Balancing Act: Caring for Someone with Dementia While Keeping a Practice Afloat
18  ATA 2022 Elections: Candidate Statements
Calling all Voting members!
Participating in ATA’s annual elections is your opportunity to help shape the future of the Association. Learn what this year’s candidates for ATA’s Board of Directors have to say. Remember, the Annual Meeting of Voting Members and Election will be held October 13, 2022.

18  Balancing Act: Caring for Someone with Dementia While Keeping a Practice Afloat
My father had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. My mother was in the early stages of an unspecified dementia. And the brilliant plans I had made so I could work from their senior living facility while caring for them during extended visits were crumbling all around me. Being a caregiver and at the same time a self-employed professional is a balancing act. But in the end, it can be a gift.
22
“Your Story Is Your Weapon”: Interpreting for Immigrants in the Wake of Trauma
Whether in legal, health care, or community settings, interpreting for immigrants who’ve been forcibly displaced tests emotional resources. An interpreter shares techniques from the ancient art of poetry for building resilience.

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Language Industry Standardization in Argentina: A Brief Overview
In recent years, the term standardization has become increasingly relevant in the language industry, with a growing need for more information on the subject. Here’s an introduction to the main aspects related to standardization and the language industry in Argentina.

30
Team Interpreting for Magistrate Courts in Texas
Learn how Texas magistrate judges, court staff, prison personnel, and interpreters are working remotely to ensure that non-English-speaking and limited-English-proficient detainees understand their rights when facing criminal charges.

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Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns are found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.ata-chronicle.online!
As I make my way home from the summer ATA Board of Directors meeting and Strategy Day in Chicago, I find myself drawing connections about the many items the Board discussed over the course of three days together.

First, we met on Friday, August 5, for our Annual Strategy Day. This is a day where the Board discusses big-picture issues affecting the translation and interpreting (T&I) professions, buyers of T&I services, and the Association as a whole. We do this exercise to stay current about issues to keep in mind throughout the year, with a mindset on how we can be proactive and make improvements to areas like member benefits, the Annual Conference, the Association’s finances, and more over the coming years. This year, we discussed:

- External and big-picture trends in the world that affect our professions
- Booming areas of specialization in T&I
- Membership retention and growth
- The future of ATA and the Annual Conference

And while I don’t have the space in my column to go into these topics in great detail, I do think it’s worth sharing that the Board found several areas where we can support our members as we continue to see growth in specific areas of specialization, such as video remote interpreting (VRI), video game and app localization, subtitling and dubbing, multilingual copywriting, and user experience (UX) writing. This support includes putting more focus on our professional development and business practices programs to continue developing content and education on important topics related to specific areas and industries, skills-building, and the future of technology in our professions. We also discussed the continued importance of advocacy and public relations as we look to the future.

Our Annual Strategy Day allows us to take a step back and look at the big picture, focusing on ways to address challenges related to our professions and the Association.

Our Annual Strategy Day is one of my favorite meetings with ATA’s Board, as it allows us to take a step back and look at the big picture, focusing on ways to address challenges related to our professions and the Association. Huge thanks to President-Elect Veronika Demichelis for planning our Strategy Day this year. It was one of the most productive I’ve experienced in my eight years on the Board. Watch for big things to come!

We were also in Chicago to tour two potential hotel venues for the 2026 Annual Conference. This coincided well with the Strategy Day topic of the future of the
conference in general. We’re seeing increasingly smaller attendance at our Annual Conferences, even beyond the unfortunate effects the pandemic has had on our most recent two conferences. This parallels our slowly declining membership, which the Board is also taking measures to address. Above all, we must consider our finances, including the need to increase the number of attendees to cover the cost of holding our flagship event. So, the Board is discussing ways to offer members, sponsors, and exhibitors an elevated conference experience while trying to avoid raising the price of attendance.

It became clear that holding an Annual Conference in Chicago again would cost much more than any of our previous conferences to date. Much of this is due to the high cost of food and beverage and the union requirements in Chicago. With the goal of avoiding taking a loss on the conference and having membership dues subsidize the event, we’re considering other options for the 2026 conference and will report back when we’ve selected a venue. I’m pleased to see that our Board is willing to forego a popular and vibrant location to consider other options where we have more financial certainty. This doesn’t mean that ATA will be looking at smaller cities. In fact, the Board discussed that the Annual Conference has been most successful in major cities like San Francisco, New York, Boston, Miami, and Washington, DC. Therefore, we’re considering what rotating among these cities might allow us to do in terms of attracting more attendees while elevating the conference experience going forward. Stay tuned for more on this topic.

And while unrelated to strategy and conference locations, it would be remiss of me if I neglected to thank three individuals who have made a great impact on our Board and the Association. Our colleagues Cristina Helmerichs and Jamie Hartz are both finishing their terms as directors in Los Angeles. I think it’s fair to say on behalf of the Board that we’ll truly miss having them at our meetings. Cristina and Jamie have contributed greatly to the Board’s activity and ATA’s core programs over the past several years, and I’m sure we’ll continue to see great things from them. And finally, as you may know, our beloved Executive Director Walter (Mooch) Bacak is wrapping up 28 years of service to ATA. The impact he has made on our Association and the T&I professions during his time with us is significant, to say the least, and he will be greatly missed by all. We’ll plan to have a proper send-off and celebration for Mooch at ATA63 in Los Angeles!
The Final Countdown!

The countdown is on for ATA63! In a few short weeks (or days, depending on when you’re reading this), we’ll gather in sunny Los Angeles on October 12–15 to reunite with old friends and make new ones, talk about the latest developments and the future of translation, interpreting, and localization, and geek out over all things language- and culture-related. That feeling of being part of a strong, vibrant, and committed professional community is something I enjoy the most at ATA’s Annual Conferences. It’s something that’s hard to find in the plethora of online events. You just can’t replicate the in-person interactions and connections.

Here are some tips to help you prepare for ATA63—our first fully in-person Annual Conference since 2019!

Registration: Yes, there’s still time to register! ATA members and student members save more, but we also have something special for colleagues who have never attended an ATA Annual Conference. First-time attendees get a $75 discount on conference registration, so please spread the word!

It’s also not too late to add Advanced Skills and Training (AST) Day courses to your registration or sign up for an ATA certification exam. There are many fantastic AST courses taught by top-notch instructors on the AST Day schedule—from keyword localization to translating sustainability reports, learning about the latest trends in artificial intelligence and machine translation, finding direct clients, upgrading your sight translation skills, and more!

Tips from the Locals: Our fantastic co-hosts, the Northern California Translators Association (NCTA) and Association of Translators and Interpreters in the San Diego Area (ATISDA), created a wiki-page with tips for local restaurants, attractions, and activities. Their representatives will also greet you on-site at the Hospitality Tables and answer your questions. A huge thanks to Michael Schubert, Marco Díaz, and the NCTA and ATISDA teams for all their hard work!

Conference App: Our conference app is back! You’ll be able to download it approximately two weeks before the conference, and I strongly suggest you set aside some time to get familiar with the app and make the best of all it has to offer. As soon as the app is available, you’ll find guidance on how to use it on the ATA63 website.

With the app, you can browse the latest conference schedule, mark the sessions you want to attend, view handouts and slides, receive alerts for schedule changes, and submit session evaluations. It will also help you network. You’ll be able to see the list of conference attendees and connect with them before and during the conference, create your personal list of exhibitor booths to visit, connect with exhibitors, and see the list of companies participating in the Job Fair. Hot tip: don’t forget to update your own profile and upload your résumé if you’re actively looking for work!

Schedule: Throughout the conference, the ATA63 app and website will be your go-to resources for the latest schedule of sessions and events and other conference updates. There’s so much to choose from, so it’s a good idea to plan your schedule—and set aside some social time! Here are some of the many, many great events on the schedule—and some new ones I would like to highlight:

• If you’re attending for the first time, don’t miss our legendary Buddies Welcome Newbies program where you can get helpful tips and get paired with an experienced conference-goer who will act as your guide in navigating your first ATA Annual Conference. If this isn’t your first conference, I hope you can attend this session and help other colleagues make the best
of ATA63—it’s a rewarding experience for both parties.

- Get excited about the Welcome Celebration—the best way to kick off our four-day-long T&I fest! Visit the designated ATA division tables to network with colleagues who work in the same subject areas and language pairs as you, talk to ATA Board members, meet the candidates in this year’s election, and have fun! We’re also excited to offer a selfie station this year, with some fun props for your ATA63 selfies and group photos. Don’t forget to use the hashtag #ATA63 when you post them on social media.

- Grab a bite at one of the assigned breakfast tables and meet the candidates in this year’s election, talk to Board members, network with fellow students, catch up with fellow parents of young children, and more. Check the most up-to-date list of breakfast meetups on the ATA63 Event Schedule.

- Attend the Annual Meeting of Voting Members and Election and help shape ATA’s future. Our Association is only as strong as the commitment and energy of our volunteers.

- Visit the Book, Podcast, and Blog Fair to celebrate our talented colleagues who double as book authors. New this year, we’re also shining a spotlight on podcasts and blogs for translators and interpreters. If you’re a T&I podcaster or blogger, please check the guidelines on how to participate.

- Need new headshots? No more excuses—make an appointment online and get professional headshots done at the conference. Three headshots for $40 is a fantastic deal!

- Let’s face it, most of us are bookworms—it’s the nature of our profession. Don’t miss the Dictionary and Book Exchange—and please thank Jost Zetzsche for this wonderful initiative he started a few years ago. You can donate old dictionaries and find new ones you can put to good use. This year, we’ll also have a Leave a Book/ Take a Book table so you can exchange fiction and nonfiction page-turners with fellow conference attendees.

- If you’re actively looking for new work, add the Job Fair to your schedule and remember to update your résumés and business cards! This is your chance to meet agencies that are looking for talented T&I professionals to join their team.

- Attending a conference is a chance to focus on growing and building your business—and networking is a huge part of that. There’ll be plenty of ways to network at ATA63, including the popular Stronger Together Networking, Brainstorm Networking, and Speed Networking events. Don’t miss these fantastic opportunities to make new connections and collaborate with colleagues.

- Many ATA divisions are planning off-site events for their division members, and you can find that information on the ATA63 website, your division’s website, or through the division administrator.

- I could go on and on, as there are so many things to look forward to at ATA63—from the glamorous Annual Awards Presentation to the bustling Exhibit Hall and the legendary Conference Dance Party. All I can say is that ATA63 will be one for the books!

- I know that COVID-19 is still a concern, and I can assure you that we’re doing our best to make ATA63 not only memorable, but also safe. We’re in close communication with the hotel and will follow the local requirements. I strongly encourage you to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Los Angeles County Health Department’s recommendations as you get ready for the conference.

I hope you enjoy ATA63! See you in LA!

The American Translators Association’s Board of Directors met in Chicago, Illinois, August 6–7, 2022. The meeting was preceded by the Board’s Annual Strategy Day. Strategy Day allows the Board to discuss in–depth aspects of the Association and the translation and interpreting professions. The event is coordinated and led by ATA’s president–elect, who, by office, is the chair of the Governance Committee. This year, President–Elect Veronika Demichelis guided the Board through discussions about membership, the future of the conference, and trends in translation and interpreting and how to act on them. Strategy Day discussions don’t necessarily lead to concrete action plans, but they do serve as the foundation for working through the Board’s activities for the year. Here are some highlights from the Board meeting.

**Budget:** The Board approved the July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023 final budget and the 2023–24 draft budget. The budget is $3.1 million. No dues increase is planned for 2023.

**Ethics:** The Board approved the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility. This revised and updated code incorporates revisions and clarifications that became apparent with deliberations over various ethics cases during the past few years. The Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility takes effect January 1, 2023.

**Special Interest Groups:** The Board approved establishing a pilot program for Special Interest Groups (SIGs). These SIGs are envisioned as a way for groups of members with similar languages, areas of specialization, or services to meet. They may serve as a professional home for members who don’t have the number of signatures required to start a division. A SIG could also serve as an incubator for groups that are working toward establishing a division. The pilot program runs from ATA63 through 2023. Director Robert Sette was approved as chair of the Ad Hoc Special Interest Groups Oversight Committee.

**Membership:** The Board reviewed a proposed membership survey to be sent to all members. In addition, the Board continued its discussion of restructuring membership. Proposed revisions will be shared with the membership for feedback.

**Outgoing Board Members:** President Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo recognized and thanked outgoing Directors Jamie Hartz and Cristina Helmerichs for their service. The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are also posted online. The next Board meeting is set for October 15–16, 2022, in Los Angeles, California. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.

Thanks and See You Down the Road

After 28 years, I’ve decided to step down. It has been a great ride.

I’ve had the fortune to work with so many dedicated volunteers starting with Past Presidents Edith Losa, Peter Krawutschke, Muriel Jérôme-O’Keeffe, Ann G. Macfarlane, Tom West, Scott Brennan, Marian S. Greenfield, Jiri Stejskal, Nick Hartmann, Dorothee Racette, Caitilin Walsh, David Rumsey, Corinne McKay, Ted Wazniak, and current President Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo. I continue to be in awe of the time and energy ATA’s volunteers give back to the Association.

Of course, I wouldn’t have lasted as long as I did without our incredibly dedicated, hardworking staff: Roshan Pokharel, Mary David, Caron Bailey, Trish Boward, Teresa Kelly, Jamie Padula, Jeff Sanfacon, Cathy Taguding, and Adrian Aleckna. I would be remiss if I didn’t also mention former employees Terry Hanlen, Maggie Rowe, Loan Dang, and Kirk Lawson.

While I would have loved to have been surrounded by “yes” people, always agreeing with me, all was made better by their challenges, ideas, and input. ATA has greatly benefitted from their work.

Together, we—the volunteers and staff—have accomplished so much over the years. And, there’s plenty more to do. As we make the transition to the next executive director, the journey continues. Good luck with all your great work, thanks for letting me be a part of it, and see you down the road.
The member-exclusive, ATA-endorsed Professional Liability Insurance Program protects translators and interpreters against claims-related errors, omissions, and/or negligence arising from their professional services. This comprehensive solution, commonly known as errors and omissions liability insurance (E&O), covers defense costs and settlements and provides a valuable layer of additional coverage that includes:

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

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

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

We also have options for a stand-alone cyber liability and general liability (GL) policy. We make the process of finding the right professional liability insurance coverage as quick and easy as possible.
Yasmin Alkashef, CT
Yasmin_alkashef@thelanguagesmith.com

It’s an honor to be nominated to run for ATA’s Board of Directors. It would be a privilege to serve ATA members in this capacity.

I’m an ATA-certified Arabic>English translator, a certified court interpreter, and a conference interpreter. Originally from Cairo, Egypt, I have an MA and PhD in translation and interpreting studies from Ain Shams University. I worked in academia and as a conference interpreter for over 10 years in the Middle East until my family moved to the U.S. in 2015.

Faced with the challenge of market access, I thought the gateway to the U.S. market started with ATA, and I was right. Upon passing ATA’s certification exam, clients started finding me through ATA’s Directory. I’m grateful for all the opportunities and support ATA has offered me as a freelance translator and interpreter.

Over the past few years, I’ve volunteered for ATA in several capacities. I’m a member of the Interpreters Division (ID) Leadership Council, where I help organize Interpreter Connections—a bimonthly casual meetup in which ID members discuss topics of interest to interpreters in all specialties.

I serve as assistant administrator of the Arabic Language Division (2021–2023), where I actively engage with ALD colleagues to offer support and resources to members. I helped organize online events for members and started an ATA certification exam study group. I also proposed and helped organize the first ALD Arabic interpreting scenarios.
contest, an initiative aimed at addressing the scarcity of training material for Arabic interpreters.

This year I became a member of ATA’s Professional Development Committee, where I help co-host ATA webinars and other continuing professional development opportunities. In all these capacities, I’ve enjoyed learning from working with excellent colleagues. I’ve also leveraged my background and experience in the U.S. and abroad to add value to discussions and initiatives. I would love to bring this perspective to ATA’s Board.

As an adjunct faculty at New York University and the University of Massachusetts, I know that high-quality training is crucial for professionals—experts and beginners alike. That’s why in 2020 I started the Arabic court interpreter practice group—a safe space in which interpreters meet to practice and exchange feedback. It has been a successful initiative that has attracted many interpreters. If elected, I would like to work on increasing similar meaningful opportunities for training and professional development.

If I become a member of the Board and a representative for ATA members, I would like to see our organization forge ahead building on our passion for the profession, eagerness to volunteer, and current ATA strengths. I would like to work on increasing awareness of the profession via targeted outreach activities and advocacy, growing the membership through public relations initiatives, and offering members a real return on their investment through the visibility, networking, and professional development opportunities ATA provides as a community of practice. I would be honored to get your vote and represent you on ATA’s Board.

Andy Benzo, CT andy@andybenzo.com

I’m honored to accept the nomination of my colleagues as a candidate for ATA’s Board.

I’ve been working as a freelance translator specializing in legal and commercial translation for over 30 years. I’ve been an ATA member for the past 23 years and became ATA-certified (English>Spanish) in 2011.

In my native Argentina, I earned a translation degree and became licensed as a technical–scientific and literary translator. I also earned a law degree and was a practicing attorney there. Working in both professions provided a unique perspective on international recognition in these fields. In Argentina, as in many other countries, translators are licensed specialists who enjoy the same respect accorded to other licensed professionals.

At the University of California, San Diego Extension, I taught legal and business translation, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, and an introduction to translation and interpreting course for six years. I continue to fulfill my passion for teaching as a frequent presenter at ATA Annual Conferences and other national and international conferences.

My leadership experience includes being one of the founders of the Association of Translators and Interpreters in the San Diego Area (ATISDA), an ATA affiliate, and serving as its first president (2008–2013). At the time it was founded, ATISDA became the only translators’ association in Southern California. We collaborated on the 2010 ATA Spanish Language Division (SPD) San Diego mid-year conference and volunteered as the 2012 local hospitality group for ATA53 in San Diego. I’ve served as chair of the Bylaws Committee for the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, and currently serve as Spanish legal advisor to the Research Institute of U.S. Spanish.

I was elected assistant administrator of the SPD in 2020. I also chair the SPD Podcast Committee, host our popular Charlas de café podcast, and am a member of SPD’s Professional Development Committee.

I’ll bring my leadership and teaching experience to ATA’s Board and look forward to collaborating with the other
Board members. If elected, I’ll focus on these priorities:

- Providing more content-based training in specialized language issues to improve the knowledge and expertise of translators and interpreters. This will enhance the value of ATA membership and attract new members. To remain relevant, we must be experts.

- Continuing efforts to actively educate our members on professional standards promulgated by international organizations, such as the International Organization for Standardization and ASTM International, to enhance our position and relevance against global and non-human competition.

- Increasing collaboration and communication among divisions, their administrators, and assistant administrators. Fostering relationships and networking will improve our ability to address many common concerns.

- Offering more opportunities for members to serve in ATA leadership roles to facilitate the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences.

I’ll continue to engage with and learn from colleagues, and I welcome hearing from you about your vision for ATA and any concerns. Thank you for your consideration. I would be honored to have your support and vote.

Robin Bonthrone
rb@robinbonthrone.com

I very much appreciate this opportunity to continue serving on ATA’s Board of Directors, which I joined in 2021. Since then, I’ve had the privilege to collaborate with an outstanding group of hardworking colleagues. Serving as a Board member gives you the chance to be involved in shaping future short- and long-term policy, and this is surely one of the most rewarding aspects of being an ATA director. I very much look forward to continuing this work if you re-elect me.

My first contact with ATA was in 1997, when I attended the Annual Conference in San Francisco. I gave my first ATA conference presentation (on the language of German accounting) at the 1999 conference in St. Louis. Since then, I’ve presented 11 regular sessions and 10 pre-conference/Advanced Skills and Training Day seminars.

I joined ATA in 2004, and have played an increasingly active role in the Association since I moved to the U.S. five years ago. It’s particularly rewarding to serve as a member of the Professional Development Committee, and I’m extremely proud to be part of the team that has been responsible for making ATA a global leader in online continuing education for translators and interpreters. Our vastly expanded offering of webinars and workshops is supporting ATA members and nonmembers alike across all stages of their professional journey—from new entrants to the profession down to the most experienced translators and interpreters. And I’m leading the team responsible for our next project, which promises to be our most exciting and ambitious online offering to date—I hope that details will be announced at this year’s conference!

I’m proud to have served as chair of the Ethics Committee since October 2021, and have been actively steering the final phases of a multi-year project to revise and update ATA’s Code of Ethics and Professional Practice and related documents. The project is completed, and you will be able to read the amended code (now with a new title) and accompanying commentary at the latest when you next renew your ATA membership. Many thanks to the past and current members of the Ethics Committee for their hard work and dedication.

I also serve on ATA’s Finance and Audit Committee, where my knowledge of accounting as a specialized financial translator is invaluable, and on the Honors and Awards Committee, where this year I’m heading the team responsible for ATA’s Innovation Award. In the past, I also served on the Business Practices Education and Standards Committees.

I’m currently serving my second term as president of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA), an ATA affiliate, which has given me frontline knowledge of nonprofit governance and valuable experience in steering AATIA through the challenges imposed by the pandemic. I also attended a very instructive training webinar for nonprofit directors last year.

I’m asking for your vote so I can continue shaping the future of ATA in this challenging and fast-changing world, working with fellow Board members to safeguard and advance the interests of all our members.

Céline Browning
celinebrowning@gmail.com

This past year has taken quite the turn from what I expected it to be. First, while I was deeply honored to be nominated to run for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors at ATA62, I wasn’t elected. While election to the Board didn’t occur for me, it was an honor to have been nominated to serve such a worthy organization.

Following ATA62, I signed up for multiple ATA committees and was on my
way to doing what I had
pledged to do when I ran
last year. But life had other
plans in store for me. Sadly,
at the start of the year I lost
my mother to a sudden fall.
At the time, I was taking
a sabbatical in Paris at the
Cordon Bleu, enjoying some
time away from the blue light
of the computer and honing
some other senses that might
have dulled over the years
of remote simultaneous
interpreting. Of course,
that endeavor was abruptly
terminated. Needless to say,
with my personal loss, I was
emotionally and physically
unable to keep my promises
to be a participatory
member of the committees
I had signed up for. So, I
resigned from most of these
committees, but I’ve been
able to keep abreast on what
some committees are doing
so that I might participate
again following ATA63.

As I stated in my statement
last year, if elected, I’ll
continue to advocate for
diversity and visibility of all
divisions and languages in
our Association. However,
one large difference from last
year is that I’m no longer
freelance. Nevertheless,
I’ll now be able to provide
insight to the Board
on matters as a federal
employee, from a specific,
more structured perspective.
This new position will
also bring me closer to
interpreters and translators
of other languages with
whom I’ll interact.

As I’ll be relocating
to the Washington, DC
metropolitan area, I’ll be
closer to ATA Headquarters.
It’s my hope to use my new
geographical proximity to
Headquarters wisely and
fully to better learn, serve,
and be available for ATA as
an association.

If this past year has taught
me anything, it’s that life
is unpredictable. I never
expected loss, nor did I
foresee my career taking this
turn. However, one event
led to another and now I’m
eager to learn as I move
forward in this new chapter.
I’ll not claim to come in as
a director who knows all the
answers. I believe the most
powerful learning comes
through questions. If elected,
you can be certain that I’ll
welcome and encourage
your questions and will
seek advice and input from
my fellow directors and the
ATA community to provide
the most comprehensive
response I am able.

It would be my pleasure
to receive your vote. If
elected, I hope to continue
to strive to bring equality,
visibility, and appreciation
to the mighty, yet often
underappreciated fields of
translation and interpreting.

Amine El Fajri
fajri2000@hotmail.com

What an amazing surprise
and honor it was to learn I
was nominated to be a part
of ATA’s Board of Directors.
Being nominated really made
me reflect on my journey
with ATA, which has been
amazing. I’ve been a member
since 2014, attending every
Annual Conference since then.
I also had the great pleasure
of presenting at the following
conferences: ATA56 in Miami,
ATA57 in Washington, DC,
and ATA62 in Minneapolis.
Speaking at these conferences
was such a great way to
challenge myself, and I really
learned so much to help me
in my career.

I began my career as
an Arabic and French
interpreter in 2008. My
freelance services include
mainly interpreting for the
U.S. court system, medical
interpreting, and document
translation. I became a court
certified Arabic interpreter
in 2018, and I’m currently
in the process of becoming
a court certified French
interpreter. My educational
background includes two
master’s degrees in business
administration. I’ve also
had the honor of serving as
a member of the Language
Access Committee for the
Utah State Courts and as a
board member of the Utah
Translators and Interpreters
Association, an ATA affiliate
and the local T&I association
in my home state of Utah.

I’m asking for your vote so I
can focus firmly on the future
of ATA in this constantly
changing world. The pandemic
has changed everything,
including our profession
and also ATA. Working
with fellow Board members
in the interest of all ATA
translators and interpreters,
I’ll be a strong advocate for
encouraging solidarity and
the development of outreach
deavors that involve
mentoring as well as client
education and fostering
relationships. ATA is strong
because of its members, who volunteer their time to advance the profession.

In closing, I thank you for your consideration and sincerely hope you’ll give me the opportunity to serve on ATA’s Board of Directors.

Christina Green, CT
christina@greenlinguistics.com

It’s truly a great honor to have been nominated to run for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors.

I began my career over 25 years ago, after graduating from the Universidad Central de Venezuela with a degree in translation and interpreting in English and French. Since then, I’ve been a full-time translator and interpreter.

My first ATA Annual Conference was in 2000, in Los Angeles, the year I moved to the United States. I had worked in Venezuela, Italy, and France, where I gained valuable experience as a language professional.

To the Board, I bring my experience from having served one prior term on the Board, and as the former chair of the Membership Committee, assistant administrator of the Educators Division, and assistant administrator of the Interpreters Division. I’m also on the Honors and Awards Committee and serve as the president of the Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters, an ATA chapter.

Throughout my professional career, I’ve focused on providing language services in different sectors, mainly in the education, legal, medical, and entertainment fields.

I’ve also provided services to the most marginalized populations with dignity and respect. My work as a volunteer interpreter for nonprofit organizations has shown me what the world looks like for those who don’t speak English.

If elected to the Board, these are the specific areas in which I want to contribute:

- Increase exposure and visibility of our members: This has always been at the forefront of my agenda. We often forget that the most important people in our association are our members. And we can do more for them. Many customers don’t know what ATA is, what our contributions are, how we help shape language policies, or even what we stand for. As a professional association, we must have a more effective outreach with our external customers.

- Student outreach, specifically at colleges and universities: We need to attract younger generations to our profession and to our association. During my tenure as chair of the Membership Committee, we created an e-book for translation students that remains unpublished. By creating tools for students to understand what our profession entails and what skills are needed to succeed, we can steer more people toward studies in translation and interpreting, while paving the way for future generations and increasing our dwindling numbers.

- More active social media presence: Undeniably, social media plays a key role in today’s communication. During my tenure as assistant administrator for the Interpreters Division, I’ve led the social media team where we have used all platforms not so much to send messages, but to have meaningful conversations with our members. This could attract new members to our association and could result in greater membership numbers.

There is so much we can do, and this is just a brief description of my ideas. I’m available to expand on these subjects with anyone interested. I would be honored to become your director and your voice.

Ben Karl, CT
ben@bktranslation.com

I’m honored to have been nominated for the position of ATA director. I’ve been serving on the Board for the past year after being co-opted following the last election, and it would be my privilege to be elected by my peers to my first full term this year. I would like to continue my work as director and help ATA keep moving forward.

I’ve been an ATA member since 2016 and owe my professional success in large part to this community, which works tirelessly to support, professionalize, and advance the careers of language professionals.

I’m a Mandarin>English and ATA-certified French>English translator and copywriter based in Long Beach, California. I specialize in corporate and marketing communications and user experience.

In addition to currently serving as director, I also serve ATA in other ways. I’ve chaired ATA’s Advocacy Committee since fall 2021, leading a team of dedicated members who are working to monitor and respond to issues important to ATA members and empower us all to be better advocates. We’ve issued calls to action to members, drafted official ATA position statements, contacted legislators and policymakers, signed letters on behalf of the Association, and participated in legislative action days on Capitol Hill.

I’ve also served on ATA’s Membership Committee since 2018 and as the Membership Committee representative to ATA’s Government Linguistic Outreach Task Force. During my time on the Membership Committee, I’ve helped roll
out new member orientation sessions, a guide to help new translators get started in our industry, and an upcoming member survey to ensure we know more about who our members are and how we can serve them better.

Apart from ATA, I’ve chaired the Translatio Standing Committee of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) since 2018. If re-elected, I’m eager to continue the meaningful work I’m already doing. I’m a professional association evangelist, and I’m passionate about promoting the benefits of ATA more broadly so we can start growing ATA’s membership again and thus our dues income, one of our main revenue streams. It’s important for us to know who we’re serving and what our members need, which is why I’m excited about the upcoming member survey, which I encourage everyone to take. I’m very proud of the Advocacy Committee’s work and excited to share everything we’ve been working on, including a free resource library to help every linguist advocate for themselves and our profession more effectively. We are fortunate to have an Association that can put its full weight behind issues that matter to us. When we work together, we are stronger.

Finally, I believe very strongly in taking additional steps to embody and fulfill ATA’s 2017 Resolution Supporting Diversity. I would continue to advocate for the Board to allocate more resources to initiatives that support our underrepresented members and the communities they serve. I’m grateful to be considered for this position and hope to be able to serve you all as director.

I’m very honored to have been nominated for an ATA director position. I’m an ATA-certified English-Japanese translator, published author, English as a second language (ESL)/Japanese language instructor, founder/teacher of an online translation course, interpreter, and YouTuber. I’ve been involved in many activities as a linguist for the past seven years promoting the translation industry. I’ve done so using social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and blogging. We need to let the public know how important translators are, especially because many people in the world have the false idea that artificial intelligence has advanced to the level where translators and translations are no longer necessary.

After receiving an MEd in curriculum and instruction from the University of Texas at Austin and working as an ESL/Japanese teacher for several years, both in the U.S. and Japan, I became a translator. I’ve lived in various parts of the U.S. (e.g., Texas, California, and Alaska) and around the world, including the U.K. and several cities in Japan. I’ve also been an in-house translator for several years in the U.K. and Texas. Being ATA-certified for 25 years has served as an extremely important credential during my career, regardless of how the economy has done. I’ve very much appreciated the freedom that being a freelancer has afforded me, personally and professionally.

I used to think that being anonymous and invisible as a translator was good enough, but the recent advancement in artificial intelligence has minimized our visibility in the world. This made me decide that it’s no longer appropriate to be a bystander and see the world so unaware of the translation industry, so I’ve become an enthusiastic advocate for linguistic professionals.

In order to carry out this advocacy, I’ve been working as an educator, published two ESL books demonstrating the importance of learning foreign languages and their associated cultures, taught translation online, and, with help from colleagues in ATA’s Japanese Language Division, given seminars for prospective translators. Through these activities I’ve helped recruit new members to ATA and to the Japanese Language Division. I also have a YouTube channel where I share information on how to become a successful translator. (As of August 2022, the channel...
has 3,750 subscribers.) In 2020, in order to continue to grow and evolve as a linguist, I began offering interpreting services as well.

I believe there are many more things we can do to ensure that our industry thrives and also attracts more people from younger generations to our community.

If elected, I would leverage the skills I’ve acquired as an influencer to spread the news of how valuable linguists are, how much we count in all aspects of society, and encourage those of the younger generation to become translators and interpreters so that our community of professionals can continue to grow and flourish.

Caroline Kyung Ha Kim
Caroline_kim@sbcglobal.net
I sincerely appreciate you considering me for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors and trust your judgment to make the right decision.

If elected, I’ll work to promote the value and reputation of translators and interpreters to ensure that the work of language professionals is appreciated by the public. I’ll reimage the referral program so that ATA will be the go-to source for anyone in the U.S. who needs a translator or interpreter. I’ll keep you updated on language access, professional standards, working conditions, and advocate so your voice will be heard by ATA.

To increase ATA membership, I’ll reach out to former ATA members, listening and encouraging them to become lifelong members. I’ll enhance support systems, such as ATA’s Mentoring Program, the Buddies Welcome Newbies session at ATA’s Annual Conference, and expand networking opportunities in person and virtually. One of the reasons I especially enjoy ATA is because it gives me the opportunity to experience the diversity of our profession. I’ve learned from dialogues, mentoring, colleagues, friendships gained from membership in divisions, listservs, webinars, meetings, and conferences.

My career has benefited tremendously from ATA membership and I’m looking forward to helping other people get the same benefits.

Since 2002, I’ve been a conscientious ATA member, attending 11 in-person Annual Conferences across the U.S. and two virtual ATA Annual Conferences. I presented a session on interpreting the nuances of idioms and proverbs at the 2012 ATA Annual Conference. I’ve enjoyed being the assistant administrator of ATA’s Korean Language Division (KLD) for three years, where recently we’ve been working hard to increase membership by sending notifications and encouraging participation in our listserv and meetings. I’ve encouraged collaboration with other ATA divisions and ATA Headquarters. I’ve also served on KLD’s Leadership Council and Conference Committee.

I’m an official federal court interpreter, state certified court interpreter (California), and translator in Korean and English. I have 20 years of experience in Korean simultaneous conference interpreting and interpreting and translating in the areas of information technology, law, medicine, and business. I’m also a voice-over talent, translator, and dialect coach for film and television.

I have a legal interpreting and translation Korean/English certificate from the University of California, Los Angeles. I have a secondary Korean foreign language credential, a California secondary single subject English teaching credential, and a cross-cultural language and academic development certificate from Point Loma Nazarene University in California. As an approved instructor for court interpreter minimum continuing education credit (CIMCE), I’ve presented CIMCE courses on interpreting Korean and English cultural expressions, colloquialism, slang, and grammatical structures. I volunteered as vice president for the Korean Professional Interpreters Association (2011, 2012, 2015–2018) and as a CIMCE advisor. Currently, I serve on the Leadership Council of ATA’s Law Division.

I look forward to working together with the members of ATA will hold its elections at the ATA 63rd Annual Conference in Los Angeles, October 12-15, 2022.
ATA to further ATA’s mission and promote our industry.

Edna Santizo, CI
lsantizo.es@gmail.com

I’m honored to be nominated for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors.

In 2010, after earning a certificate in professional translation and legal interpreting, I was advised by my mentors to join a professional association to build my network and find professional development opportunities. I joined ATA that same year and found my tribe.

In 2016, I was invited to join the Digital and Social Media Committee (DSMC) of ATA’s Spanish Language Division (SPD). The following year, I was appointed chair of the same committee. That opportunity offered me a platform to learn about the inner workings of one of ATA’s largest divisions. In my role as a member of SPD’s Leadership Council, I had the opportunity to support SPD’s administration with several division-related tasks, including: organizing committees for SPD annual dinners and activities, serving as a member of SPD’s Hospitality and Podcast Committees, and contributing to the Student Involvement Committee.

In 2019, I co-chaired the DSMC. During my tenure on this committee, I helped maintain and support an active and growing SPD presence on all the division’s social media channels. I also added our presence on Pinterest, Instagram, and LinkedIn with a profile page.

In addition, I volunteered as chair of the Translation Company Division’s Nominating Committee (2019) and as a member of the Language Technology Division’s Nominating Committee (2021).

I currently serve as SPD administrator (2020-2022). As administrator, I’ve successfully collaborated with SPD’s Leadership Council to organize, promote, and deliver the core services prescribed by ATA’s Divisions Handbook. With the assistance of other SPD leaders, the division has been able to offer quality professional development and networking opportunities to our members. Some examples include:

- Offered, for the first time, two free webinars and a networking session exclusively to SPD members via Zoom.
- Organized two Instagram Live conversations about T&I topics.
- In 2021, SPD’s Professional Development Committee (PDC) collaborated closely with ATA’s PDC to offer six successful and well-attended webinars tailored to SPD’s membership through ATA’s webinar series.
- In 2022, ATA’s PDC, in collaboration with the SPD PDC, offered the first two-day workshop on Spanish grammar and punctuation. Both the first workshop and a second iteration sold out within weeks.

- Encouraged ongoing collaboration with the Organización Mexicana de Traductores.
- Published an interview with the renowned author Isabel Allende in SPD’s newsletter, *Intercambios*.

As a freelance conference and community interpreter and small-business owner, I have witnessed and lived the challenges of our profession. My past experience as an office manager has provided me with a solid background in project management, communication, and multitasking. I believe my skill set and background will prove to be beneficial to ATA.

If elected, I’ll prioritize the following:

- Address the needs of ATA members
- Foster and promote leadership and professional development
- Seek and ensure cooperation with ATA divisions and ATA committees.

I offer my gratitude for your kind consideration and vote.
Balancing Act:
Caring for Someone with Dementia While Keeping a Practice Afloat

It isn’t unusual for freelancers to end up as caregivers. To varying degrees, we’re the flexible ones in the family. Most of us, at one time or another, have been or will be caregivers of some kind.

By Carol Shaw
The Best Laid Plans

I sat on the end of the bed in my parents’ guestroom, facing the small folding table that held my laptop, and began the day’s work. A few minutes later, my father walked in.

“There’s my girl,” he beamed, and started chatting about this and that. Then he stopped mid-sentence and exclaimed, “Oh, you’re working! I’m sorry, I’ll let you get back to it!” and left. Fifteen minutes later, he walked in again and the scene repeated. In fact, it repeated several times that morning. That was the first sign that my plans might need to be revised.

The second sign came just before noon. As I bent over my work, proofreading a rush translation, my mother came in to say that lunch was ready. “I’ll be out in a bit,” I told her, “There’s an anxious project manager in Houston literally waiting by his computer for me to finish.”

The full authority of motherhood flashed across Mom’s face, she drew herself up to full height, and told me firmly, “No. You need to call your client in Houston and tell them lunch is on the table. They’ll wait.”

For a split second, I was five years old again, being told I couldn’t go out to play until I ate my peas.

But I hadn’t been five years old in decades. Instead, my father had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. My mother was in the early stages of an unspecified dementia. And the brilliant plans I had made so I could work from their senior living facility while caring for them during extended visits were crumbling all around me.

Have Computer, Will Travel

It isn’t unusual for freelancers to end up as caregivers. To varying degrees, we’re the flexible ones in the family. Most of us, at one time or another, have been or will be caregivers of some kind. Over the years, I’ve read our colleagues’ discussions online about caregiving, the challenges they’ve faced, and the solutions they’ve found. Whether raising small children or caring for the chronically ill, whether we live with them or just near them, most of the challenges seem to be the same:

- Meeting our loved one’s needs without losing our business
- Finding time for self-care (and accepting that we need it)
- Knowing when to ask for help and how to find it

But when that loved one has any form of dementia, there’s a twist: For the remainder of their lives they will never not need care, and their needs will never be static.

Backups and Redundancies

My brother, Steve Moore, is also a freelance translator. Once our parents’ medical conditions began to manifest, my siblings and I moved them from their home near me in Texas to a senior living facility in our parents’ home area in northern Indiana. There, they could start out in independent living, then transition to assisted living or memory care as needed. Steve lived a mere 10 minutes away. He and his wife (a nurse) would help my parents with their day-to-day needs, like doctor appointments, grocery shopping, and so on. I would provide respite care, traveling from Texas to Indiana to live with my parents for days or weeks at a stretch, several times a year. Our sister and brother served as sounding boards from afar and weighed in on major decisions. There were other friends and family in the vicinity who could step in for short periods. This gave us multiple levels of backup care, and over the years we used them all.

As their live-in respite care, I would need to be able to work from their home. Backups and redundancies were necessary there as well.

- The closet in the guestroom held a stand-alone monitor so that on each visit I would have my usual two-screen setup without the need to transport one of my desk monitors.
- Projects were not only stored on my laptop, but were also saved regularly to a large-capacity flash drive. If my computer failed during a late-night work session, I could use my parents’ computer to finish the job or contact my client.
- Their internet service was part of the facility’s Wi-Fi network for residents. It worked fine, until it didn’t. I bought a prepaid USB satellite stick for my laptop. That put a secondary connection at my fingertips.
- And finally, I set up remote access to Big Momma, my desktop computer at home. When the computer-assisted translation tool on my laptop developed a glitch, I was able to email the updated memory file to myself, access the program on Big Momma, and finish the job, leaving the software debugging for later, when there was more time.

Communication

With any form of dementia, things are always changing. There isn’t a lot of predictability as to when or how, either. Because of that, clear and constant communication is vital.

Part of that communication came at the start. At the time our parents moved close to him, Steve still had a preteen daughter at home. He and his wife discussed with her how Grandma and Grandpa’s care might impact his availability. I sat down with...
my grown sons and discussed what support I needed from them during my absences: picking up mail, depositing payments, and sending me updates.

Before each trip, I would email my clients with my travel dates and, if they were direct clients, the names and email addresses of colleagues they could contact with any urgent requests if I was unavailable.

Neither Steve nor I went anywhere without our cell phones. While we both tried to be realistic regarding delivery times, our respective clients did get the occasional message if we were late or unavailable. But we both agreed to call them about any issues. We also set up a system where our siblings could watch out for one another when we were out of town.

Time Management and Realism

That first day of my first extended visit, it became obvious that my meticulously planned schedule (three hours of work in the morning, two in the afternoon, and two or three late at night) was completely unrealistic. While I lived with my parents, I would have to follow the rhythm of their days, not mine or my clients'.

So, taking into account the times when my parents' cognitive functions were at their best (early in the day), when they napped, watched TV, and went to bed, I started putting a workday that looked something like this:

- 4:00 to 7:00 a.m. (while they were sleeping)
- 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. (while they napped)
- 9:00 to 12:00 p.m. (once they were in bed for the night).

Messages were answered as I could throughout the day. Over the next three years, as my parents' health deteriorated and safety issues multiplied, this schedule changed. In fact, it changed many times. Toward the end, I was working an average of five hours a day in time segments ranging from 30 minutes to two hours during my extended visits.

Space to Breathe, Time to Laugh

A staff member at a care facility recently told me to "pay attention when the overwhelm hits. Caregiver burnout is real." Being a caregiver and at the same time a self-employed professional is a balancing act, and part of doing it effectively is to consciously find ways to de-stress.

My brother is a bonsai artist. "Playing with my trees was one significant way" to relieve stress, he told me. "Or sometimes just sitting on the deck, looking at them."

For me, the magic formula is writing—but social media helped as well. Those short, easily controlled interactions with friends and family pulled my focus away from the immediate situation for just a moment and gave me perspective.

And then there’s humor. There’s nothing quite so de-stressing as a belly laugh.

During my first long-distance stint, I sat down one night to access a file that was back home on Big Momma. I logged in remotely, opened the file, and…it instantly disappeared. I tried again. And again. And again. Each time, the file opened and then promptly closed.

Resources for Caregivers

If you find yourself facing this or a similar situation, Presbyterian Village North and, I’m sure, other facilities can offer counsel and downloadable information. Here are some other resources for caregivers:

**AARP**
This is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization offering services and information to aging people. AARP offers legal checklists, information on care options, an online community, and a page of local resources and links to medical services, Alzheimer’s programs and more. The organization also offers a Family Caregiving guide.

**Alzheimer’s Association**
This group offers resources for those with Alzheimer’s and dementia, along with their caregivers. Included is information on symptoms, diagnosis, stages, treatment, care, and support resources. The group’s online tools page features an online forum called ALZConnected, e-learning workshops, a planning aid called Alzheimer’s Navigator, and more.

**Alzheimers.gov**
This site from the federal government provides free information about Alzheimer’s Disease, including information on Medicare coverage, treatment options, and referrals to local community resources.

**Caregiver Action Network**
This group offers resources for caregivers, including forums and tips.
As I was at my wits’ end, my cell phone rang. It was my younger son. “Mom!” he said in a worried voice, “I think you have a virus! I’m at your computer and this file popped open all by itself, and it just keeps opening no matter how many times I close it…”

Whatever the method of choice, the importance of finding space to breathe and time to laugh cannot be understated.

Just as I was at my wits’ end, my cell phone rang. It was my younger son. “Mom!” he said in a worried voice, “I think you have a virus! I’m at your computer and this file popped open all by itself, and it just keeps opening no matter how many times I close it…”

Whatever the method of choice, the importance of finding space to breathe and time to laugh cannot be understated.

“Your Loved One Needs Care, but They Also Need You”

Lisa Englander is the director of residential services at Presbyterian Village North, a Dallas facility that offers independent living, assisted living, and memory support care. I spoke with her about recognizing when at-home solutions are no longer viable for the care of a loved one with dementia.

“The first thing is safety,” she said. “Can they be left alone without wandering off? Could they pose a danger to themselves or others? Do you find that all your time is spent supervising them?”

Second, she pointed to the need to connect as yourself. “Your loved one needs a caregiver, yes, but they also need you as you,” she stressed. In other words, if an adult child’s sole interaction with their parent is as a caregiver, the parent-child relationship may be lost. Not everyone has access to the same services or support, but the more we can rely on the solutions that are available to us, the more we are free to fill the need that no one else can: our presence as their loved one.

In the End

As I said before, when someone has dementia, for the rest of their lives they will never not need care.

My father’s Alzheimer’s was interrupted by pancreatic cancer and he died before he lost the memory of us. Mom followed him 11 months later when her broken heart gave out. After her funeral, after sharing precious time with my siblings, I packed up my car and—seven weeks after I’d last slept in my own bed—drove back to Texas.

My business survived the years of travel back and forth, the interrupted nights, and hectic days. The lessons in flexibility and adapting to circumstances helped prepare me for the pandemic and its challenges.

If caring for a loved one with dementia is on your horizon, please know this: it’s a balancing act, and one that will be unique to you and your situation. But in the end, it can be a gift.

Carol Shaw, CT is an ATA-certified Spanish-English translator and holds a Texas Master Court Interpreter license. She serves on ATA’s Professional Development Committee and on the Interpreters Division’s Leadership Council, managing the division’s blog. A believer in associations, she is also active in the Texas Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education, and Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association. Raised in Ecuador, she and her laptop sometimes spend a few weeks working from her sister’s home in Quito. carol@carolshaw.net
Being aware of how words sound in our ears when we hear them—of how words feel in our bodies when we speak them—can provide a powerful physical counterweight to the undertow of suffering tugging at our attention, and tugging down our boundaries, as we interpret.

I had been interpreting for Ahmed for almost two years when one day his words dried up. As an asylum seeker fleeing Algeria in 2007, he had already come through a lot. An escalating series of death threats from Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb had culminated—late one night, as he was closing out the register at his restaurant—in four men spilling out of an SUV, headlights glaring, guns blazing. Ahmed had narrowly escaped his attackers through a safety door leading upstairs to his apartment. But because Al Qaeda’s reach extended far beyond his city, he was forced to flee Algeria.

I was helping Ahmed prepare for his immigration court hearing. As a senior corporate paralegal at Orrick, a large international law firm with an extensive pro bono practice, I served on the Volunteer Interpreters’ Panel of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, but I also worked with Orrick attorneys as part of Ahmed’s legal team.

I had dual roles then, as an interpreter and advocate. Ahmed’s attorneys had asked me to work with him, one on one, a few days before the hearing, to practice his testimony in French as it had been scrupulously developed in meetings. Both emotionally and legally compelling, his story was based solidly on persecution for religious and political beliefs as a non-observant Muslim opposed to terrorism.

Turning Memories into Testimony

Yet like many asylum seekers—traumatized by an initial catastrophic event whose effects are compounded when an individual is uprooted from family and community—Ahmed found it hard to align the swirl of his splintered memories with the precise chronology required to convince a judge. As we practiced, he froze periodically into stretches of silence, or stumbled over actions he had recounted easily before.

I had come to know Ahmed well. I knew that the gunmen’s shots had both terrified and shamed him, this successful business owner, loving husband, and father of two young children. The restaurant boarded over, his family crowded in with relatives, Ahmed was alone and barely scraping by, stocking shelves in a city on the other side of the world.

“This is hard,” he said finally. “Sometimes it all gets jumbled up in my head.”

“I know,” I said. “It’s really hard. Remember, though, when the terrorists were shooting, you had no choice but to run. Now it’s different. When you tell your story, it’s where you stand your ground and strike back.”
I haven’t experienced vicarious trauma. But in one of my first interpreting sessions, during a meeting with attorneys, I interpreted for Aissata, an asylum seeker from Guinea who had been subjected, as a young girl, to genital cutting. As an adult she was tortured by government forces for belonging to a political party opposing an attempt by Guinea’s president to extend his term for life.

The meeting lasted several hours. For at least an hour afterwards, I sat in my office with the door closed, the phone silenced, and stared at the surface of my desk. I felt as if I had been flattened by a truck.

Yet I also felt I had just discovered work of enormous complexity and utility, a way of using whatever I knew about French to support a woman from another continent, whom I had never met before, in telling her story of integrity and courage before an American judge. She had fled Guinea because her life was in danger. If I could help her convey her story, I would be helping to save her life.

I recognized, in that moment, that I wanted to continue this work. Over the years that followed, I also came to recognize that, if the work is to be sustainable, interpreters need techniques for building resilience.

Interpreter Self-Care: A New Wealth of Online Resources

I’m deeply grateful for the extensive, expert work accomplished over the past decade by practitioners, researchers, agencies, and organizations to support interpreters with a range of self-care techniques. During 2022 alone, the following invaluable free resources have become available online:

1. “Trauma Basics for Interpreters: When Trauma Is in the Room.” Foreign Language Interpreting about Traumatic Experiences.” A webinar presented by Lisa Aronson Fontes on June 15, 2022, through Blue Horizon, the online training platform of Cross-Cultural Communications, LLC.


3. Breaking Silence: Interpreting for Victim Services, by Marjorie Bancroft, Katharine Allen, Carola Green, and Lois Feuerle. This is a specialized training manual for trained, professional interpreters, with accompanying workbook and glossary, produced by Cross-Cultural Communications, LLC in 2022. The manual was undertaken as a project for Ayuda, which provides legal, social, and language services to help low-income immigrants access justice, with funding from the District of Columbia Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants.
**Drawing Resilience from the Source: The Well of Language**

In addition to these tools, I find myself, as a writer, turning repeatedly to another source: the well of language from which we drink so deeply, daily, that it’s easily taken for granted. Yet there they are, hiding in plain sight: the words we hear in one language, then speak in another as we listen to immigrants tell their stories.

Of course, we’re already listening—at every moment, with all the attentiveness we can muster—for the meaning of what we hear. When we speak, we’re equally attentive to the meaning of each utterance.

At the same time, we need to be aware that every word has a physical presence, not only in our minds but in our bodies: our ears, tongues, throats, chests. Being aware of how words sound in our ears when we hear them—of how words feel in our bodies when we speak them—can provide a powerful physical counterweight to the undertow of suffering tugging at our attention, and tugging down our boundaries, as we interpret.

During my time interpreting for Aissata, an attorney asked if she thought her husband, brutally beaten in prison, might still be alive. She responded “Non, c’est pas possible,” and I said, “No, it’s not possible.” At that moment, meaning was paramount in my mind. I had come to know Aissata well and mourned her husband’s likely death.

Yet there was a silent, underground part of myself that noticed how the fiercely nasal non contrasted with the percussive, alliterative hits of pas possible. That same part of me sneaked a quick sip from the way, in English, the long “o” in “No” modulated to the broader “o” of “not,” which in turn was echoed in “possible”—and how all those flat, drawn-out English sounds contrasted with the fluid French they rendered.

**From an Ancient Art: Four Fresh Techniques**

As I’ve tried to capture, as a poet, some of the struggles and satisfactions in interpreting for asylum seekers, I’ve developed techniques rooted in poetry that have helped steady me after challenging sessions, and that may be of use to others.

But why poetry? Isn’t poetry too delicate a companion to help us make our way through a sometimes charred, broken landscape? What makes poetry up to the task is that, as U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón said, it’s “the only creative writing art form that builds breath into it.”

Each stanza or line break gives space for the reader to breathe, to slow down for an infinitesimal moment, rather than charging, as we tend to, ahead.

When our minds are hell-bent on meaning, poetry, rooted in the body, holds us to a slower pace. It insists that we consider words in all their dimensions—sound and rhythm as well as sense. When we interpret for those who’ve experienced trauma, the narrative can threaten to undermine our bodies and minds. Poetry’s unique gift is to strengthen both. The following techniques may help unlock this gift.

1. **After a session, reclaim in writing your solo voice.** Writing about your experiences in a journal can be very helpful. But try choosing just a few words or concrete details that stick in your memory. If some seem too painful, feel free to choose others: you’re in charge. Rather than encasing words in conventional sentences, try moving them around on the page. Arrange and rearrange.

   When I wrote about Aissata, I found the pain of her experience during genital cutting bound up in small details. Eventually they came to rest like this:

   **Near the woman’s hand, a small bright knife with a little handle, tied with a fuzzy piece of red string**

   I remained fully aware of each word’s meaning, but poetry opened me up to other dimensions. I read the words aloud. I noticed how the sound of “handle” echoed “hand,” and how the vowel sound in “string” semi-echoed “piece.” Then there was “fuzzy”—its sound, I realized, an outlier, a bumblebee among sharks.

   Just when I needed something to steady myself, I grasped at monosyllables: “small bright knife,” “red string”—each one sturdy as a walking stick, or a heartbeat.

   I love longhand’s tactile engagement, but if you prefer typing, go ahead. What’s essential here is a sense of freedom—anything that lets you put space around words to hear and see them in new, powerful ways. Immersed in, and at the mercy of, an interpreting session, you can’t do this. Now is your time to reclaim your voice, your language in all its dimensions.

2. **Honor, in post-session writing, the shared rhythms of consecutive interpreting.**

   Even during searing, high-stakes testimony, I’ve found—and clients have confirmed—a quiet but essential undertone of mutual support in the shared rhythms of consecutive interpreting. When a session is going well, try to hear, if only for a few seconds, the back-and-forth duet unfolding as your unique, human voice interweaves with another voice—also human, also unique.

   Later, in a journal or wherever you do your personal writing, try to remember a few sequences of words or phrases, first in the speaker’s voice, then yours. Place these on the page however you want, just as you did when writing about your experiences in your solo voice.

   Watch as these phrases take shape. Speak them, feel them in your body like the hum that starts up in your throat as you welcome your favorite song. Listen to the differences between languages like musical instruments, each contributing its timbre as thread to tapestry.

   Do any of these sounds evoke memories, whether of hearing or learning? For me (not a native speaker), that tricky French “r” reminds me of seventh grade, when
I doggedly explored regions of my throat I never knew existed until they emerged, by June, with the sound I couldn’t manage in September at the start of school. Speaking that “r,” even when interpreting brutality, can ground me physically in something beautiful that I found, initially, hard. It reminds me of times I’ve been discouraged and considered giving up.

Write your memories as well. They make the undertones of your particular music.

### Between sessions, keep your interpreting instrument in tune.

If you already like poetry, you can probably skip this section. But if you’re indifferent to it, dislike it, or simply feel intimidated, letting bits of it into your life for a few minutes, once or twice a week, can ease you into a way of hearing language that may—over the long term, indirectly but powerfully—strengthen your interpreting practice.

I’ve found that podcasts make this process simple. The two excellent podcasts listed below can bring you a wide range of contemporary poetry in short episodes. Typically, the host will read one poem and discuss it briefly, in an insightful, non-technical way that I almost always learn from:

- **Poetry Unbound**, hosted by Pádraig Ó Tuama. One 15-minute episode is released twice weekly.

Finally, while this isn’t a regular podcast, poet and novelist Ocean Vuong’s extended discussion with Krista Tippett (host of the On Being podcast), entitled “A Life Worthy of Our Breath,” ranges through themes of language, poetry, the body, immigration, displacement, and joy.

### Don’t memorize. Learn by heart.

If you decide that you would like to bring poetry even closer, choose a short poem—anything that speaks to you, in any language, rhymed or unrhymed—to learn by heart. Notice I didn’t say “memorize,” though, yes, it’s the same thing. But I like that “learning by heart” captures how, in the process of committing a poem to memory so you can say it out loud to yourself, you bring it into your body.

Choose your poem carefully: you’ll have it forever, like a third eye.

### Our Story Is Our Weapon

Interpreting for immigrants in the wake of trauma requires us to carry—in our bodies, our voices—the stories of others. When these stories haunt us, or when they are harrowing, it’s essential that we make space, somewhere in our lives, for our own stories.

Ahmed learned to shape his story into his weapon, to protect and shield him as he moved toward a new life. We also, in our work, at times need shields. Poetry, as an ancient art rooted in the body, can help us hear the muted rhythms of our voices tracing the shapes of our stories. When we’re at our most vulnerable, poetry can help steady us for our ongoing work.

### NOTED

1. The names and identifying details of former clients have been changed to protect confidentiality. In addition, asylum seekers like Ahmed whose stories formed the basis for my book, Second Tongue, were read the text aloud, in French, and provided written consent to publication. All profits from the sale of the book are being shared equally with my former clients.


3. “Vicarious Trauma and Language Professionals” (an ATA webinar presented by Ludmila Golovine on February 15, 2022).


5. Bessel van der Kolk, M.D., a clinician, researcher, and educator best known for his work on the effects and treatment of trauma, confirms that “[w]riting experiments from around the world…consistently show that writing about upsetting events improves physical and mental health.” See van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (Penguin Books, 2014), 242–243.

6. Bessel van der Kolk vividly describes how rituals of collective rhythm—expressed in music, dance, and theater as ways of “keeping together in time”—have helped veterans and others heal (See van der Kolk, Bessel. *Body Keeps the Score*, 335). Bruce Perry, M.D., a teacher, clinician, and researcher in children’s mental health and the neurosciences, writes that “[r]hythm is essential to a healthy body and a healthy mind.” Perry, Bruce D., and Oprah Winfrey. *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* (Flatiron Books, 2021), 47.

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In recent years, the term standardization has become increasingly relevant in the language industry, with a growing need for more information on the subject. The following serves as an introduction to the main aspects related to standardization and the language industry in Argentina. We’ll review the history of the development of Argentina’s language industry and define some basic concepts related to standards. We’ll analyze the historical development of standardization in Argentina. Next, we’ll focus on the adoption of standards applied to the language industry in Argentina by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Finally, we’ll share our conclusions about the standardization of language-related services in Argentina.

The Development of the Language Industry in Argentina

Argentina is a unique and well-developed market in the language industry, not only because of the large number of professional translators in the country with a high level of education and professionalism, but also because of the current relevance of Spanish as a target language. Argentine translators have inherited the tradition of extending bridges between cultures, a gift received from the culture and work of countless immigrants who came to the country from all over the world.

A high percentage of translators in Argentina have a degree from one of the many universities offering translation courses, and many seek additional training in areas of specialization. The most renowned universities are located in Buenos Aires, La Plata, Rosario, and Córdoba. These universities share the same focus in their curricula, which includes subjects such as linguistics, grammar, translation theory, interpreting, and translation methods and techniques applied to law, business, literature, science, engineering, and other fields. Translators can continue their professional development by attending the wide array of courses offered throughout the academic year by these institutions.

Many professional associations regulate the professional practice of sworn translation. To become a sworn translator (also called official or certified translator), linguists must have a university degree in legal translation and be accepted by one of the several professional translators’ associations in Argentina, such as the Association of Sworn Translators of the City of Buenos Aires (Colegio de Traductores Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, CTPCBA) or other professional associations in Córdoba, Rosario, Mendoza, Río Negro, Santa Fe, and Buenos Aires Province.

In 1973, the National Act 20,305 was approved by the national government,
regulating the professional practice of sworn translators in Argentina. As a result, the CTPCBA was created as a non–state public legal entity to govern the control and administration of a professional registry of sworn translators in various languages. Searches within the registry can be filtered by language combination and by cities and regions of Argentina.

The CTPCBA now has around 9,000 registered translators. According to Act 20,305, every document in a foreign language submitted before official, judicial, or administrative bodies or agencies shall be attached to a certified sworn translation in the national language, or vice versa. Pursuant to Section 10, Paragraph D of Act 20,305: "the Association of Sworn Translators of the City of Buenos Aires shall attach a certification stating that the signature and seal affixed to the translated document match the specimen signature and seal of the sworn translator whose name appears on the attached translation." Since 2019, certified sworn translators have been allowed to use their registered digital signatures. Translators have to file their signature with one of the authorized registration governmental authorities. The corresponding associations then authenticate the translated documents based on the registered digital signature.

According to data from Nimzdi, an international market research and consulting firm, the most dominant services provided by Argentine linguists are translation (28.6%), desktop publishing (10.7%), localization (10.7%), interpreting (8.9%), transcreation (5.4%), training courses (5.4%), and other related services (5.4%).

**What Does Standardization Mean?**

Standardization has a very long history dating back to the early 19th century, when the Industrial Revolution gave the real impetus for growth in this area. Standardization is a process intended to establish provisions aimed at common and repeated uses to achieve an optimum set of rules in a given industry. The result of this process is a document called a standard that specifies the provisions agreed upon by (ideally) all interested parties. Standards cover a huge range of activities. They can be about making a product, managing a process, delivering a service, or supplying materials. The purpose of a standard is to establish clear provisions that facilitate communication and commercial exchanges carried out at a national and international level. Standards can be national, regional, and international.

In general, standards are established by consensus and approved by a recognized body. They are agreed upon by experts who know the needs within the subject matter and of the organizations that these experts represent. Standards provide rules, guidelines, or characteristics for activities or their results to achieve the maximum degree of quality in a given context.

In connection with quality standards, the importance of a process-oriented approach must be stated. A process is an ordered sequence of interrelated activities. Process standardization is generally defined as improving operational performance, reducing expenses through decreased process errors, facilitating communication, and profiting from expert knowledge. Processes are designed to satisfy customer requirements more effectively and efficiently by assigning responsibilities within specific activities.

**Historical Development of Standardization in Argentina**

Each country has its own standardization body. Argentina is a trailblazer in standards in South America. Back in the early 20th century, some visionary organizations in Argentina saw the importance of founding a new technical, independent, and representative organization that could create standards that regulate and collaborate within the various activities of society. As a result, the Instituto Argentino de Normalización y Certificación (IRAM), a private nonprofit entity, was founded in 1925. It became a legal entity in 1937 and was shortly afterwards granted recognition by the government as the central organization for the technical and scientific study of standards, with the object of developing and maintaining uniformity of systems and process criteria throughout standards. The relationship between the Argentine government and IRAM is defined in Presidential Decree 1474/94, passed in August 1994, which established the National System for Standards, Quality, and Certification and defines its scope, operation, and implementation. Only two private sector organizations carry out standardization and accreditation in Argentina, working under the National System for Standards, Quality, and
Certification: the Organismo Argentino de Acreditación (Argentine Accreditation Body) and IRAM (also known as the Argentine Standardization Body).

The ability to differentiate the meaning of accreditation and certification according to the National System of Standards, Quality, and Certification is very important. On one hand, accreditation is the formal acknowledgment submitted by a third party that an organization complies with the specified requirements and that the organization is competent to perform the specific tasks to assess compliance. On the other hand, certification is a voluntary process through which a certification body assesses the compliance of a process, product, system, or person to applicable ISO standards.

To date, IRAM has published more than 9,000 consensus-based standards and has 270 active technical organizations in which representatives from production, consumption, science and technology, education, and government participate.

At a regional level, Argentina is a member of the Pan American Standards Commission and Mercosur Standardisation Association. At an international level, Argentina is a member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), and International Telecommunication Union.

Standards Related to the Language Industry in Argentina

ISO and IEC form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of international standards through technical committees. Other governmental and non-governmental international organizations collaborate with ISO and IEC to develop and adopt standards.

ISO defines the adoption of standards as: “the publication of a regional or national normative document based on a relevant international standard, or endorsement of the international standard as having the same status as a national normative document, with any deviations from the international standard identified.”

According to the European Commission, “normative documents” consist of a broad category of documents, including those establishing juridical (legal) norms, and requirements.

In the adoption process, changes in wording may occur, such as replacing single words or phrases in the regional or national standard with synonyms to reflect common language use in the region or country adopting the international standard. ISO published its Adoption of International Standards—ISO/IEC Guide 21-1:2005 as a way to provide: “methods for determining the degree of correspondence/affinity between regional/national standards and international standards; adopting international standards at a regional or national level; stating technical deviations that would facilitate the identification of any deviation; and numbering of regional or national standards that are identical adoptions of international standards.”

Following this guide, the standards listed below have been adopted in Argentina. One of these standards (IRAM 13650) is still in the preparatory stage and has not been published yet:

- IRAM–ISO 12616:2006—Translation-Oriented Terminography
- IRAM 13612:2018—Interpreting. Requirements and Recommendations for
Standardization in Argentina: Leading the Way

One of the main reasons the language services industry in Argentina is unique and well developed is due to the sound academic background of its language professionals. Thus, it’s not surprising that Argentina has been one of the first markets in Latin America to adopt international ISO language–related standards and develop its own national standard for certified sworn translations. Standardization in Argentina has provided a framework to all relevant parties in the industry and contributed to ensuring quality through predefined processes, thereby boosting productivity by eliminating guesswork and supporting the flow of information along the value chain. Moreover, the adoption and integration of language–related standards at a national level is of particular importance for competitiveness and opening up markets.

We hope this article inspires other national markets to embrace standards in their language industry. Our vision is that in the near future standardization will become commonplace for all language professionals around the world.

NOTES

1. See the curricula of the Translation Course of Studies at the University of Buenos Aires and the Translation Course of Studies at the Universidad del Salvador.
2. Curricula of the Translation Course of Studies at the University of La Plata.
3. Curricula of the Translation Course of Studies at the University of Rosario.
4. Curricula of the Translation Course of Studies at the University of Córdoba.
5. See CTPCBA’s official website.
7. Digital Signature in Argentina.
9. See the “Who We Are” section on the website of the Instituto Argentino de Normalización y Certificación.

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Team Interpreting for Magistrate Courts in Texas

By Sandra Dejeux

While over-the-phone interpreting and video remote interpreting have been great solutions for courts that have to conduct daily business online, these solutions still come with the pitfalls associated with always providing professional interpreting services.

Sometimes people involved in language access decisions believe that first appearance hearings—or, as we refer to them in Texas, magistration hearings—are an easy task for interpreters. This is probably because even though they’re fast-paced, these hearings are also repetitive. Once you’ve interpreted for magistrate courts for a while you know the drill. Judges will always mention four things: 1) the charges brought against the detainee, 2) the range of punishment, 3) the detainee’s rights, and, if the detainee is eligible, 4) the bond amount set for their release and its conditions (e.g., they cannot have committed or been convicted of a certain type of serious crime).
But stakeholders who believe that these hearings are an easy task for interpreters overlook the fact that it can be difficult to adjust to the speech patterns of the various speakers involved. The questions and comments uttered by detainees can be long and incoherent, and court colloquy, when providing information or responding to questions, can be lengthy and complex. And, if interpreting online, add to the mix distorted sounds, frozen screens, people speaking through their smart phones, surgical masks (and sometimes even clear face shields) muffling the utterances, voices overlapping, and interlocutors speaking through a computer microphone instead of headphones. Here you have the perfect recipe for inaccurate interpreting, miscommunication, and an inaccurate record of the proceedings.

Over-the-phone interpreting (OPI) and video remote interpreting (VRI) have been great solutions for courts that have to conduct daily business online, and they have certainly been great for magistrate courts in Texas. That being said, these solutions still come with the pitfalls associated with always providing professional interpreting services.

The Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA) played an important role in helping courts transition to conducting business online and providing language access remotely. OCA provided free Zoom licenses for courts across the state that included the option of a simultaneous interpreting channel. Providing remote interpreting services was nothing new for OCA. They had been offering free over-the-phone and VRI services to courts across Texas through their Texas Court Remote Interpreter Services Program for almost a decade. This put them in a good position to assist courts that were becoming acquainted with VRI. The challenge was when two counties would request assistance with court interpreting for magistration hearings taking place at a prison or detention center three times a day, seven days a week.

The OCA’s Language Access Department was happy to provide the service, but it was reserved for short, non-contested, and non-evidentiary hearings. Staff interpreters soon found themselves working mostly for magistration hearings, so they knew they wouldn’t be able to continue providing services for a long period, at least not without help. They presented the arguments not only to justify hiring a few contract interpreters to assist them, but to also provide team interpreting whenever dockets had more than five detainees that required the services of a Spanish interpreter.

The services have exceeded expectations, thanks in part to the lead interpreter in charge of the program, and to the administrative staff that has been very supportive toward interpreters. The program complies with the state’s government judicial code requiring master licensed court interpreters, since statutes don’t allow basic license holders to interpret for judges acting as magistrates. Interpreters in the program have developed a methodology (discussed below) that allows them to minimize delays due to technical difficulties or lack of interpreters on-site. They also have convinced judges and staff that having a backup interpreter can always come in handy. I’m happy to be part of this interpreting team and would like to share some highlights of the program.

Working and Communicating with Your Team Interpreter

By the time my interpreting partner and I joined the team, the two staff interpreters had already established a method to communicate with each other while working. As the program has grown, each one of us has contributed with comments and ideas on how to improve the system. Here are the highlights of the methodology.

Interpret in the consecutive mode. This is the best interpreting mode for this type of hearing, since detainees generally appear in groups of five to eight individuals, and the Magistration Warnings, also known as the Advisal of Rights, are read to them as a group. Later on, judges hold individual sessions (online hearings) and address the specifics of each case.

Use a Microsoft Teams Channel to communicate with team members. This
chat allows us to keep track of the docket by typing in the name of each detainee, which is also the session we need to interpret. When we’re in the last session of each group, we let our team interpreter know so they can join and be ready to start interpreting for the next group. This chat also allows us to provide support if one of us is stuck on a word or having technical issues and needs the other one to take over immediately.

**Use a Microsoft Teams Channel to communicate with court staff.** This chat allows us to communicate with the rest of the team if we’re experiencing audio or video problems that can impact our performance (e.g., loud noises at the jail or feedback generated by a microphone or speaker). Multitasking can be challenging in the beginning, especially if you’re not computer savvy and on top of using the delay feature with the regular headaches of VRI (e.g., having to focus on typing things in the chat). Once you become accustomed to the system, however, the steps become part of your daily routine and you don’t even think about them anymore.

**Creating a Good Environment When Working with a Team Interpreter**

Of course, not everything is easy sailing when working as a team interpreter. It requires compromise and a willingness to accept working with a partner. For those of us who are impatient, used to working alone, or feel overwhelmed when working with someone we feel might be judging our performance, here are a few recommendations:

**Create a glossary.** This helps to lay the foundation for what type of terms and word choices everyone feels will be clear to the majority of detainees, as there are always language variations and regionalisms that might be difficult to understand. Having a glossary on hand also avoids judges and staff speculating as to why one interpreter keeps using one term while others use a different one.

**Learn to compromise.** Keep in mind that you’re working as part of a team. You’re there to help each other, not to compete and try to outshine your colleague. Having a good relationship with your team interpreter will make the work environment more pleasant. This is important to avoid both of you feeling like you’re working with a check interpreter instead of a support interpreter.

**Find your rhythm while allowing others to find theirs.** You might be a fast typist but slow to adjust the settings on your headphones and camera. Your partner might be a fast speaker, whereas you are not. That’s okay, as everyone has a different rhythm and working routine. The important thing is to learn to be patient and take advantage of each other’s strengths to excel while interpreting.

**Limit messages on the chat.** Unnecessary messages can be distracting and stressful and will affect performance.

**Be respectful to your colleague.** Remember that you’re both equally qualified. Respect each other’s word choices and don’t try to impose your interpreting style on your partner. Make comments only when the term chosen impacts the meaning of the message, or when you notice your partner is stuck on a word they might not remember or with which they are unfamiliar.

**Make it a habit to conduct team meetings to discuss possible issues.** Be sure to have periodic team meetings to work through any issues that might have surfaced while working together.

**General Recommendations**

Anticipate, but don’t get ahead of the judge. Being able to anticipate allows interpreters to start to structure utterances before the speakers are done talking. However, sometimes interpreters who have been working for the same judge for a while may be tempted to stop listening after the first few words because they think they know what the judge will say next. This can result in interpreting errors, as a judge might say something different than what’s expected and the interpreter will miss it or add something to the message that was not yet said by the judge.

**Avoid interpreter fatigue.** If you need a break, just say so. Some judges forget about
the interpreter and either speak very fast or for long periods, which puts stress on interpreters and forces them to write lengthier notes. If this makes you tired, ask for a break or ask the judge to slow down and insert pauses. Remember, the code of ethics for licensed court interpreters requires that we disclose things that can hinder our performance, and fatigue is one of them.

**Protect your hearing.**
Always use a good set of headphones and adjust your volume settings so the sound won’t hurt your ears. Acoustic shock has become a concern for many VRI and conference interpreters, so we must be aware of this risk and protect ourselves against it. If you think that someone else has set their volume too high or too low, let them know. Don’t take unnecessary risks to please other stakeholders.

**Wear professional attire.**
Remember that even if you’re working remotely, you’re still an officer of the court and should always dress professionally. Judges appreciate that, especially in an era where people appear in sweatpants and tank tops, thinking that the proceedings are less formal because they’re using a tablet or their smartphone.

Finally, I would like to say that while this article focuses on VRI team interpreting, the program created to provide video remote hearings for Texas magistrate courts wouldn’t have succeeded had it not been for the entire team of stakeholders. They understand that due process cannot be met unless magistrate judges and non-English and limited-English-proficient individuals can communicate effectively.

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**NOTES**
1. Texas Court Remote Interpreter Services Program [Office of Court Administration].
2. Government code (Texas Judicial Branch) requiring master licensed court interpreters.
3. Texas Court Code of Ethics for Licensed Court Interpreters.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**


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What Does Shrinkflation Have to Do with T&I?

Have you heard of an economics term called shrinkflation? I hadn’t until earlier this year. Unfortunately, I encountered it in Spanish during an interpreting assignment. (Luckily, it was a practice assignment!) I did recognize the term and was able to render it correctly in English, but didn’t know exactly what it was all about, so I looked it up.

Turns out you don’t need to be an economist to understand the concept. Shrinkflation is what happens when manufacturers sell you seemingly the same quantity of product, but it’s actually less—and they sell it at the same price or higher. This means, of course, that customers are both receiving less and paying more, which is hardly a way for sellers of products to make themselves popular. Therefore, sellers of myriad products—from cookies to laundry detergent—have found clever ways to trick customers into believing they’re receiving the same quantity of product as before: think clever packaging and some misleading labeling. Some clueless customers, like yours truly, hadn’t even noticed they were getting fewer cookies than before, which is exactly what the seller intended.

While this goes without saying, I do want to state for the record that I’m in no way, shape, or form advocating for applying the principles of shrinkflation to our services businesses, which would be difficult to do anyway. (It’s not like it would be easy to offer 50 minutes of interpreting instead of the usual hour and bill the same fee schedule.) What I’m advocating for is that we need to adjust for inflation. Let’s have a closer look.

Readers of this column, which, believe it or not, dates back to 2009, might recognize an argument that I’ve been making for years: that as self-employed small business owners, we must adjust our fee schedule for inflation, if only to preserve our purchasing power. If you work in-house for a company, this adjustment—which is far from a raise—is usually called a cost-of-living adjustment. In fact, when I was an in-house translation team manager many moons ago, my boss and I had good-natured banter every January about the raise versus cost-of-living adjustment question, and every year I would get both. It turns out that we’re not as good about giving ourselves what companies—at least good companies—naturally give their employees. Many colleagues don’t adjust for inflation at all. If you don’t adjust in 10 years and inflation is, say, 3% every year, you have essentially decreased your purchasing power by more than 30%, but probably significantly more due to something called compound interest (the interest you earn on interest). Adjusting for inflation is now, for the first time in decades, something that’s gone from nice-to–have to critical. With inflation rates at unprecedented levels in the U.S., which, frankly, we’re just not used to, small businesses must adjust their fee schedules to make it through this difficult time. Everything has gotten more expensive, and so will services, including ours. I’ve taken the first steps and informed some of my largest customers of an increase in my hourly fee schedule (and daily fee schedule for conference interpreting) and have yet to hear any complaints. I highly encourage you to do the same. To sum up: shrinkflation is about deceiving customers, but adjusting for inflation is about making sure you can stay in business to take care of your customers in both the short and the long run.

Useful Links


“What is Compound Interest?” (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission).

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This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to judy.jenner@twintranslations.com.
Ridiculous Generosity

I’m so happy to announce that we’ll once again have a Dictionary Exchange at ATA’s 63rd Annual Conference in Los Angeles (October 12–15, 2022). Many of you know that this has been my favorite ATA event during the past few years because it allows us to be ridiculously generous with our own dictionary treasures while making our spouses or partners happy with reclaimed bookshelf space. It’s also amazing to see a table full of dictionaries in rather unexpected language combinations (Czech<>Albanian, anyone?), and the flushed cheeks of translators who have just grabbed one or two or even more of those gems. All the recipients have to do in return is…oh, that’s right: nothing!

We started the exchange at ATA59 in New Orleans four years ago and—perhaps unsurprisingly—this has become a very popular event. (You can read my report of the first Dictionary Exchange in the January/February issue of The ATA Chronicle.) Reading that account, you’ll find that one thing we make sure of each year is that the handful of dictionaries that don’t find a new owner aren’t simply tossed in the trash. Instead, they go to a reputable bookstore or college library. We try not to just honor the old and new owners of the books, but also the books themselves. If you don’t want to schlepp your print dictionaries but have glossaries to share, you can bring a description of that glossary along with a QR code on a printed sheet of paper that will bring your colleagues to its online location. Of course, you can also email that code to me (jost@internationalwriters.com) and I’ll display it on the Dictionary Exchange table. All of these will then also be shared under the #dictionaryexchange tag on Twitter. An additional new feature this year that ATA President-Elect and Conference Organizer Veronika Demichelis has come up with is a (non-dictionary) book exchange. Unlike the Dictionary Exchange, this is a “true” exchange where you can bring your favorite book of the past year or so and exchange it for someone else’s favorite book. This should not only make for interesting reading on the plane, train, or automobile back home, but also for interesting conversations at the conference, and possibly new friends as well.

It may be that very last thing (“new friends”) that ends up being at the core of why the Dictionary Exchange is so great, and why I would strongly encourage other associations to offer something similar at their meetings. The world of translation is a strange and beautiful place where we cooperate rather than compete, where we help each other rather than stand in each other’s way. This event is that principle exemplified beautifully and practically.

Again, be sure to bring your dictionaries. If you’ve already gifted your dictionaries at a previous Dictionary Exchange, help spread the word on social media or any other place where you interact with colleagues.

NOTES

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This column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals.
MultiTraiNMT: Neural Machine Translation for Everyone

Neural machine translation (NMT) is on everyone’s mind. Its quality has become stunning, if not frightening, and it continues to improve even as we speak. Tech giants are investing tremendous amounts of capital in NMT applications. Language services providers, big and small, are deploying it in production. And translators are increasingly using it in their workflow. Indeed, post-editing machine translation (MT) has become a default modus operandi for many.

Due to its end-to-end computational architecture designed for deep learning, NMT is easier to understand than its predecessor, statistical MT. But hardcore MT research remains a privilege of relatively few. For most users, MT remains a black box with often unpredictable behavior, but thanks to recent efforts aimed at increasing MT literacy, the situation has started to change. The MultiTraiNMT project is a major step in this direction.

What Is MultiTraiNMT?

Funded by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union, MultiTraiNMT is a project specifically intended “to develop, evaluate, and disseminate open-access materials and open-source applications that will lead to the enhancement of teaching and learning about MT among language learners, language teachers, trainee translators, translation teachers, and professional translators across Europe.” And not only Europe.

Developed within the past three years by a team of experts from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Universitat d’Alacant, Université Grenoble-Alpes, and Dublin City University, along with Promsip Language Engineering and KantanMT, MultiTraiNMT invites all interested parties to join it as partners to:

1. “Use the project coursebook and associated activities in their classes.”
2. “Test the MutNMT educational platform and activities for managing NMT engines for didactic purposes.”
3. “Participate in any other training and/or research activity which fosters the development of MT skills in general.”

Three interrelated components of the project are briefly described below.

The Book

Released in July 2022, the open-access coursebook, Machine Translation for Everyone (see links in the sidebar on page 39), covers much ground—from the technical foundations to the ethical and broadly societal implications of MT. While explicitly intended for classroom use, the book’s nine chapters, written by experts in the relevant fields, are remarkably clear and accessible to everyone. Each chapter can be read on its own and is complete with ample references to more specialized literature.

The Activities

There are two types of activities developed for each chapter of the coursebook:

1. Self-learning questions ranging from multiple-choice to crossword puzzles and fill-in-the-blank exercises (see Figure 1 on page 37), with immediate automatic feedback for those learning at their own pace.
2. Open-ended, customizable teacher-guided mini-projects that invite readers to reflect on many interesting and challenging issues surrounding MT and write short essays. (See Figure 2 on page 37.)

There are currently over 200 excellent and thoroughly prepared activities, and the authors deserve much praise for putting them together with such care to detail, using the open-source H5P platform, which allows users to integrate them into learning management systems such as Drupal or Moodle and publishing environments such as WordPress. Translation instructors may further adapt the activities to their needs. And it’s a great self-test, too: if you can answer most of the questions correctly, you probably know a lot about MT!

To appreciate this point, browse through the questions. You’ll be quizzed on a broad range of topics—from the basics of neural networks to the famous semantic alchemy of word embeddings, to MT evaluation metrics such as BLEU and TER, to the opportunities and challenges of adapting a particular MT engine to a given task, and of using MT in second-language learning. If you discover significant gaps in your background, read the book! It has all the answers and is a very rewarding read even if you’re already familiar with this material. Among other things, it tries to offer a unified perspective on a field that has become very mosaic.

MutNMT

Deriving its name from Mut, the mother goddess of ancient Egypt, MutNMT is a web application that allows you to get under the
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hood of MT without any coding! Anyone with a Google account can access five out of the seven features of the application: Data, Engines, Translate, Inspect, and Evaluate. (See Figure 3 on page 38.) Let’s take a look at each of these features.

**Data:** A rapidly expanding collection of parallel corpora already uploaded to the system by expert users. Some corpora have millions of sentence pairs. These are used to train NMT engines. Any user can “grab” an available corpus and add it to their individual collection (“Your Corpora”). The corpora can also be previewed and downloaded as a zipped archive of two parallel text files.

**Engines:** Offers a growing list of NMT models trained by expert users on the available corpora. Again, users can “grab” any engine and add it to their individual collection (“Your Engines”) for translation and inspection. You can also view the training log of a given engine and learn a ton of useful information. The corpora and engines that are no longer needed can be removed from the individual collections.

**Translate:** This is where you can choose an engine from your individual collection to translate a sentence or a small file. This may take some time. Important: don’t expect DeepL quality! Rather, come to appreciate the amazing fact that a neural model trained entirely from scratch on a relatively small corpus—with a simple toolkit, for just one hour of graphics processing unit (GPU) time, for primarily didactic purposes can often produce a reasonable translation—and in such a transparent way!

**Inspect:** Allows you to gain more insight into what happens when the
“Translate” button is pressed. The system starts by “tokenizing” the input sentence (splitting it into words, punctuation marks, and sometimes subword segments). The engine then produces “N-Best” candidate translations, from which the most probable one is selected. These steps are visualized for your attention and learning. You can also compare the output of several selected engines for a given language pair.

**Evaluate:** Computes several popular metrics (e.g., BLEU, chrF3, and TER) by comparing the output of a chosen engine with a reference translation produced, hopefully, by a professional human translator. You need to upload a source file (up to 500 sentences, in plain text format, one sentence per line) as well as the MutNMT output and reference files, which must be perfectly aligned with the source. Please note that this test set should not be used for training the engine! In addition to the document-level scores, MutNMT generates a sentence-by-sentence BLEU/TER “score map” for the first 100 test sentences. (See Figure 4.) You can display each of them to see what may be wrong with the MT output. As a bonus, you could use the Evaluate feature to score any MT output (e.g., from Google Translate, ModernMT, or your own custom engine) to get an almost scientific sense of its quality—just by uploading three text files and pressing the “Evaluate” button.
Uploading Corpora and Training Engines (for More Advanced Users)

The five features of MutNMT discussed here allow anyone to open the “black box” of NMT and get inside it. Those who feel comfortable with it and are prepared to do more work can request “Expert” status to be able to upload new corpora and train new engines. This is very exciting, but also time- and resource-consuming. There are lots of multilingual public corpora available in different formats, including TMX and parallel text files (e.g., see the OPUS site in the sidebar). And if you have a good translation memory with >100K units, you could try to train an engine on it. Corpora for a given language pair can be combined for training, for a total of 500K sentence pairs. In addition, you’ll need to create smaller separate corpora (3–5K sentence pairs) for “Validation” and “Testing.” I suggest adding one more for “Evaluation” (500 sentence pairs).

Assuming these data don’t overlap with the training set or among themselves, you’ll be fully equipped for the entire process. In MT research and development, it’s standard practice to produce validation and testing data by splitting them off from the large training corpus. But some public corpora are highly repetitive, so you would need to ensure that there’s no overlap among the resulting subsets, otherwise you may get inflated scores but poor quality. In any case, the corpora must be fully aligned, cleaned, and otherwise pre-processed to be used with MutNMT.

“Expert” users may be further promoted to “Admin” status if they decide to use MutNMT in teaching or otherwise partner with MultiTraiNMT in an official capacity. For further tips, please read the materials referenced in the notes section and the sidebar and watch very helpful videos on the MultiTraiNMT YouTube channel.

Unpacking the Black Box

The best way to learn MT is to unpack its black box. It’s becoming increasingly possible thanks to efforts like MultiTraiNMT. Getting under the hood of NMT is very empowering!

NOTES

1. Such as the Machine Translation Literacy initiative led by Lynne Bowker. (Be sure to check out the Twitter page as well!)


4. Up to 0.5M sentences, which is the limit set by the developers. For comparison, corpora used to train commercial MT engines may have 100M+ sentence pairs.

5. MutNMT is based on JoeyNMT, an educational NMT framework with a simplistic architecture and many inherent limitations.

6. But bear in mind that “Sharing” it will make it public. Even if you keep it in your individual collection, it’s a good idea to double check with the developers on the confidentiality of the uploaded data.

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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.
Rites of Passage: Selecting and Preparing Source Texts for the Certification Exam

Ask an ATA certification exam grader to name the most difficult thing about the job, and chances are they’ll reply, “passage selection.” You might wonder what’s so hard about this task. If a group of graders needs a new passage, don’t they just find a random article in an online newspaper, copy and paste a few paragraphs onto a blank page, and add it to the exam packet? Well, there’s a bit more to it than that. The following will walk you through the multi-stage process of selecting, vetting, submitting, and approving an exam passage.

Passage Bank and Language-Specific Guidelines
The Certification Program’s policy is that each grader workgroup (the set of graders responsible for a given language pair to or from English—e.g., Arabic>English, English>Arabic, etc.) must maintain a bank of six passages per exam year. This bank consists of three active passages that are presented to candidates (who select two of the three to translate) and three backup passages that come into play if any of the active ones are spoiled due to a breach of passage security or another cause. After a certain time, active passages are retired and any unused backup passages are put into use. Retired passages may then be repurposed as practice tests.

Each grader workgroup is also required to develop language-specific guidelines (LSGs), consisting of common challenges for translators in their language pair and direction. For example, an LSG could state that a source language tends to have long, complex sentences that need to be split into two or more shorter sentences in translation.

Other challenges are at the word level. For example, a given language may have many “false friends” (i.e., words in a foreign language bearing a deceptive resemblance to words in one’s own language), or perhaps terms that can be translated in different ways depending on context. In selecting and developing passages, graders look for texts that feature the challenges identified in the LSGs.

Selection Criteria
The first step in selecting a passage is to find a text in the source language that meets explicit criteria for passage suitability. Here are some key guidelines that all graders abide by when selecting passages:

Length: Source texts in English must be between 225 and 275 words. The length of source texts in other languages is judged by the average length of a translation into English.

Content: The subject matter should be readily familiar to an educated layperson. Topics that are controversial or potentially upsetting to a candidate are avoided.

Lexicon: The vocabulary should be nontechnical (i.e., require no particular knowledge of a specialized field). Thus, any specific terminology should be commonly known or readily accessible in a good general dictionary.
Reading Level: The source text’s sentence structure and higher-level organization should correspond to Level 3 as described by the U.S. government’s Interagency Language Roundtable in its scale for reading proficiency.1

In more concrete terms, the passage should present a clear and coherent progression of thought and reasoning in which the candidate must follow an argument or supported opinion and possibly author inference. Texts that present straightforward factual material are generally too easy, while highly specialized, esoteric, or stylistically idiosyncratic pieces are considered unduly difficult for candidates under exam conditions. Typical examples of English-language texts at the appropriate level are editorials in national newspapers, or articles in magazines aimed at an educated audience. More technical or academic material may also be used if adequate context is provided within the passage.

Even passages that meet the above criteria can be rejected for other reasons. For example, the source text may be too easily recognizable (e.g., Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address or Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech). Or the text may be available on a bilingual or multilingual website that includes the language being tested (e.g., the BBC World Service publishes news coverage in dozens of languages). Similarly, if it turns out that the text was not originally written in the selected source language—let’s say an online piece in English is actually a well-translated article from Agence France Presse—it’s automatically ruled out as an exam passage.

With these criteria in mind, let’s look at the steps for converting a raw text into an approved exam passage.

Initial Sourcing and Counterpart Review

Once a group of graders has found a text that satisfies the specified criteria, it’s edited for length, and some recasting of sentences may be done to eliminate unfair challenges or introduce desirable elements, but without distorting the style and tone of the original text. In other words, most passages are authentic—taken “from the wild,” so to speak—but they are typically modified to some degree to make them more suitable for exam purposes. All graders in the workgroup then decide whether a passage is worth pursuing. If it is, then it undergoes counterpart review. This means the prospective passage is sent to the language chair or another grader from the counterpart group (i.e., a native speaker of the source language), who checks the text for possible usage or spelling errors and confirms that the text is authentic (mainly that it’s not itself a translation).

Sample Translations and PSTF Review

Once a passage is cleared by the counterpart group, one or more graders prepare a sample translation of the text, working under actual exam conditions (i.e., using allowed resources and adhering to the time limit) to further assess the text’s suitability. If any unfair challenges or other problems are identified and the workgroup wishes to alter the text, the counterpart group is again consulted. Once the final text is decided on, the workgroup completes the passage selection form (PSF), which contains the source text, a sample translation, and lists at least three challenges at the word level and three challenges at the sentence level. These challenges must be described in English for the reviewer, a fellow grader serving as a member of the Passage Selection Task Force (PSTF), who doesn’t necessarily know the other language.

The PSTF reviewer’s task is to confirm that the proposed passage satisfies program-wide standards for passages and that the challenges are articulated adequately. The reviewer may go back to the workgroup with questions or proposed tweaks. Once the passage is approved, it’s added to the workgroup’s queue of passages for future use, which is maintained by Certification Program Manager Caron Bailey. At this point, any graders who haven’t already done so prepare a sample translation of the passage under actual exam conditions. The aim here is to identify problems that
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Passage-Specific Guidelines

After this long series of steps is completed, including all the grader translations, the life of the passage is just beginning. To prepare for marking candidates’ translations, the team of graders develop a set of passage-specific guidelines, or PSGs. (We’re fond of acronyms in this program!) These guidelines contain a list of challenges and possible translations, both acceptable and unacceptable, that graders agree to score the same way. For example, the PSGs might specify that translating the same source term as “Treasury Ministry” in one paragraph and “Finance Ministry” in the next merits a four-point Cohesion Error (or COH4), given the significant impact on the meaning and usefulness of the translation, whereas a misplaced comma might be only a one-point Punctuation Error (or Pt). (See the Framework for Standardized Error Marking1 and the Flowchart for Error Point Decisions2 on ATA’s website.) The idea is to eliminate subjectivity in grading as much as possible, even though each candidate produces a unique translation that’s graded in a unique manner. As long as a passage is in use, its PSGs are discussed (sometimes vehemently!) and modified as new candidate translations come in. When the passage in question is retired, the corresponding PSGs continue to be consulted and amended if the passage becomes a practice test.

From this general description, you can probably tell why ATA certification exam graders find passage selection so challenging. It’s a complex process requiring adherence to various criteria. In view of the amount of time and effort that goes into each exam text in every language pair, it’s no surprise that passage security is a central concern in administering the exam. Replacing a spoiled passage is no small matter!

NOTES

1. Interagency Language Roundtable Language Skill Level Descriptions—Reading.
3. Flowchart for Error Point Decisions.

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