A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM OF LINGUISTIC ATHLETES

A Publication of the American Translators Association
An Ending and a Beginning

B y the time this issue of The ATA Chronicle reaches you, I’ll have moved on to an entirely new role as a past president of ATA. After serving for seven years on ATA’s Board—three years as director, two years as president-elect, and two years as president—my term ends at ATA’s Annual Conference in Palm Springs, where I’ll leave you in the highly capable hands of Ted Wozniak and the 2019-2020 Board.

To me, the best chapters in life are those that—when they’re about to conclude—make you think, “I would do it again in a second, and I’m ready to move on to a new chapter.” That’s exactly how I feel about my years on the Board and my time as president. Without a doubt, these have been the most enriching seven years of my professional life, and also the most demanding. I’ve learned a lot about myself and about ATA, and hopefully I’ve contributed to some positive changes in ATA. I have a long list of my own goals that I’m ready to pursue, but I know ATA will surely benefit from a set of fresh eyes on the Association’s goals and challenges. With that, here are a few parting thoughts on what ATA has achieved in recent years, and where we can continue to do better.

Without a doubt, ATA’s Annual Conference remains the must-attend event for translators and interpreters in the U.S., and even those who travel internationally to attend. The Annual Conference continues to receive rave reviews from attendees—90%+ consistently say that they are glad they attended—and the number and quality of the proposals we receive continues to increase every year. This year, as in past years, we accepted fewer than 50% of the proposals we received, and the conference is on track to exceed our financial projections. At the same time, we hear from ATA members who are being priced out of the conference and can’t afford to attend, or can’t come every year. While the Board feels that our conference is attractively priced and well worth the investment, the “total cost of attendance” (registration, airfare, hotel, food, ground transportation, side events, etc.) is significant. Attendance at the Annual Conference remains strong, but we also need to continue offering webinars, one-day conferences, and other professional development events at a variety of price ranges.

Over the past several years, the Board has made a significant commitment to soliciting and considering input from members. We’ve implemented a process of asking for members’ feedback (via our division and chapter listserves, social media posts, etc.) ahead of every Board meeting. Every comment is posted on a flip chart for Board members to read, and is then logged in a spreadsheet that we track over time. The Board also created the ataTalk listserv, where concerned members can discuss ATA governance issues. We’ve become much more active on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and even Pinterest. We also launched The ATA Podcast (shoutout to our amazing host Matt Baird!) to make sure we have a full range of ways to communicate with members. At the same time, as we’ve seen during the current controversy over whether ATA certification exams should be opened to nonmembers of ATA, we still have members who feel that they are not informed about key ATA decisions, or that their voices are not heard or considered. We need to look at this from both angles: how to continue to keep members informed, and how to solicit and consider members’ feedback.

These are areas in which ATA has made great progress, but there is still further to go. ATA is in excellent hands with the next leadership team. I thank you for the trust you’ve placed in me when I was elected, and I wish all of you—and ATA—every success in the years to come.
ATA Board Delays Decoupling Certification Exam

ATA's Board of Directors has voted to postpone a decision to open the certification exam to nonmembers. What is the rationale behind this proposed change and how would it be implemented? Here are some answers to some frequently asked questions.

Interpreting for the Astronauts: A Conversation with Fernando van Reigersberg

In 1966, Fernando van Reigersberg, an interpreter for the U.S. Department of State, was assigned to travel with Neil Armstrong and Richard Gordon on the Gemini Goodwill Tour of South America. Learn about this important moment of the space race and what it was like traveling and interpreting for the men who would eventually travel to the moon.

A Multidisciplinary Team of Linguists

In 2013, Lima, Peru, was chosen as the host city of the XVIII Pan American and Sixth Parapan American Games, the largest international multidisciplinary sports event in the Americas and the second most important in the Olympic and Paralympic circuit in the world. Find out what it's like to be part of a team providing translation and interpreting services at a high-level sporting event.

Decluttering Mistakes You’re Making When Revising Your Text

Like your closet, your text might contain pointless, ugly, or sentimental items that you shouldn’t be keeping. Be ruthless when it comes to getting rid of the extra stuff in your text. It pays off. Your readers will read effortlessly what you so laboriously created.

Technical-Scientific Translation: A Wondrous Voyage

For some translators, technical-scientific work is an actively pursued dream. For others, it comes as an unanticipated opportunity. In either case, for those who have the required skills, it's a challenge worth accepting, a gratifying undertaking, and a wondrous voyage.

Cover: The coordinators of the Pan American and Parapan American Games Language Services team. Standing from left: Fernando Camino, Rosario Bustamante, and Adriana Carabajal. Seated from left: Daniel Aparicio and Angie Tapia. (Photo by Adolfo Leo)
Health insurance continues to be a top concern. We often hear from members asking why ATA doesn’t offer a health insurance program. We wish we could.

All associations—big and small, national and regional—are dealing with the same challenges today. Association Health Plans (AHPs) have come and gone over the years as laws and regulations have been introduced, such as the Affordable Care Act.

Earlier this year, I attended “The Changing State of Play for Association Health Plans (AHPs),” a one-day conference sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and the Coalition to Protect and Promote. (ASAE is the association for associations.)

BACKGROUND

Insurance is state-controlled, and each state has its own requirements for offering a program. There are two types of AHPs.

- The old model that went out of business with the enactment of the Affordable Care Act. This model was for trade associations (company members as opposed to individual members) offering coverage in a specific industry to employees who were not self-employed. It was typically offered nationwide.

- The new model came into play with a presidential executive order. This model included coverage for the self-employed, typically in the same state.

Earlier this year a court order froze creating new AHPs.

PRESENTATION NOTES

The ASAE conference offered two panel presentations: one from early adopters and the other from providers. (The idea of talking with providers really attracted me to this briefing, as we have struck out finding providers. The providers turned out to be software companies or administrators, not actual health care insurance providers.)

Here are some comments from the presentations:

- There is no question there is strong interest in AHPs.

- National Association of Realtors (1.3 million members): There is no plan at the national level. They cannot get a clean national plan. They have worked with five of their local chapters to establish local plans.

- National Restaurant Association: Plans in 30 states. Health insurance co-ops are not financially viable. Their coverage is for small businesses (less than 100 employees). I talked to this presenter at a break. I asked him how the members in the 20 states where the association doesn’t have plans are taking it. His response: not well!

- There is a political element to AHPs. AHPs are seen as another way to chip away at the Affordable Care Act.

- There are no national providers. They are sitting on the sidelines to see where the regulations go and trying to determine the market and risk. (Will AHPs only attract older, sicker individuals who are less profitable to cover?)

- All programs are different. There is no boilerplate. There is no unicorn plan for individual coverage.

- State insurance commissioners are reluctant to relinquish control and allow AHPs to operate in their states without having the AHPs meet their respective state requirements.

Although the briefing offered reassurance that we had not missed anything, it was still deflating because there is no easy answer.

We will continue to monitor AHPs.
In Memoriam: Peter Less
1920–2019
(Special thanks to Tanya Gesse, who contributed to this piece.)

Peter Less, who served as an interpreter at the Nuremberg trials, died October 9, 2019, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Peter was the recipient of ATA’s Alexander Gode Medal in 2006 for his pioneering service to the interpreting profession.

A native of Germany, Peter fled the Nazi regime and arrived in Switzerland in 1938. Peter’s father, mother, sister, and grandmother, who stayed in Germany to “wait out” the Nazis, perished. His father was an attorney, his mother a businesswoman, and, being educated people, they couldn’t imagine that the Nazis would take hold. They said, “this will pass.” Peter never saw them again.

Peter attended the Geneva School of Conference Interpretation, becoming one of its first graduates. In 1946, Peter, then 25, was recruited by the U.S. Army to provide interpreting services during the Nuremberg trials. From June to December 1946, he interpreted the proceedings from English into German (simultaneously in the courtroom, and consecutively during depositions). He also translated court documents as well as the final judgment. Nuremberg was one of the first times a multilingual event was interpreted using the simultaneous mode (with primitive interpreting equipment, including bolted-down microphones and heavy headsets).

Peter sat in the courtroom a few feet from Hermann Goering, Rudolf Hess, and others accused of crimes against humanity. These were the very people responsible for the deaths of his entire family. In the September 2004 issue of The ATA Chronicle, Peter reflected upon his role at these historic trials.

“It wasn’t easy. You were sitting in the same room with the people who probably killed your parents, but you could not let your feelings interfere with your job. You swore to interpret as faithfully as possible, to put the speaker’s idea into the listener’s head. So we did.”

Following the trials, Peter moved to the U.S. and worked as a family law attorney in Chicago. Throughout the years, Peter generously gave his time to speak to audiences large and small. Having lived through a tumultuous historical period, Peter was asked in the 2004 Chronicle interview what advice he would give us today.

“Don’t follow somebody who tells you what’s good for you. I like the motto lead me to those searching for truth, but keep me away from those who have ‘found it.’”

NOTE
ATA Board Delays Decoupling Certification Exam

Why decouple ATA certification from membership? Read on to learn more about the issues involved, and be sure to check out the free webinar offered by ATA Past President Corinne McKay and President Ted Wozniak.

After receiving feedback from members who felt that they were not sufficiently informed about the rationale for and implementation of opening ATA’s certification exam to nonmembers (planned for January 1, 2020), ATA’s Board voted to postpone this change until January 1, 2021.

To learn more about the reasons behind the decision to open the exam to nonmembers, as well as details about the implementation of this change, read the answers to the frequently asked questions below.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: OPENING ATA’S CERTIFICATION EXAM AND THE CERTIFIED TRANSLATOR CREDENTIAL TO NONMEMBERS OF ATA

1. What is “decoupling”?
“Decoupling” is a shorthand term to describe removing the link between membership in ATA and the right to take the certification exam and maintain certified translator status. It simply means allowing nonmembers to take the exam and to hold status as ATA-certified translators (CTs).

2. Why should ATA open the certification exam to nonmembers?
Removing the membership requirement to take the exam and maintain certified status would benefit the Certification Program, ATA, and all its members in a number of ways.

Increased awareness of ATA’s Certification Program and a greater number of professional practitioners using the CT designation will promote the recognition of the profession, the first purpose of ATA listed in its Bylaws. Our Bylaws also state that ATA has a duty to support certification programs “for translators and interpreters who meet specific standards of competence.” Our Bylaws thus make that support contingent on an individual’s competency, not their membership in ATA.

We also believe the credibility of the Certification Program would be enhanced because a positive correlation between professional competence and paying membership dues has never been demonstrated. A membership requirement is sometimes perceived as mere “pay to play”; a ploy simply to raise revenue. External stakeholders, and government agencies in particular, are reluctant to endorse a membership requirement as a professional qualification.

Opening the exam would likely increase demand by freelancers, and ultimately recognition by clients. For instance, there are at least 50,000 translators and interpreters in the U.S. working in our industry, and at present, fewer than 2,000 of them are certified. Over the years, ATA has received numerous comments to the effect that a potential candidate would like to take the exam, but not if membership is required. We have also heard from certified members who feel that ATA is placing an undue or unfair burden on them by requiring them to maintain their membership in order to identify themselves as ATA-certified translators.

The extra fees paid by nonmembers would benefit the Certification Program financially and reduce the expense currently borne by the membership. The fees currently paid by members...
Decoupling will work.

ATA’s Bylaws state that taking the certification exam is a membership right. Why did the Board approve this policy change without approval of the members through a Bylaws amendment? Why doesn’t the Board ask the membership to approve this change?

While the Board still believes it has acted properly and in accordance with the Bylaws, given the ambiguity in the wording, and to avoid problems that would arise if the exam were open to nonmembers and subsequently closed again, the members will be asked to amend the Bylaws as they see fit.

How will decoupling work?

Generally speaking, the only difference between members who take and pass the exam and nonmember CTs will be the amount that nonmembers pay for practice tests, exams, continuing education training provided by ATA, and recertification. Naturally, nonmembers will not enjoy any membership benefits. See below for answers to specific questions about implementation.

Will nonmember CTs be bound by ATA’s Code of Ethics and Professional Practice?

Yes, in order to take the examination, nonmembers will be required to affirm that if they pass, they are aware of, and must abide by, ATA's Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.

Decoupling is a shorthand term to describe removing the link between membership in ATA and the right to take the certification exam and maintain certified translator status.

ATA is not a guild nor a union. It is a professional association. The Board has researched this issue and has been unable to find any professional associations for other professions in the U.S. that offer a qualification credential that requires membership as a credentialing criterion.

ATA does not want to be “an” association of translators and interpreters; it wants to be “the” association for our profession, akin to the American Medical Association, American Bar Association, etc. Best practices at these other top-tier associations separate (or “decouple”) membership from certification. If ATA wants to be the top-tier association for our profession, it should pursue best practices.

Last but not least, there is a potential legal issue arising from excluding nonmembers from becoming certified. Such an exclusion could be deemed a “refusal to deal,” also known as a boycott, and a violation of U.S. antitrust law. In the same way that ATA cannot discuss or coordinate rates, it cannot unduly control the supply of certified translators, which would have a similar effect on the market. By excluding nonmembers, it currently impacts that supply. The Board has the duty of ensuring that ATA is not in violation of any federal laws or statutes.

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The current and past Boards take/took the position, which is backed up by an opinion from ATA legal counsel, that because the Bylaws do not expressly state that taking the certification exam is an exclusive right of membership, opening the exam to nonmembers is a change in policy that is governed by Article IV, Section 2 of the Bylaws, which states: “The Board of Directors shall have the power and authority to manage the Association’s property and to regulate and govern its affairs; to determine policies and changes therein; to specify and review the work of the elected officers; to decide on applications for membership; and to devise and execute such measures as the membership may direct or which, in the judgment of the Board of Directors, are necessary or desirable on behalf of the Association or in furtherance of its policies and objectives.”

In addition, Article III, Section 2—Eligibility, subsection (a), currently states that: “1) Any person who... (c) meets one of the following criteria: (i) has passed a certification examination administered by the Association...” is eligible to become an Active member. Therefore, it cannot be both a criterion for becoming an Active member and an Active member’s exclusive right.

Thus, the Bylaws are ambiguous on this issue and reasonable people can have different interpretations. In light of that and based on feedback from members who feel uninformed about the rationale for and implementation of decoupling, the Board recently voted to delay opening the exam to nonmembers until January 1, 2021, so that this issue can be clarified. On the 2020 ballot, the Board plans to propose a Bylaws amendment that would clarify that taking the exam is not an exclusive membership right.

Opening the exam would also remove the last vestige of the “guild mentality” that pervaded ATA when it was founded. Over the past 60 years, ATA has eliminated all of the characteristics of a guild, which once governed membership. For example, in order to become an Active (voting) member in 1965, a professional translator had to be “endorsed” by at least two Active members in writing. (If no endorsers were available, the applicant had to submit proof of three years of professional experience in the form of written references from individuals who supervised their work.) The applicant then had to be approved by the Membership Committee. In guild terms, one had to be recommended by several “master” translators in order to achieve such status.

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(CEPP) to maintain ATA-certified translator status. Ethics complaints against nonmember CTs will be handled by the Ethics Committee in the same manner as complaints against members. Nonmember CTs who are found to have violated the CEPP can be sanctioned through censure, suspension, or revocation of their certified status.

**6.** Will nonmember CTs have continuing education requirements to maintain their certification?
Yes, nonmember CTs will have the same continuing education (CE) requirements as certified members (except certified members age 60 or over—see below). However, they will be required to pay more for ATA CE training, such as webinars and conferences, and will also pay a higher administrative fee for recertification. Unlike certified members age 60 and over, who do not have to pay the recertification fee, nonmember CTs will have to meet the CE requirements and pay the recertification fee regardless of age.

**7.** CTs are required to submit 20 hours of continuing education every three years to maintain their certification. Nonmember CTs will be able to avoid complying with the CE requirements for three years before being disqualified. What will prevent them from using the CT designation during that time?
Nothing. But the same will hold true for certified members. After decoupling, a certified member who does not renew will still retain their certification until they fail to meet the recertification requirement. The only way to mitigate this risk would be to require recertification every year or every other year—with an attendant annual recertification fee. The Board would prefer not to increase the expense for members (and it would be an unfair trade practice to have a different reporting period for nonmembers.)

**8.** Will nonmember CTs be listed in ATA’s Membership Directory?
No. Potential clients looking for translators in ATA’s directory will only find members. The public will be able to verify the CT status of nonmembers, as is now the case for certified members.

**On the 2020 ballot, the Board plans to propose a Bylaws amendment that would clarify that taking the exam is not an exclusive membership right.**

**9.** Won’t opening the exam to nonmembers result in a loss of members and dues revenue? Current CTs will be able to drop out and prospective CTs will never join?
The Board has conducted numerous financial studies of this issue, because it recognizes the potential impact of modifying the status quo. In addition, it has established a set of financial requirements to enable the Association to deal with potential losses during the transition period. It does expect to see an initial drop in both membership renewals and new members. That is a consequence that the Board feels is worthwhile. The increased recognition of the CT designation and the Certification Program will spill over to ATA itself and enhance the value of ATA’s brand and membership.

Only about 20% of current ATA members are certified. That means 80% find value in ATA beyond just certification. For those 20%, to mitigate risk, the Membership Committee is working on improving existing benefits, adding new ones, as well as communicating the value of membership to current and future members.

**10.** What about CT Life members? What happens when a Life member who drops out of ATA?
Life members who drop out of ATA will lose their membership benefits, including any waivers of CE requirements (for grandfathered members over 60) or reduced recertification fees. While they can retain their certification, they will be required to meet the same recertification criteria as every other CT.

**11.** What happens when a nonmember CT joins ATA, or when a former member decides to rejoin after dropping out?
Nonmembers simply gain the rights and benefits of members when they join. As the primary difference in certification requirements is the price paid for CE training and recertification, new members would see cost savings over time. For “lapsed” members who return, the answer depends on whether the grace period has expired since their membership lapsed. If less than three years has passed, they can retain CT status by meeting the regular CE requirements. This is currently the case for lapsed members. If more than three years has passed and they cannot meet the recertification criteria, they will have to take the examination again. In effect, they would start from scratch.

**12.** What will the price differences be for members and nonmembers?
Members will enjoy lower prices than nonmembers for all certification-related costs and expenses. These numbers have not yet been finalized. In order to avoid antitrust issues, the Board has been advised that the price differences for nonmembers should generally be set such that there is no significant financial incentive to become a member. In other words, the total cost of becoming and remaining certified (i.e., taking the exam and completing CE requirements) for nonmembers should not be so much higher that a nonmember is effectively required to become a member.
Has the scope of nonmember interest in taking the certification exam ever been addressed?
Nonmembers have never been surveyed, but we have significant anecdotal evidence that people would attempt to become certified if membership were not required.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?
If you want to learn more about what decoupling involves, ATA Past President Corinne McKay and President Ted Wozniak hosted a free webinar in October where they reviewed the decision to open the exam to nonmembers and discussed the procedures that will be in place in 2021. The webinar is available at http://bit.ly/ATA-decoupling.

NOTES
1. Email from ATA Counsel to ATA Executive Director Walter Bacak, dated February 21, 2018. “Refusal to make certain valuable association benefits available to nonmembers, such as certification, could be challenged under the antitrust laws as a concerted refusal to deal, also known as a boycott, or as a tying claim. Best practices in association law provide that such valuable association benefits should be made available to nonmembers, although they may be charged somewhat higher rates (though not as much as to essentially compel membership). Although no such claims apparently have been made, this potential cause of action likely remains available.”

2. Email from ATA Counsel to ATA Executive Director Walter Bacak, dated February 21, 2018. “With respect to the right to take certification examinations, the Bylaws clearly intend that Active members (as well as Corresponding and Associate members, as noted below) have the right to take certification exams, but this does not say the right to take exams is solely reserved to Active members, and it would be somewhat unusual for this to be an exclusive right. For example, refusal to make certain valuable association benefits available to nonmembers, such as certification, could be challenged under the antitrust laws as a concerted refusal to deal, also known as a boycott, or as a tying claim. Best practices in association law provide that such valuable association benefits should be made available to nonmembers, although they may be charged somewhat higher rates (though not as much as to essentially compel membership). Although no such claims apparently have been made, this potential cause of action likely remains available.

Further, nothing in the Bylaws states that the right of certain members to take certification examinations is exclusive. Sub-sections (b) through (d) of Section 3 further describe the rights for Corresponding Members, Associate Members, and Institutional and Corporate members, but there is no reference to any rights being exclusive only to members. Given that these provisions do not explicitly state that the rights of members are exclusive rights, it is our view that the right to take the exams is not exclusive to members. It appears that the Bylaws language was drafted in a way to provide flexibility for ATA to offer the certification exams to nonmembers. Given how specific translators are with word usage and meaning, it would seem that a statement clearly making certain rights exclusive to members would be used if that were the intent.

With that, we believe there are sufficient legal ambiguity, flexibility, and authority for the Board to make a policy decision on this issue if it wanted to open up eligibility for certification exams to nonmembers. Nevertheless, if the Board determines that the decision regarding ATA’s certification exam should be made by ATA members, the members could vote as part of a formal Bylaws amendment to clarify the issue.”

 Increased awareness of ATA’s Certification Program and a greater number of professional practitioners using the CT designation will promote the recognition of the profession.
This year’s International Translation Day celebration was all about telling your story!

On September 30th, ATA released a short animated video taking viewers through a day in the life of a translator and an interpreter. The video conveys what it’s like to be a language professional so that the business world and the general public gain a better understanding of these career paths.

The video was shared on ATA’s social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, and YouTube). It was posted on ATA’s official ITD web page, where members could share it with colleagues and friends on their own social media channels. ATA also encouraged translators and interpreters to post what their typical workday looks like.

In addition to the video, members were invited to listen to ATA’s International Translation Day 2019 podcast as host Matt Baird interviewed ATA member Judy Jenner about the role translators and interpreters play in the global community.

WHY TELL YOUR STORY?
What better way to create a platform for raising awareness of the translation and interpreting professions than to utilize the power of social media to share what you do with family, friends, clients, and all those people who keep asking, “Can you really make a living doing that?” This volunteer effort was headed by Jamie Hartz and Molly Yurick, who spent countless hours coordinating the details with ATA Director and Public Relations Committee Chair Eve Bodeux and ATA Headquarters.

LET’S KEEP THE ITD MESSAGE GOING!
If you missed ATA’s International Translation Day celebration, don’t worry! You can still access and share the video and the podcast to let everyone know what you do! Just visit http://bit.ly/ATA-ITD2019, ATA’s official ITD web page.

NOTE
WHAT IS ATA’S SCHOOL OUTREACH?
For 15 years, ATA’s School Outreach Program has been raising awareness of the role that translators and interpreters play in business, government, and society at large. With several sources predicting major growth in the demand for professional translators and interpreters, this program continues to build awareness of careers in the language industry. As our world becomes more integrated globally, businesses and governments are realizing the importance of using skilled professional translators and interpreters to communicate their message effectively and successfully to global audiences, avoiding potentially costly and embarrassing mistakes.

ATA launched the School Outreach Program in 2004 to educate students about translation and interpreting and to interest them in these rewarding career fields. Through the program, professional linguists speak to students at all levels, highlighting the career benefits of learning another language and the increasing potential for exciting work with language skills. Using a variety of model presentations and activities available on ATA’s website, presenters outline the requirements for becoming a professional translator or interpreter, emphasizing that these careers demand far more than simply being bilingual.

“By visiting classrooms through the School Outreach Program, translators and interpreters share valuable information not only with the next generation of linguists, but also the next generation of language services clients,” says Meghan Konkol, an ATA director and coordinator of the School Outreach Program. “Our program focuses on educating the public about these exciting career paths and their wide range of applications around the world.”

To receive this award, participants must belong to ATA or an ATA chapter or an ATA-affiliated organization and must deliver a presentation at a school of their choice. Entrants must also submit photos of themselves presenting in the classroom. To learn more about the ATA’s School Outreach Program, visit www.atanet.org/ata_school.

WIN A FREE REGISTRATION TO ATA61—
2019–2020 SCHOOL OUTREACH CONTEST NOW OPEN!
The 2019–2020 School Outreach Contest is now open! The winner will receive a free registration to ATA’s 61st Annual Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, October 21–24, 2020. For more information, visit www.atanet.org/ata_school/school_outreach_contest.php.
July 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of NASA’s Apollo 11 mission to the moon. Neil Armstrong’s first step on the lunar surface on July 20, 1969, was the culmination of one of the largest and most expensive peacetime undertakings by any government in human history. Between 1960 and 1973, the U.S. spent $28 billion ($288 billion in today’s dollars) to put men on the moon. And as is so often the case, scattered throughout this herculean effort were translators and interpreters quietly doing their jobs. This is one of their stories.

In October 1966, a little less than three years before the Apollo Lunar Module Eagle would take Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin to the moon’s surface, Armstrong set off with fellow astronaut Richard Gordon on the Gemini Goodwill Tour of South America, visiting 11 major South American cities in less than two weeks. A young interpreter for the U.S. Department of State, Fernando van Reigersberg, was assigned to travel with them as their personal interpreter. Just a few days after the anniversary of the lunar landing, I sat down with Fernando to learn about this important moment of the space race and what it was like traveling and interpreting for the man who would eventually become the first person to walk on the moon.

Interpreters are more than interpreters. We’re bridges. We help connect people.

Barry S. Olsen: Fernando, you’ve been an interpreter for over 60 years. How did you get started?

Fernando van Reigersberg: I lived with my mother and brother in Tangier, Morocco, for most of my teen years. My parents divorced and there wasn’t much of a future for me in that place, so we decided I should apply to the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. I was accepted, so we moved to Washington, DC, after I graduated high school in 1954. In the middle of the second semester of my freshman year, my mother told my brother and I that she had run out of money. Our father had distanced himself, both personally and financially, and she had no idea how I would continue my studies at Georgetown.

I knew I needed to get a summer job if I hoped to stay in school. I ended up at the Georgetown employment offices...
Was that the beginning of the International Visitors Program that actually continues to this day?

Yes. It began during the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower. Back then it was called the Foreign Operations Administration (a precursor to the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID), and the administration was bringing in mainly European visitors as part of the Marshall Plan. The program was so successful that they soon included Latin Americans and others as well.

I took the State Department test in March or April of 1955 and passed. So, as my freshman year ended, I was told to come in for training, which consisted of two hours of consecutive training in the morning and two hours of simultaneous in the afternoon for two weeks. I was given a 90-day assignment immediately following training. Back then, we were paid $50 a day, so I made $4,500 in 90 days. Tuition at Georgetown was only $300, so the assignment helped me finish my education.

During my senior year, when all my classmates were being interviewed for jobs by various private-sector companies, I got a call from the State Department. They said, “You’ve been doing very well. People are very happy with your work. Why don’t you come and work for us on a permanent basis?” And I said, “Sure!” It took some time for my security clearance to come through, so I did some freelance interpreting in the interim. My first conference interpreting job was with Italia Morayta, Mexico’s first professional simultaneous interpreter, at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. One of the speakers was John Foster Dulles, who was U.S. Secretary of State at the time. I was about 20 years old, so you could say my career started off with a big bang.

A presidential interpreter at age 22. Not many people can say that! But let’s fast forward to the space race. What was it like in the 1960s, witnessing President John F. Kennedy’s decision to commit the U.S. to go to the moon and then see the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions carried out? How did the State Department become involved in these Goodwill Tours with the astronauts, and how did you end up being assigned to the Gemini Goodwill Tour in 1966?

It all started with a lot of confusion. I don’t think anybody expected the Russians to get ahead, or that Yuri Gagarin would be the first guy to circle the earth. The people in the White House were just trying to figure out what to do. So, gradually, NASA got involved, but the State Department didn’t really have much to do with it.
The ATA Chronicle | November/December 2019

**What were the press conferences like?**

The press conferences were basically the highlight. USAID had publicized them, so there were a lot of press people, invited guests, and so on. All the press conferences were kind of copies one of the other. As a result, so were the answers. The press asked the usual questions like, “Were you ever afraid?” and Neil Armstrong always answered by saying, “No, they kept us much too busy. If you don’t want to be afraid, stay busy and you don’t have time to be afraid.”

The press always asked the astronauts what they ate and what this dried-up stuff called astronaut food was like. They also asked about bathrooms on the space vehicles and things about health. Finally, they would always ask what the benefits of the Gemini missions were. Neil and Richard would highlight two. First, they would say, “We hope to go to the moon sometime in the future.” And second, they would say, “Velcro. It’s a new thing that’s been invented that we have on all of our uniforms and everything else to keep things together. We don’t know where the name comes from, but that’s what we use.” Back then, Velcro was viewed as one of the big technological discoveries.

**What was it like working with the astronauts? I mean, were they very personable and interested, or did they feel the tour was a distraction from the “real” work that they were doing?**

Both. They loved the trip. They loved the adulation and the coverage, but they were always very professional. NASA briefed them on what to say and what not to say, and they handled themselves very well. They were very intelligent, articulate, and personable. You know, engineers are basically uncomplicated people. I would take an engineer over a politician or a lawyer anytime. They were direct. They were straight. And they had no ego. They also had their wives along as well. Janet Armstrong was a delightful lady, and so was Mrs. Gordon.

The tour was about the U.S. showing its best side—a clear technological superiority that it was willing to share with other people.
B What was the reception like in the countries throughout South America?

F Excellent. The tour was totally noncontroversial, which is what the U.S. government wanted it to be. These were people who were popular. The astronauts had already been widely talked about in the media, and not just Neil and Richard. Space exploration in general was in the news all the time. USAID was a very active agency, so the tour was very well publicized. And you really couldn’t be against them. I mean, even the anti-Americans had to admire the space effort. And the trip showed that the U.S. was interested in Latin America.

B What were some of the challenges you faced throughout the assignment?

F Stamina. By the time we had been to our fifth country, we were all getting very little sleep. You would arrive at an airport and immediately take a motorcade into the city. Then there were all the events you had to attend. You had a little time at the hotel to rest, or you would try to sleep on the plane. The tour was just very, very long. Everybody was happy when we finished in Santiago and headed home. During our flight back, Richard Gordon said he wanted to fly the plane. So, between Santiago and Panama, the U.S. Air Force allowed him to take control. Everyone else just slept. It was exhausting. Although normally interpreters work in a team of two, I was the only interpreter. I had no backup. I had to do every event.

B How would you best describe the tour?

F I don’t normally use the word triumphant, but it was. The tour was about the U.S. showing its best side—a clear technological superiority that it was willing to share with other people. A country with no apparent divisions. I mean, it was showing a very good face of the U.S., and that made me very proud. It was unifying for us and for the world. There was something hypnotic about the tour, even for people who were not scientifically minded. What the astronauts were doing made everyone very excited, and that excitement transcended them and affected us. The astronauts responded to that excitement, and so did everybody on the trip. After each country visit, we would get back on the plane and have a staff meeting while we were flying, and everybody was so happy about how things had gone.

F Wow! That sure gives you an idea of how personable folks were. When you see things on television, you’re so distant from everything, so I think it’s easy to forget that the protagonists of these great events were human. Any parting thoughts?

B Thank you, Fernando, for sharing this part of your amazing career. It’s been an honor speaking with you.

NOTES
2. The Gemini Program (1965–66) was an early NASA human space flight program and an essential precursor to the Apollo Program. Read more about the Gemini Program at http://bit.ly/Gemini-Program.
3. The Marshall Plan was a comprehensive plan to rebuild the European economy after World War II. For more information, see http://bit.ly/Marshall-Plan.

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In recent years, Peru has gained the attention of the world for having an increasingly more stable economy, attractive tourist sites, friendly people, and, of course, great food. These factors have led to the country being selected as the host of numerous major international events, including the 20th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2014, the Meetings of the Board of Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 2015, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in 2016, and the Summit of the Americas in 2018.

The coordinators of the Language Services team. Standing from left: Fernando Camino, Rosario Bustamante, and Adriana Carbajal. Seated from left: Daniel Aparicio and Angie Tapia. (Photo by Adolfo Leo)

A Multidisciplinary Team of Linguistic Athletes

We might think that sports and languages don’t mix, but the Lima 2019 Pan American and Parapan American Games and the Language Services team proved that to be far from true.

The coordinators of the Language Services team. Standing from left: Fernando Camino, Rosario Bustamante, and Adriana Carbajal. Seated from left: Daniel Aparicio and Angie Tapia. (Photo by Adolfo Leo)

THE PAN AMERICAN AND PARAPAN AMERICAN GAMES

On October 11, 2013, Lima, Peru, was chosen as the host city for the XVIII Pan American and Sixth Parapan American Games, the largest international multidisciplinary sports event in the Americas and the second most important in the Olympic and Paralympic circuit in the world.

Now that the pressure of such an important international event rested on our shoulders, the first challenge we had to tackle was communication. Since Peru had almost no experience in the organization of this type of multidisciplinary sporting event, the Peruvian government needed to sign a collaborative agreement with a government that did have such experience. So, the U.K. and Peru signed a Government to Government agreement making the U.K. their key partner in supporting the preparation and delivery of the Games. When the agreement with the U.K. government was signed, and English and Spanish were established as the official languages of the Games, the question of having an in-house language department was raised. After drawn out debates about the importance of an in-house language services team and the costs of outsourcing these services, the powers that be opted for an in-house team.

Shortly after, the first two professional translators were hired to be part of Lima 2019 Language Services, but they could not manage the increasing influx of documents alone. The first translation project manager, and head of Language Services, was hired shortly after in order to gain a sense of the services to be provided for the benefit of the project. A few months after, the chief interpreter was hired, followed by other key roles, such as chief translator, quality assurance coordinator, and multilingual desktop publishing coordinator.

Around 20 team members were added within a two-year period before the Games were scheduled to begin in July 2019. The team would not only handle the increasing amount of content that required translation, proofreading, and desktop publishing, but also provide interpreting services at several meetings, conferences, and events before and during the Games.

Once the Games started, Language Services had among its ranks 50 team members and was managing approximately 350 volunteers and coordinating their operations at the competition venues alongside the various event areas. The scope and complexity of this project was something Peru had never seen before.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Hiring a translation project manager and the leader of the team was key. Angie Tapia, head of Language Services, was
able to manage, organize, and prepare her team for the challenges of this multi-sport event. One of the initial challenges she faced was the need to adapt her vast experience with dedicated translation project management software to the resources made available to the team, such as the tools offered in Microsoft Office 365 (instead of the trusty Post-It notes she had been using).

Another challenge was convincing the Peruvian members of the Organizing Committee representatives to purchase computer-assisted translation (CAT) tool licenses through tender processes so her team wouldn’t have to continue translating and proofreading directly in Microsoft Word. Some of the translators were not well versed in CAT tools, so they would need to be trained.

Linguists also needed to be reminded about the importance of meeting deadlines, not interfering with project management-related tasks, and improving their daily translation capacity.

One of the most difficult challenges was communicating the importance of setting reasonable deadlines to several clients who required translation but had no idea what it entailed (e.g., “I need this 12,000-word equestrian sports technical manual ready for tomorrow.”). Organizing schedules and planning the resources necessary to complete the official documents that were going to be published was essential, especially considering that the translation stage was the last step of every publication. A lack of thorough planning could directly affect the production process of Language Services, including its efficiency and productivity. The Language Services project management team took over the task of planning publications for the Games and added the desktop publishing process to its tasks, both to save time and guarantee quality results. The team even proved to be quite resourceful in terms of obtaining information on sports events in real time in order to anticipate publications, press releases, or tweets that required translation.

One of the most difficult tasks of Language Services was convincing the organization that having multilingual desktop publishers as part of their team was a necessity.

Once the responsibilities, tasks, and processes were properly communicated and delegated within the team, Language Services worked smoothly, met deadlines, and translated over 4,000 projects (more than six million words) in just under two years.

TRANSLATION

The translation team also faced the challenge of translating Lima 2019’s communication with the world, working with the press and social media. They also had to work with all types of internal documents for the project, including sports technical manuals, sanitary reports on the water conditions of competition venues, security policies, and the World Anti-Doping Agency online training platform.

Translating sports media content proved harder than it looked, as articles and press releases were filled with metaphors and expressions related to sports that were unfamiliar to the team. In addition to the content of the documents, terminology, linguistic-related problems, and deadlines were among the most challenging aspects of Lima 2019. Since all documents were always labeled by the client as “urgent,” “important,” or “priority,” the translation team had to permanently work against the clock, trying to keep up with the quality standards required for this kind of event.

One of the most important lessons we learned was that, for this type of project, it’s important to consider hiring a trained team of professional translators from day one. Linguists need time to adapt and adjust to new topics, terminology, and other work-related conditions to deliver the highest quality possible. As stress intensifies and shifts get longer, it’s also essential to have a committed team that is fully aware of the importance of an event like the Pan American and the Parapan American Games.

PROOFREADING

The task of proofreading was essential to the translation process. Although translators may do their own proofreading in a freelance market, in the context of such a massive event, it was necessary to separate both these tasks. The proofreaders were allowed to change
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM OF LINGUISTIC ATHLETES continued

Continued anything and everything to ensure a high-quality final product.

We soon discovered that hiring proofreaders was a more difficult task than it seemed. For one thing, finding translation professionals with a university degree in translation and a near-native level of English in Peru is like finding a needle in a haystack. To be a proofreader, it’s not enough to have studied translation—Peruvian universities don’t require you to know English before enrolling—or to be a native English speaker. (The “your/you’re” mistake makes one thing clear—just because you know it, doesn’t mean you know it well.) When we finally found the elusive proofreaders we needed, to no one’s surprise, they knew next to nothing about sports, which meant they had a long road of research ahead of them.

One of the many lessons we learned from this process was the importance of having well-trained proofreaders from day one. This way, the translation memory will only have content of the highest quality, making it more efficient and useful. Also, for future, less time-consuming projects, it would be ideal to prepare specialized glossaries for translators to make the proofreaders’ job just a little less stressful.

MULTILINGUAL DESKTOP PUBLISHING
One of the most difficult tasks of Language Services was convincing the organization that having multilingual desktop publishers as part of their team was a necessity. However, once the publications started taking shape, it quickly became obvious that it was essential to have a specialized team within the translation process to carry out this task. Language Services began to receive a wide variety of documents created in dedicated graphic design software, such as Illustrator, Photoshop, or InDesign, that required a team specialized in editorial design who could prepare the text for the translation process and later edit and correct the layout of the translated file to deliver it to the client.

Another crucial task that was eventually assigned to this four-person team, alongside the marketing department, was the desktop publishing of all publications for the Games, both in their original language and their translations. This change was both cost- and time-efficient, especially due to the amount of urgent last-minute changes that many of the publications required. Finally, finding professionals with the specific profile necessary to provide a service that is still not very widely known in Peru was also a challenge. They had to have a combination of skills that is not common among professional designers, and they also needed the proper training to adapt their skills to the translation process.

INTERPRETING
Hiring a group of professional freelance interpreters was another very difficult task for Language Services. Not only because of the nature of the profession, which tends to make some freelancers afraid of committing to a long assignment for one client and causes them to shy away from a traditional nine-to-five job, but also because the rigorous hiring process of the public sector in Peru is not attractive for the typical freelancer.

A few months after being hired, the chief interpreter was joined by a group of seven interpreters with different backgrounds, skill levels, and personalities. Almost all the interpreters had some type of formal training in interpreting. Before the Games, they had worked on assignments in various settings, including press conferences for the medalists, visits to venue construction sites, discussions with leaders from different sports federations, general assemblies of sports organizations, referee training sessions, language support for international technical delegates, anti-doping control trainings, and budget auditing.

Some coordination of meetings or visits from international consultants required the use of portable interpreting equipment. The rest of the assignments were done using consecutive interpreting or whispered interpreting. During the Games, only the international sports federation and sports confederation assemblies at the official hotel required simultaneous interpreting with a booth, with English and Spanish as the working languages. There was a second booth at the Pan American Village that was used for meetings of the chefs de mission (the

At the opening ceremony.

The team would not only handle the increasing amount of content that required translation, proofreading, and desktop publishing, but also provide interpreting services at several meetings, conferences, and events before and during the Games.
leaders of each national team) and for some sport-specific technical meetings.

Before hiring in-house interpreters, the Organizing Committee was relying on the services from different external agencies. The priority when hiring those services was cost savings, which led to some issues concerning the professionalism required by such an important international multidisciplinary sporting event.

Teamwork and good practices were fostered among all the interpreters who, in most cases, understood the importance of acting professional. Even though they had put their freelance careers on hold to work for the Lima 2019 Games, they appreciated having the opportunity to interact with the rest of the Language Services team. It was an opportunity for those who were inexperienced to learn from their more seasoned peers.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

The Language Services team insisted on the importance of confidentiality, teamwork, and good practices, but, as is common among all teams, incidents happened and some egos collided. Long working hours, stressful situations, and the pressure of the Games brought out many emotions, including frustration, anger, and anxiety. The team later learned that this was normal in this type of international multidisciplinary event. Nevertheless, although Language Services itself was divided into several teams responsible for different tasks, they were, at all times, one team with the same goal: to do their part so that the Lima 2019 Games could be a success.

Hiring an in-house team of professionals resulted in quality translation services and consistency in terminology, and also saved the organization money! Something that was key for the team to function properly was the versatility of its members. On a few occasions, due to high demand, some translators had to face their fears, remember their undergrad interpreting training, and interpret. Likewise, some interpreters had to focus for longer periods of time, stop speaking, pay attention to details, and translate. Some project managers with a translation background had to train this diverse group of linguists in the use of design software.

**Finding professionals with the specific profile necessary to provide a service that is still not very widely known in Peru was a challenge.**

We might think that sports and languages don’t mix, but the Lima 2019 Pan American and Parapan American Games and the Language Services team proved that to be far from true. This was, without a doubt, a great opportunity for learning and growth. Lima 2019 taught the Language Services team many lessons. First, that terminology is important when translating, but so is having good communication with the proofreader. Second, having a well-equipped interpreting booth is important, but so is knowing the speaker, who you may have happened to sit with during lunch the day before. And, finally, we learned that having a productive team is key for the project’s success, but so is having fun and relaxing.

The Games’ slogan is “Let’s All Play,” and Language Services played and did it as a team.

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**Members of the Lima 2019 Language Services Team**


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Decluttering Mistakes You’re Making When Revising Your Text

Clutter in text (and in life) doesn’t just mean extra or unnecessary stuff. Clutter is also stuff out of place and stuff that doesn’t fit right.

So you have a first draft. It feels great, doesn’t it? It just needs revising. You have the best intentions and set out to tighten the text and present the best version to your readers.

But you find clutter. Clutter in text (and in life) doesn’t just mean extra or unnecessary stuff. Clutter is also stuff out of place and stuff that doesn’t fit right. Jargon in a patient education leaflet is clutter. Imprecise terminology in a surgeon training manual is clutter. Erratic verb tenses create clutter with confusing time references. Disorderly class inclusion (jumping from some to all to many) creates clutter by disorienting the reader.

MISTAKE #1: YOU’RE NOT FOCUSED ON ONE IDEA AT A TIME

As you start decluttering a passage, forking paths get the best of you. You start revising an issue, but the next issue catches your attention. So, you insert a note to come back to the first issue as the second one distracts you from your original decluttering.

Before you know it, you’ve spent most of your time jumping from passage to passage, adding something here and chopping something there, creating a bigger mess than the one you started with. Perhaps, you set off to get rid of weak verbs and notice nominalizations bloating the text. You switch to verbalizing nouns instead. Or, you were editing for gender neutrality, but verb tenses got in the way, and now you’re addressing time references instead of pronouns. You just spent valuable time without readable results.

Instead of trying to rid a passage of all its clutter, try focusing on one issue at a time. Don’t let yourself move on to the next issue until the one at hand is resolved.

To identify issues, you may want to review one or two paragraphs. Name all the issues you’re dealing with: it’s likely you’ll encounter them throughout your piece. Prioritize your list of issues and work through the text one issue at a time. You don’t need to know technical linguistics terms—though, over time, you may want to pick up a few to share ideas with others.

You may choose to tackle a substantial issue, like the order of information throughout the text. If you’re explaining a procedure, are all the steps in sequence? If you’re addressing an arguable issue, did you include a rebuttal? If you’re narrating a story, do your tenses make sense, or did you jump from past to present to future haphazardly?

The key is to split the text into issues and inspect one passage at a time so you have a specific focus. To get started, you can use my printable decluttering checklist, which will help you pick specific aspects of text and focus on one at a time.

MISTAKE #2: YOU KEEP TOO MUCH STUFF

Again, you start off with the best intentions, but you end up talking yourself into keeping ideas or phrases you don’t really need in your piece. You think it sounds really good (or, that it makes you sound really good), or that your readers might need it to understand the background for your piece. Or perhaps you feel it’s a valuable piece of information even if it’s not completely within the scope of the piece.

The fact is, you don’t need to hold onto words or ideas that make you feel as if you’re not good enough. Your readers want to read your piece, and you do have valuable information for them. Embrace you inner rockstar. Take a deep
comforting, will also spin your text in the wrong direction. This doesn't mean you'll never meander. But if you offer a detour, have a reason for it.

Check out these passages about a mating hat that helped reproduce endangered peregrine falcons in captivity and save them from extinction. In the first passage, accurate and interesting yet completely tangential information clutters the text. All the text in italics is clutter. Also notice how redistributing the information by placing the peregrine falcon in the subject and topic position (with a passive voice sentence) makes the second paragraph clearer and smoother.

A ban on DDT saved the peregrine falcon from extinction. An Austrian chemist first synthesized DDT in 1874. DDT, or Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, was later used as an insecticide.

Unfortunately, no one looked into the side effects that ultimately caused an environmental debacle. An ornithologist at Cornell University helped save the peregrine falcon as well. He invented a mating hat. You can confirm this story by googling it. Female falcons had become scarce. However, a few wistful males maintained a sort of sexual loitering ground. So, the ornithologist imagined, constructed, and then wore the mating hat. He then patrolled the loitering ground, singing like a bird

Revision
The peregrine falcon was brought back from the brink of extinction by a ban on DDT, but also by a peregrine falcon mating hat invented by an ornithologist at Cornell University. If you can’t buy this, Google it. Female falcons had grown dangerously scarce. A few wistful males nevertheless maintained a sort of sexual loitering ground. The hat was imagined, constructed, then forthrightly worn by the ornithologist as he patrolled this loitering ground, singing, Chee-up! Chee-up!

In addition to your content plan, you can dive in with a schedule in mind, especially if you’re tackling a lengthy piece. You may assign an entire afternoon to go through every nook and cranny of your text (or any chunk of time that makes sense for your project). But, by the end of your first hour, you may find yourself exhausted, possibly with more clutter than when you started, feeling like you haven’t made any progress.

When you’re working on a long piece, make a timed date with your text: You may only get to tackle one issue, and that’s okay. Maybe you’ll choose to revise the imagery you used to explain something: Are your metaphors and analogies consistent, or did you jump from baseball to black hole to ballroom throughout the piece? Or, you may choose to review your piece looking for reference mismatches or making sure all the names and dates are correct. Limiting your decluttering time will allow you to focus on a specific task.

Revising one issue at a time may seem like a small win, but it will give you the motivation to keep going. You’ll avoid burnout and look forward to your next text date.

I know your text is an organic whole, and issues overlap. Keep them apart as much as possible. Toward the end of your decluttering process you’ll get to fix any holes that your compartmentalized approach may have left behind. Approaching ideas in your piece in this way creates a mental shift that will have you decluttering like crazy!

MISTAKE #3: YOU DIVE IN WITHOUT A PLAN

Of course, you need a solid rationale for what to keep and what to let go. Like your closet, your text might contain pointless, ugly, or sentimental items that you shouldn’t be keeping. To make your selection, ask yourself these three questions about each idea, word, or phrase you’re considering:

1. Does it have a purpose?
2. Is it meaningfully beautiful?
3. Am I using it as a security blanket or am I infatuated with it?

A particular item has a purpose if it moves your story forward and adds to the point of your piece. Beware of items that speak to the topic of your piece but deviate from your point. The point, or purpose, of your piece is a stance on the topic. To separate topic-related ideas from purpose-specific ones, ask yourself what you want your readers to get out of the piece.

Meaningful beauty adds style to your text without sacrificing clarity. You don’t want to be dry and boring, or your piece may go unread. But an overly adorned piece will suffer the same fate. Superfluous items, though possibly cute, accurate, or comforting, will also spin your text in the
FEATURE | BY GUILLERMO “WILLY” MARTINEZ

Technical-Scientific Translation: A Wondrous Voyage

Today, without a doubt, technical-scientific translators play a leading role in the world’s social, economic, and political arena.

Some time ago, a few students and rookie translators who were interested in the technical-scientific aspects of our profession caused me to reflect upon my own journey.

I’m Argentine and was formally trained as an English->Spanish translator in my country, where translation training programs tend to offer the following options: public translation (with a legal orientation), and technical-scientific and literary translation (with a generalist orientation—literary and technical training go together in one bundle).

My training took the latter path. The observations presented here, however, are based on my experience in the international market, where I often collaborate with colleagues from a diverse range of professional backgrounds.

TECHNICAL-SCIENTIFIC WORK AS AN OPTION

Many colleagues find that technical-scientific translation is a logical niche within the profession, and thus proactively seek out such work. Others enter the field through unexpected opportunities, and find themselves challenged and excited by the work. Seeing the chance to further their professional development, they devote considerable time and energy toward working on technical-scientific projects, which might not have been on their radar screens at the start of their professional careers.

WHAT DOES TECHNICAL-SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION INVOLVE?

Technical-scientific translation is a specialized type of work that entails the translation of documents produced by technical writers (e.g., specifications, user guides, owner manuals, catalogues, instructions, etc.). It might also cover texts related to areas of technological interest, either for practical application or for providing scientific or technical information. In general, among other elements, the work requires a reasonable understanding of the subject matter, the terminology, and the relevant writing conventions.

TECHNICAL VS. SCIENTIFIC TRANSLATION

In broad terms, technical translation is related to scientific knowledge put into practice, while scientific translation is related to pure science (i.e., theoretical knowledge). There can sometimes be a stark difference between theory and practice, but occasionally they may be intertwined to the point of being inseparable. For example, a research paper on a particular disease—one that would be presented at an international symposium of specialist physicians—would encompass the analytical aspect of pure science in combination with practical knowledge applied to the treatment of the disease (e.g., the clinical trials of an experimental drug).

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TECHNICAL TRANSLATOR

Years ago, I heard a colleague who—through the deliberate use of upper and lowercase letters—described what characterizes various types of technical translators. Unfortunately, I don’t remember my colleague’s name or the specific event. (I admit that the original idea is not my own, but my personal
These translators enter the international market:

**TECHNICAL translators:** These translators haven’t been formally trained in the art of writing (composition, grammar, spelling, and stylistics, etc.), but have entered the international translation market because of their technical/scientific knowledge and ability to communicate in one or more languages. In other words, they master the content, but need the collaboration of an editor to improve the quality of their product.

**technical TRANSLATORS:** (This is my case, and probably the case for many of our colleagues with similar professional backgrounds.) These translators enter the field through the exact opposite career path from the one described above. They have been formally trained in the translation profession, but don’t initially have the same degree of familiarity with the content as do professionals in technical and scientific fields. These translators have the opportunity to improve their performance in the course of their own experience through research and involvement in work projects.

**technical translators:** I hope I’m leaving no room for misinterpretation here. In the translation world there are people whose professional training is insufficient, and yet they somehow get work as technical translators. Some of them complete their initial formal training, but don’t continuously develop their skills. Thus, they produce work of objectionable quality. One way or another, there are technical translators (exclusively in lowercase letters) who are active in the market today. With time and experience, some of them end up improving the quality of their work. But others do not, and their involvement in a project can mean a real headache for the other team members.

**TECHNICAL TRANSLATORS:** These are a select minority, quite different from the immediately preceding category.

These individuals are distinguished by their mastery of the art of writing as well as their knowledge of technical and scientific fields.

**The outlook for technical-scientific translators has changed considerably since I started walking this path.**

**THE PATH TRAVELED SO FAR**

I started translating professionally in 1983. Initially, I would translate during my spare time, as opportunities arose, since I had a full-time day job to cover my basic needs. After a few years, I began working on technical-scientific translations. It was a gradual process. Nowadays, I work both in editing and translating those types of materials. I didn’t choose this path on purpose. Rather, that’s simply how opportunities came along.

When I decided to work in the profession full-time, I managed to get a list of several hundred companies and offered my services to each of them through a personalized letter with my résumé attached (this was back in the 1990s). Less than 20% of those companies responded, but the investment paid off with enough clients to get started. I would go on to develop other contacts through third-party recommendations (i.e., colleagues, project managers, other clients, and friends). Currently, most of my clients are a product of those relationships.

As for my current marketing strategy, I would say my method is similar to a spider’s. In other words, I attract potential clients, rather than using the tiger method, which implies going out and hunting for them.

**GLOSSARIES AND OTHER NECESSARY TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

Glossaries are assembled quite differently now that translation memories have become such a standard industry tool, but they are no less important. Sometimes, a glossary will need to be prepared before the actual translation work can begin. I can think of two examples of why this would be the case.

A. Because the end-client requires one, when their internal contact person wishes to apply their own terminology and wants to evaluate the translator’s vocabulary in advance.

B. Because the end-client wants to reuse the vocabulary from documents that their organization previously translated. In this case, the translator is usually provided with copies of the reference documents in both languages. (Note: don’t assume this will happen—make sure to ask!) Then, the key terms—those used most frequently and/or those that are difficult to translate—are picked up for the glossary. The terminology file usually has two columns, with the source text on the left and the translation on the right. For purposes of clarification, some reference to the original context or source is often added in a separate column. Glossaries are frequently assembled using a terminology...
management tool, along with a computer-assisted translation (CAT) tool. Such tools automatically search for and offer equivalent terms during the translation process.

Besides CAT tools, other essential resources include specialized dictionaries, online forums, interaction with colleagues, and contacts who have specific technical knowledge. Other key considerations include how much time needs to be devoted to the project (without sacrificing hours of sleep), a healthy attitude of self-criticism, the premise that no one is perfect, and, of course, an excellent internet service provider.

**DAILY PRODUCTIVITY?**

On average, I translate about 2,500 words per day or edit about 7,000 words translated by another colleague. The word count is based on the original text, and my productivity varies with the complexity of the subject matter, among other factors.

What if I’m assigned a translation of 10,000 words or more? First, I evaluate the basic aspects of the project, such as the degree of terminological difficulty. I then distribute the project over a work schedule that allows me not only to produce a given number of words per day, but also to devote some time to smaller projects for other clients. Naturally, all of this is subject to the deadline, which is agreed upon before starting a project.

**HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?**

I tend to price my work with a per word rate (based on the word count of the original), and my rate needs to be in line with the market’s supply and demand. Some clients require the use of translation memories that are already available. If so, once a base rate is agreed upon, with the translation memory as a reference, the cost is calculated based on a discount system for partial and total matches. Then, with the help of a CAT tool, the translator or the project manager can run a budgetary analysis of the source-language text.

**OPPORTUNITIES YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW**

The outlook for technical-scientific translators has changed considerably since I started walking this path. When I got my diploma, I saw other colleagues who had preceded me trying to make their way as bilingual office clerks or teaching, which seemed to be the natural alternative to subsidize the lack of translation opportunities. A few others, such as yours truly, eked out a living in an unfulfilling job that offered no future but helped pay the rent. My contemporaries and I would translate as an occasional paid gig and took advantage of every opportunity to develop ties with potential clients. Today, without a doubt, technical-scientific translators play a leading role in the world’s social, economic, and political arena. We live on a planet enriched by science, the exchange of ideas, international travel, immigration, and major social changes. Transcultural communication is critical for all of that.

**WHAT ABOUT THE ROBOTIC THREAT?**

It seems that quite a few colleagues feel intimidated by the advance of technological resources in our industry, such as automatic and semiautomatic translation. However, these advancements wouldn’t have been possible without the contribution of human translators. So far, the machine’s output is no match for the professional human translator. Moreover, on a daily basis, humanity continues to generate an ever-increasing volume of information, much of which needs to cross linguistic barriers. Work opportunities will continue to change along with the ways we interact and collaborate with one another. We’ll keep playing an essential role for the foreseeable future, and keep making a living with our passion. I love it.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**


**Guillermo “Willy” Martinez, CT** is a freelance editor and ATA-certified English>Spanish translator based in Argentina. Contact: willyspanish@gmail.com.
How to Plan for Big Changes in Your Freelance Business

Do you ever feel like you need to make a change in your business, but you’re not sure when to pull the trigger? Or maybe you know you’ve needed to make a change for some time but just keep putting it off.

If you aren’t sure when the best time is to make a change in your business, or if you’re unsure if you should make one at all, you might first try considering the reason you even think making a change is necessary.

Is something in your business no longer working as you had hoped? Are you feeling burned out in your business and that you ought to pivot to do something else or offer a new service?

Unless something sudden causes us to react quickly, most of us prefer to plan for the changes we make. And for many of us, the planning might take place at the beginning of the year. After all, isn’t that when most people set out to make a change?

I would argue, however, that the fall (or spring, depending on where you live in the world) is the best time to plan. The new year is just around the corner. This can be the best time to reassess your business, ask yourself some hard questions, and get the ball rolling on making changes that impact your business in a positive way.

HOW TO PLAN FOR CHANGES THIS FALL
You might start the change-making process by asking yourself some key questions.

What’s going well in my business?
What’s not going well?
What clients do I like to work with?
What clients would I rather not continue working with (and can I afford to let them go)?
If I do want to let go of a client but can’t afford to yet, can I look for one or two better clients so that I can eventually replace this less-than-ideal client?
What new skills would I like to learn?

Planning for changes by breaking them down into manageable steps and reassessing your progress and decisions can remove a lot of this stress.

- What can I do to improve my skills so that I can add more value to my clients, and perhaps even raise my rates?
- If I could change anything in my business, what would it be?
  - Work fewer hours, but make more money?
  - Work with only direct clients?
  - Work on building up my portfolio in a new specialization?

After you’ve taken some time to answer these questions, it’s time to make some decisions about how you’ll implement these changes.

- Do you need to inform clients about these changes?
- Do you need to “fire” a client?
- Do you need to start asking for more referrals or letting certain clients know you have more capacity now to be more available to them?
- Do you need to start a special course, get a specific certificate or certification, etc.?

Next, establish a timeline or plan to implement the changes based on your decisions. This is an important step so that you don’t let unexpected events derail your plans.

- What are the individual steps you need to take to implement your new plans?
- How can you break these steps down into smaller, more manageable (and less overwhelming!) tasks?
- When will you get these tasks done?

Tip! Put this important work on your calendar, and make it just as important as you would an appointment with a client or your best friend.

Finally, put a date on your calendar now to reassess your situation in a few months.

- Are you happy with the outcome of your decisions and changes?
- If you had to make these decisions again, would you change anything, or do you feel like you made the right move?
- What parts of your plan worked well and what could you do differently when planning and implementing your decisions in the future?
- Are there any pending tasks or projects left in your plan? If so, schedule time to reassess the changes you’re making in three to six months.

It can be overwhelming to make big changes in your freelance business. But planning for changes by breaking them down into manageable steps and reassessing your progress and decisions can remove a lot of this stress. And less time worrying means more time implementing!

Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo
is ATA president-elect and chairs the Membership Committee and Governance and Communications Committee.
She is the owner of Accessible Translation Solutions and a Spanish>English and Portuguese>English translator. She served as chair of ATA’s Public Relations Committee (2014–2018) and administrator of ATA’s Medical Division (2011–2015). She has a BA in Spanish from the University of Southern Mississippi and an MA in Spanish from the University of Louisville. She is also a consultant for the University of Louisville Graduate Certificate in Translation. You can read more of her articles on her blog at www.madalenaszampaulo.com/blog. Contact: madalena@accessibletranslations.com.
What We Call Ourselves Matters

Every profession has certain requirements that allow a person to enjoy the benefits and respect of their respective titles. I’ve been wondering lately about all the people who call themselves “interpreters” and whether they all deserve to attribute that title to themselves.

I know we’re still too far from a uniform credential in our profession, particularly in the judiciary field. That means we’re also far from being able to protect who can and cannot call themselves an interpreter. Notwithstanding what may happen in the near or distant future, I want to share these thoughts and maybe get others to think about it for a bit.

“WHERE” DOES NOT MATTER

I believe we all agree there are certain guiding principles that apply across the board to everyone providing language services in a legal setting. Whether state or federal, in court or out of court, interpreters in legal settings have the exact same ethical duties to be accurate and impartial. The responsibility of conveying fully what a speaker has said in one language into another language, while retaining the same meaning and discursive register, doesn’t change because the interpreter’s physical environment has changed.

The idea that some judiciary interpreters don’t need the same set of skills as others, that it’s okay for some judiciary interpreters to perform at a lower level of competency than others, is simply ridiculous. A criminal defendant in a state court has the same constitutional rights as a criminal defendant in federal court. It has been established for more than four decades now that the reason non-English speakers are provided with an interpreter is that it would be a gross miscarriage of justice to do otherwise.

WE MAKE THE VOICELESS HEARD

We exist because otherwise those non-English-speaking criminal defendants would be unable to assist in their own defense or confront the evidence against them. Also, witnesses who don’t speak or understand English would be unable to provide testimonial evidence without us. The rigorous demands of our profession are no less stringent because someone needs assistance to communicate and understand what is happening in an administrative hearing versus a criminal trial, or a police interrogation versus a deposition under oath.

Yes, there are still those who think “anyone can do this” and that we are “grossly overpaid.” That’s what happens when anyone can walk into a courtroom and call themselves an “interpreter.” It’s up to us, however, to uphold the highest standards for ourselves and demand the same standards of those who claim to be members of our profession within the legal arena. It’s up to each one of us to educate ourselves so we are better and better every time we walk into an interpreting assignment. We each represent our profession and we’re each an ambassador for what we want our profession to be. No one else can do this for us.

THE MINIMUM IS NOT ENOUGH

We cannot tolerate mediocrity in ourselves or others. While it may be easy to delude ourselves into thinking that we have “made it” once we obtain a credential, and to become complacent, the truth is that a credential—be it state or federal certification—is not the end game. A credential identifies those who have met the minimum skills required to provide language services in a system of justice that intends to protect the Constitutional rights of those who don’t speak or understand the language of the court.

Why should those minimum skills be any different in one system of justice from the other? Why have we accepted the fallacy of a “more competent” or “less competent” interpreter depending on which judicial or quasi-judicial setting requires their services?
**“WHERE” SHOULD HAVE NO BEARING ON QUALITY**

Are attorneys expected to be “less competent” if they practice in state court, whereas those who practice in federal court are expected to be “more competent” because they passed the federal bar exam? No. What is expected of them is to be familiar with the rules and processes that apply in one venue versus the other. In our case, we should be expected to be familiar with the terminology inherent to either state or federal proceedings, and perhaps the protocols to be followed in each. The same principle applies if we’re engaged in administrative or quasi-judicial proceedings. But the idea that lesser accuracy can be tolerated in an “interpreter” who is engaged in quasi-judicial, out-of-court, or smaller local courts’ proceedings, undermines all our efforts to be recognized as a *bona fide* profession within the judiciary.

In the U.S., someone who finishes law school but doesn’t pass the bar cannot be called an *attorney*. They can be law clerks or legal assistants, but they cannot stand in court and represent themselves to be attorneys-at-law.

**TITLES MATTER**

So, here’s some food for thought: how about calling someone who has yet to obtain a criterion-referenced credential a *language assistant*, or an *interpreter’s assistant*? Of course, there are language combinations for which no criterion-referenced examination exists, but we can deal with those exceptions. For instance, the interpreters in the Southern District of New York, under Nancy Festinger’s leadership as that district’s chief interpreter, developed many instruments to measure an interpreter’s competence in those language combinations for which there were no other tests. There is no reason why we cannot fill in these voids ourselves. As a matter of fact, there is no reason why we cannot be in charge of our own credentialing process.

We certainly cannot continue for much longer having it both ways. Either we’re all professionals and hold the title of *interpreter* because we have earned it through training, experience, and credentialing, or we’re not. Either it’s easy to join our ranks and therefore anyone can do this, with the consequential low pay and lack of respect, or it’s difficult and demanding, so those who get to call themselves *interpreters* enjoy an appropriate prestige and remuneration.

**WHO IS AN INTERPRETER?**

This may not be the right moment to be taking up the nomenclature cause, but I do believe that with so many people who still don’t know the difference between a court reporter and a court interpreter, or an interpreter and a translator, what we call ourselves matters. Who we allow to use the title of “interpreter” matters.

I do look forward to that day when we all take such pride in our profession that there will be no stratification of skills among those holding a professional credential. There will also be no pay discrimination because of those differences. I look forward to the day when our status as language experts will be immediately recognized when we say “I am a *judiciary interpreter*.”

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**Janis Palma** has been a federally certified English<>Spanish judiciary interpreter since 1981. She worked as an independent contractor for over 20 years in different states. Her experience includes conference work in the private sector and seminar interpreting for the U.S. Department of State. She joined the U.S. District Courts in Puerto Rico as a full-time staff interpreter in April 2002. She has been a consultant for various higher education institutions, professional associations, and government agencies on judiciary interpreting and translating issues. She is a past president of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. Contact: janis.palma@gmail.com.

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The truth is that a credential—be it state or federal certification—is not the end game.
Taking Screenshots on a Windows System

Screenshots are pictures of the complete or partial computer screen, and taking screenshots is often part of a translator’s job description. For instance, you might have to replace the source-language graphics in a software manual with those in the target language (assuming the software is already translated and functional).

Windows offers a number of “traditional ways” to take screenshots with the following key combinations:
■ PrintScreen for the complete screen.
■ Alt+PrintScreen for the active dialog window.

This process saves the screenshot to your clipboard, and from there you can paste it into a document or a graphics program to further modify it.

Pressing WinKey+PrintScreen automatically saves the complete screen as a graphic file under Pictures> Screenshots. If your keyboard doesn’t have a PrintScreen key, open the On-Screen Keyboard app by typing “On-Screen” in the Windows search field, click on the link that is displayed, and use the virtual key from there.

Now, back to screenshots. In the latest updates to Windows 10, you can also press WinKey+Shift+S. This activates a screenshot app in the upper part of your window. (See Figure 1 below.)

Your choices (from left to right in Figure 1) include a rectangular and a funky free-style form, the active dialog or window, and the complete screen. Choosing one places the screenshot on your clipboard and enables you to open it in the newly available Snip and Sketch app with basic editing and annotating features.

Windows is doing an increasingly good job handling “minor” things like taking screenshots and copying and pasting.

In case you’ve been looking for the old Snipping Tool, it’s still there and it still works, but its days are numbered. You will eventually see the message in Figure 2. And the truth is, this tool is a bit superfluous with all the new options.

Even with this new wealth of features, though, there’s still some functionality that would be nice to have, like having the option to include the active cursor in the screenshot, to take complex screenshots of several overlapping dialog windows, or to take screenshots that go beyond the screen you’re displaying. For these features, you’ll have to have a tool like SnagIt (snagit.com) or Greenshot (getgreenshot.org). These programs are the Swiss Army knives of screenshots, especially SnagIt. I often use SnagIt to take screenshots while listening to a presentation that includes visual elements. The program saves them in chronological order for me to easily refer to or review later on.

If you’re interested in copying text from your screen that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to access (think of an image-based PDF or graphics), you can accomplish this with screenshots by using the ABBYY Screenshot Reader (see abbyy.com/screenshot-reader). This tool actually uses internal optical character recognition processing to convert “fake” text (there’s a loaded word right now!) into actual text that can be pasted into any other program. I really love this little tool. The results are amazingly accurate in Latin and Cyrillic alphabets (I haven’t tested other writing systems), and it can save an extraordinary amount of time.

Speaking of copying and pasting, here’s a bonus rundown of those new Windows features.

Microsoft Office has included a more advanced way of managing clipboard items for quite some time now. You can activate this under Home> (the little pointer next to) Clipboard. This allows you to collect...
up to 24 clipboard items from anywhere on your computer and paste them individually or all at once into any Office document. The problem: if you don’t work exclusively in Microsoft Office programs, this isn’t very helpful and has very limited functionality.

In response, this summer Microsoft introduced a Windows Clipboard, which can be used across any program or app. It’s activated for the first time by pressing WinKey+V, and that’s how to access it from then on as well. It will store 25 items at a time (up to 4 MB per item), whether graphics, text, or HTML, and it’s possible to sync the clipboard across devices and pin items so they don’t get deleted (everything else will disappear once you restart your computer or reach the 25-item limit). (See Figure 3 on page 28.)

This tool really is quite helpful—no more temper tantrums in your office when you once again overwrite your clipboard by copying something on top of it!

Of course, as with all screenshots, there are also more advanced solutions, such as tools that allow you to print directly from your clipboard, store clipboard entries between different computer sessions (i.e., after switching the computer on and off), or “glue” as many entries as you want into one item to paste everything together. For all of that, ClipMate (see thorsoft.com) does a fine job.

To summarize: Windows is doing an increasingly good job handling “minor” things like taking screenshots and copying and pasting, but if you’re looking for something that’s better than just good, you might have to look elsewhere. 

**Congratulations!**

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

**English into Chinese**  
Boqun Ma  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**English into Japanese**  
Yukiko Ozaki  
Millburn, NJ

**English into Russian**  
Olga Dolgova  
Alexandria, VA  
Evgeny Terekhin  
Friendswood, TX

**English into Spanish**  
Aida Carrasco  
Zapopan, Mexico  
Ixchel Martinez  
Mexico City, Mexico  
Anyeliz Pagán Muñoz  
Toa Alta, PR  
Alida Gonzalez-Navarro  
Alhambra, CA  
Carlos Parodi  
Normal, IL  
Frances Pautrat  
Lima, Peru  
Adrian Villalobos  
Frisco, TX

**English into Swedish**  
Ann-Charlotte Storer  
Devon, PA

**Chinese into English**  
Trevor Cook  
Tempe, AZ  
Jack Lian  
Surrey, British Columbia, Canada

**French into English**  
Matthew Bunczk  
Norristown, PA  
Elizabeth S. Yellen  
Chicago, IL

**German into English**  
Matthew Bunczk  
Norristown, PA  
Andrea L. Menz  
Tualatin, OR  
Carle Sitzman  
Wilmington, DE

**Portuguese into English**  
Max Lantz  
San Francisco, CA  
Paul W. Mielke  
Pleasant Grove, UT

**Spanish into English**  
S. Kathryn Jiménez Boyd  
Barcelona, Spain  
Virginia R. Cueto  
Alexandria, VA  
Federico Fuentes  
The Woodlands, TX  
Petra C. Groeneveldt  
Washington, DC  
Carley Hydusik  
Laval, Quebec, Canada  
Mary Lewis  
Washington, DC  
Paul W. Mielke  
Pleasant Grove, UT  
Alex Triplett  
Alexandria, VA  
Kelly Varguez  
Omaha, NE  
Swedish into English  
Kelly Burt  
Riverside, CA

**German into Spanish**  
Matthias Bunczk  
Norristown, PA  
Andrea L. Menz  
Tualatin, OR  
Carle Sitzman  
Wilmington, DE

**French into Spanish**  
S. Kathryn Jiménez Boyd  
Barcelona, Spain  
Carline Vous  
Laval, Quebec, Canada  
Mary Lewis  
Washington, DC  
Paul W. Mielke  
Pleasant Grove, UT  
Alex Triplett  
Alexandria, VA  
Kelly Varguez  
Omaha, NE

**Swedish into English**  
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Carine Vous  
Laval, Quebec, Canada  
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Mary Lewis  
Washington, DC  
Paul W. Mielke  
Pleasant Grove, UT  
Alex Triplett  
Alexandria, VA  
Kelly Varguez  
Omaha, NE
Thoughts on Naver Papago with MT Engineer Lucy Park

At the Asia-Pacific Translation and Interpreting Forum—FIT (APTIF9) in Seoul, South Korea, in July, I listened to a very dynamic talk by Lucy Park, an engineer for the Korean machine translation (MT) engine Naver Papago. (By the way, Naver is the primary search engine in Korea, and Papago—“parrot” in Esperanto—is its MT engine.)

While Google and Microsoft’s search engines are often talked about as the dominant players in the market of easily accessible, generic MT engines, the proliferation of generic local engines is intriguing. Some European languages have seen the rise of DeepL2, Russian has Yandex.Translate3, Chinese has Baidu Fanyi7 (among others), and Korean has Naver Papago5. It’s no coincidence that, with the exception of DeepL, all of these MT engines are owned by the leading domestic search engines, which, by the very nature of their business, specialize in locating data, and, in the case of MT, reusing that data for their own purposes. (DeepL had a shot at being in the same league, because data location and collection is the core of their previous business, Linguee8.)

We all know that MT is hungry for lots of data, and I find it intriguing that providing reasonably successful MT suggestions requires little more than mere access to data. Local expertise does actually play a role. This is particularly true for Korean, which is especially challenging because of its honorific system (i.e., the nuanced forms of addressing others in relation to oneself). Many translators at APTIF9 FIT assured me that this and other difficulties are handled much more seamlessly by Papago than by its global competitors.

I asked Lucy whether she would be willing to be interviewed to explain this more thoroughly, and here’s the result.

**Jost:** Naver Papago is a neural MT between Korean and 14 other languages (English, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese). It’s very popular in Korea and—according to my impression from those attending APTIF9—widely used by many professional translators. It seems to me that it’s not particularly widely used outside Korea, but correct me if I’m wrong. I had a number of Korean translators tell me that they like Papago because it captures the subtleties of Korean much better than your big competitors, such as Google and Microsoft. Is that your impression also, and can you tell me why that is?

**Lucy:** The Papago MT team mainly focuses on translations of Korean, English, and other Asian languages such as Chinese and Japanese. So it’s quite flattering to hear that your fellow professional translators are complimenting Papago when translating the Korean language, because that’s actually what we’re trying to do best.

We put in a lot of effort to enhance the quality for Korean translations by acquiring as much bilingual and monolingual data as possible and cleaning the data thoroughly. There are also efforts on the modeling side. For example, last January we launched a new feature where the user can control the honorific level of Korean when it’s the target language.7 We also do various experiments that leverage the characteristics of languages or their corresponding scripts.

**Jost:** What about other language combinations without Korean? I (very unscientifically) looked at some translations between English and German, and the quality was not up to the standard of Google or DeepL. The first question is: Are those pivot translations with Korean as the pivot language? The second question is (or maybe it’s more like an assumption): Is your goal really to focus on Korean in combination with other languages and leave the other language combinations up to the “big boys (and girls)”?

**Lucy:** When we pivot languages, we pivot with the best model available to our team, which doesn’t necessarily have to be Korean.

We focus mainly on Korean because Papago was first created in Korea, so it has many Korean users. That’s why we currently focus on Chinese, Japanese, and Korean characters and English. If our users start telling us they need English>German translation to work better, we’ll try our best to enhance performance for those language pairs as well.

**Jost:** I noticed that you’re not offering any ready-made app for using Papago’s MT engine within computer-assisted translation tools. Why? Is the market of Korean translators so small, or
We’ve been monitoring the professional translation market, and we think it’s an appealing market. However, we currently don’t have plans to approach this market yet due to other priorities, but this situation can easily change in the future.

It’s difficult for one vendor to excel in all areas and fulfill all needs.

Your big competitors are committing to not using any text that’s submitted for translation if one uses the paid application programming interface (API), which professional translators typically do. Do you have anything like that, or do you process the data that’s being committed for further training purposes?

We take user privacy seriously. We currently are not using API logs for analysis and/or model improvement, but if we do decide to use any data in the future, it will always be with permissions granted from the user.

According to your experience with Papago—and this brings us back to the first question—do you think there is a market for language-specific, generic MT engines?

Yes. According to my experience, the global translation market is full of diverse needs. Some need fast translation with “okay-ish” quality (as opposed to slow and high quality), while others need domain-specific translation (for medicine, shopping, etc.), all in different situations and for different translation requirements. It’s difficult for one vendor to excel in all areas and fulfill all those needs. Likewise, if the demand is large enough for translation between several languages, there are also opportunities if you can attract that market toward yourself.

Is there anything else you would like to share about Papago’s plans in the near future?

We’re planning to launch offline translation models soon, and many more features to come! Please keep an eye on us.

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

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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation (Average No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months followed by No. of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date). 15a. Total No. of Copies (Net press run) 6,067, 6,100. 15b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail). 15c. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: 0, 0. 15d. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: 0, 0. 15e. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed to Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail): 37, 26. 15f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)): 5,725, 5,701. 15g. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means): 144, 200. 15h. Total (Sum of 15f and g): 6,067, 6,100. 15i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 96.9%, 96.2%. 16a. Paid Distribution Outside the Mail Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®: 303, 278. 156d. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®): 0, 0. 156c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)): 5,725, 5,701. 156d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution By Mail and Outside the Mail). 156f. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: 0, 0. 156g. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a): 303, 278. 156h. Total Print Distribution (Sum of 15e and 15g): 5,906, 5,927. 156i. Copies Not Distributed: 161, 173. 15m. Total (Sum of 15f and g): 6,067, 6,100. 15n. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): 96.9%, 96.2%. 16a. Paid Electronic Copies: 3,641, 3,777. 16b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a): 9,366, 9,478. 16c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15b) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a): 5,947, 9,704. 16d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100): 98.1%, 97.7%. I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. (Signed) Walter Bacak, Publisher and Executive Director

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NOTES
7. See youtube.be/S5x9hS1hzXo.
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