, it means higher credibility, better career opportunities, and fair compensation. For companies, standardized practices lead to greater efficiency, streamlined workflows, and improved service offerings. For clients, it guarantees consistent quality, trust in the services provided, and transparent pricing, all of which will lead to better outcomes and stronger relationships. In some cases where the language might have several variants, as is the case with Vietnamese, professionalization and standardization will help translators/interpreters and companies avoid critical mistakes when it comes to satisfying their clients' actual requirements and expectations. For clients, professionalization and standardization will help them find the right practitioner(s) with standardized rates, qualifications, and specialized knowledge. It will also provide peace of mind, which benefits everyone's bottom line.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Alaina Brandt, Tram Bui, and Andie Benzo for editing this article.

NOTES

1. "American FactFinder—Results" on Factfinder.census.gov (U.S. Census Bureau, Archived from the original on September 21, 2024).
2. Vietnamese Diaspora: Total Population, Wikipedia.
3. Badalona, Jeanne and Hataipreuk Rkasnuam. "Vietnamese Immigrants in the United States in 2012," migrationpolicy.org (August 22, 2014).
4. Hiep, Pham. "An Investigation into Resources for Teaching Translation at a University of Foreign Languages," *Journal of Inquiry into Languages and Cultures*, Volume 1, Issue 2 (Hue University, 2017), 39–46.
5. The Trieu, Ngo. "Vietnam's 30 Years of Renovation Policy Spur Economic and Market Growth (Eastspring Investments Vietnam, January 18, 2018). Also see "The World Bank in Vietnam" (World Bank Group, 2024).
6. "The average price for English-Vietnamese translation in Vietnam is about 35,000–40,000 VND/page (1.7–2 USD). Meanwhile, the price for English–Vietnamese translation in the world is 0.2 USD/word, which means the price per page (about 350 words) is 30–40 times higher than the price in Vietnam." Quote from: "An Abandoned Translation Market," *Nguoi Lao Dong Newspaper* (October 4, 2013). Also see: "Translation: A Silent Market," *Nhip Cau Dau Tu Magazine* (October 26, 2016).; and "A Lack of Qualified Translators," *Sai Gon Giai Phong Newspaper* (August 16, 2020).
7. Lan, Hoang. "Translation Profession Status in Vietnam: Document and Empirical Analyses," *Transletters. International Journal of Translation and Interpreting* (No. 3, 2020), 99–123.
8. Li, Yu. *The Chinese Writing System in Asia: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Routledge, 2020),102–103.
9. Anh, Tran and Pham Ly. "From Saline Water to Roma: The Contributions of the Jesuit Missionaries in the Process of Latinization of Vietnamese in the 17th Century," a presentation at the Episcopal Commission on Culture of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Vietnam in HoChiMinh City, October 2019.
10. Khoi, Vu. "Who 'Killed' Sino-Vietnamese Characters?" (2009).
11. Lan, Hoang. "Vietnamese in Vietnam and the Diaspora," *Translorial* (Northern California Translators Association, 2020).

Lan Bao Hoang is a certified (New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters) English<>Vietnamese translator and an English>Vietnamese chartered linguist (translator). He is also a voting member of ATA and a member of its Standards Committee. He is currently a PhD candidate (translation studies) and a translation studies teaching assistant at the Auckland University of Technology. *lan.hoang@aut.ac.nz*

Join ATA's Southeast Asian Languages Special Interest Group!

Dear ATA Members:

Currently, ATA has the Southeast Asian Languages Special Interest Group (SEAL SIG), which was recognized by ATA in October 2023. At ATA's 64th Annual Conference, the group had a table where members who were interested in joining could connect.

We're interpreters and translators working in Southeast Asian languages such as Vietnamese, Bahasa Indonesia, Malay, Thai, Khmer (Cambodian), Lao, Burmese, Karen, Hmong, Tagalog, and many other Indigenous languages from Southeast Asian countries.

We're looking to network with others working in our languages to grow professionally, connect with colleagues who share our working languages or specializations, share resources for specific languages, and make new friends and grow together!

We welcome you to SEAL SIG!

1. Please subscribe to join our listserv by emailing southeast-asian-language-sig+subscribe@groups.io.
2. Please request to join our Facebook page (search name: "Southeast Asian Languages Special Interest Group") or use the following link: www.facebook.com/groups/1338404720217973

Thank you for your support!

SEAL SIG Moderators,

Tram Bui: teechedu@gmail.com

Ryan Le: ryanleinterpreting@gmail.com

Susi Rakhmawati: srakhmaw@kent.edu

How Do Graders Address Regional Varieties? Part 2: Chinese

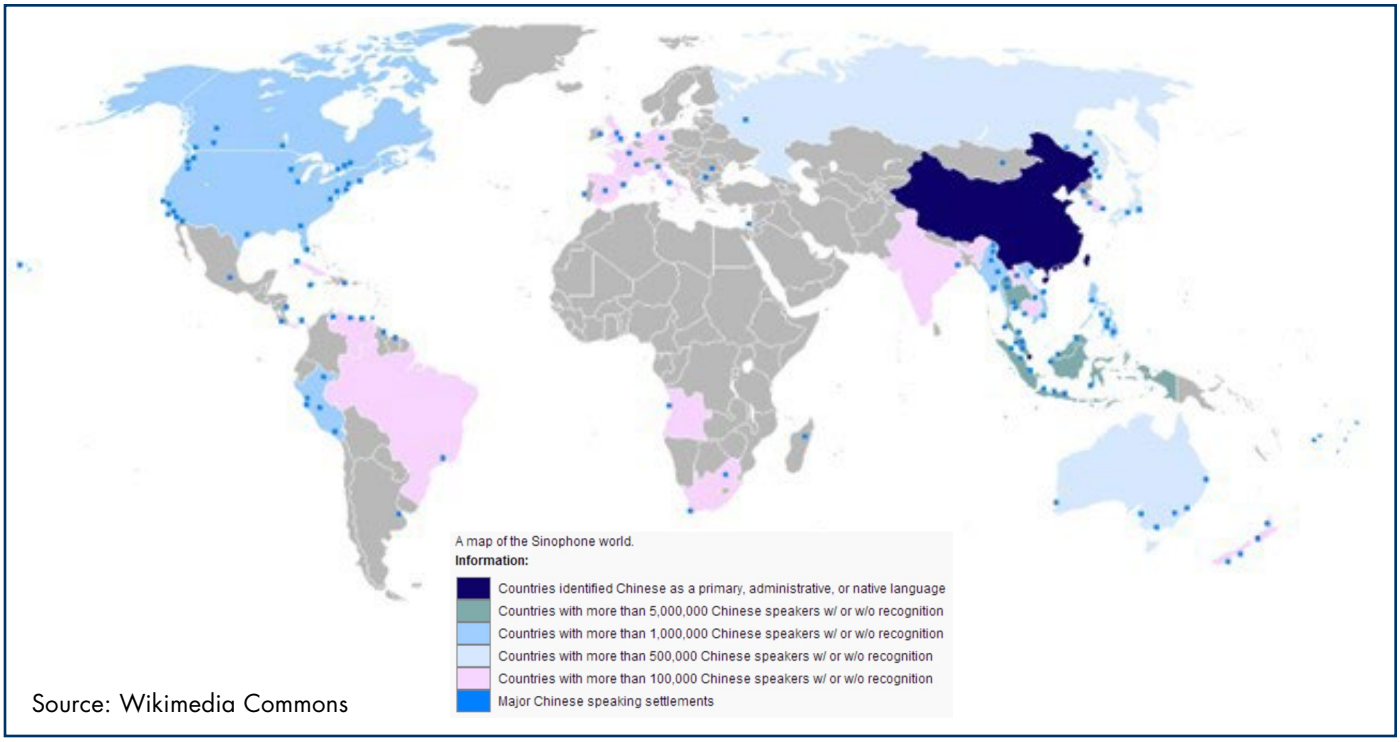
In the *July/August Certification Forum*, I addressed the issue of languages with many regional varieties (i.e., Arabic, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) and how graders deal with such varieties in certification exams. One language notably missing from the list was Chinese, to which I will devote this column in its entirety.

A World Language

According to Wikipedia, Chinese (or at least a variety of Chinese) is spoken by 1.35 billion people, approximately 17% of the world's population. It's the official language of China, Taiwan, and Singapore, and is a recognized minority language in Malaysia. Chinese is one of six official languages of the United Nations system, including all its agencies, such as the World Health Organization and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Furthermore, as the map here shows, spoken or written Chinese is used daily in a great number of countries.

Written Chinese dates back to 1250 BCE. Its character system has evolved along with the spoken language, and historically it even influenced the writing systems of Japanese and Korean. The Standard Chinese of today was officially adopted in the 1930s and is based on the Beijing dialect of Mandarin. Many varieties of Chinese are spoken within the Chinese mainland and in other Sinophone countries and regions, but all use the same characters (either in simplified or traditional form).

Thus, mutually unintelligible varieties, languages, or dialects (see the previous column regarding dialects), such as Cantonese and Wu, may look the same on paper, but once they're read aloud they're as different as Russian and Polish. In the 1950s, the People's Republic of China (PRC) instituted a system of simplified characters for greater accessibility, and Singapore adopted that system, whereas traditional characters continued to be used elsewhere, and still are, in many cases. Chinese usage is regulated by the *State Language Commission* in China, and by similar agencies in Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia. If you're preparing to take ATA's certification exam and have questions about accepted usage, you can probably find the answers there or in the *resources that are allowed* during the exam.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Rest assured that in all the language pairs we test, the passages chosen for candidates to translate don't contain obscure regionalisms or arcane vocabulary.

Which Chinese?

For any professional translator, having information about a text's source, its purpose, and its target audience is critical for generating the appropriate target-language text (hence the importance of Translation Instructions in our certification exams). Professional translators of Chinese are no exception. They must ask their clients for this information so they can determine whether to use simplified or traditional characters, layout and punctuation, and what regional variations in terminology they must observe. An informational brochure on health care options for students from the PRC coming to study in the U.S. may need to be translated differently than such a brochure for Chinese-speaking residents of this country, as differences in usage and medical terms may apply.

In an effort to inform prospective candidates for ATA certification in Chinese>English or English>Chinese of what they might expect on the exam, I asked some graders in this language pair about the issues discussed above. Evelyn Yang Garland, a former Chinese>English grader, told me that candidates are offered source texts in both simplified and traditional characters and can choose which one to translate into English.[1] The texts should be understandable to all educated, proficient readers of Chinese, regardless of their country or place of origin.

Two English>Chinese graders, Tianlu Redmon and Chaowei Zhu, kindly answered my questions about their requirements and expectations for candidates translating into Chinese. They reported that candidates can use either traditional or simplified characters, though most choose the latter, and no country or region is specified in the Translation Instructions. Regional variations in usage are not an issue, in their experience, and exam passages are general enough to be suitable for target audiences anywhere in the world. When I asked about the reasons candidates may not pass the exam, they cited poor understanding of the source text and inadequate mastery of the target language (which I would venture to say are the two main problems cited by graders in any language pair).

Conclusion

As I wrote in the previous column, exam candidates can rest assured that in all the language pairs we test, the passages chosen for them to translate don't contain obscure regionalisms or arcane vocabulary. Graders allow a certain latitude in language usage, but they expect high standards of accuracy, consistency, and target-language fluency. At the conclusion of their grading of each translation, they always ask these basic questions:

- Can the target text be used for its intended purpose?
- Is it intelligible to the intended target reader?
- Does it transfer the meaning of the source text?

If the answer to each question is "yes," the exam most likely passes.

If you have questions about ATA's Certification Program you'd like to see answered in this column, please email me at hmikkelson@gmail.com.

New Certified Members

Congratulations! The following members have successfully passed ATA's certification exam!

English into Chinese
Rony Gao
Xiwen Su
Chuhang Xian

English into French
Aurélien Baron

English into Japanese
Nodoka Sugiyama

English into Italian
Diana Mariotti

English into Russian
Diana Arzumanyan
Olga Bogatova

English into Spanish
William Hepner

Chinese into English
Roanna Y. Cheung

French into English
Kristina M. Jackson

German into English
Rachael C. Torkar

Spanish into English
Mark Athos Franklin Edwards
Lisa Hospedales
George Tuttle

NOTES

[1] Special thanks to Evelyn for sharing with me a presentation she gave on the subject at ATA54 in 2013, part of which formed the basis of this article.

Holly Mikkelson, CT is professor emerita of translation and interpreting at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. She is a federally certified court interpreter and an ATA-certified Spanish<>English translator with four decades of professional experience. She has taught classes and workshops all over the world. She has written many articles and books on various aspects of interpreting and is the author of the Acebo training manuals for court and medical interpreters. She serves as deputy chair of ATA's Certification Committee. *hmikkelson@gmail.com*

Member-Exclusive

ATA

Professional Liability Insurance Program

Visit Our Website To Learn More

The member-exclusive, ATA-endorsed Professional Liability Insurance Program protects translators and interpreters against claims-related errors, omissions, and/or negligence arising from their professional services. This comprehensive solution, commonly known as errors and omissions liability insurance (E&O), covers defense costs and settlements and provides a valuable layer of additional coverage that includes:

Coverage for a Broad Definition of Translation/Interpreting Services
Covers nearly all activities relevant to a translator or interpreter, such as editing, publishing, proofreading, printing, and computer software localization. Also covers the transcription and editing of documents that have been translated by another translator.

Coverage for Contingent Bodily Injury and/or Property Damage
Covers errors in rendering translation/interpreting services that result in bodily injury and/or property damage. These types of claims are typically excluded by generic professional liability policies.

Coverage for Fines and Penalties Associated with HIPAA/HITECH Violations
Cover fines and penalties as specified in the HIPAA/HITECH Act assessed against third parties who make a claim against you for indemnification or contribution for such fines or penalties.

We also have options for a stand-alone cyber liability and general liability (GL) policy. We make the process of finding the right professional liability insurance coverage as quick and easy as possible.

1.855.663.2282 | ata-questions@alliant.com | https://ata.alliant.com