



ITI-LRG Newsletter



Issue 34

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August 2013

From the Editor

Welcome to the Summer/Autumn edition of the LRG Newsletter!

This issue features an extensive review of the ITI 2013 Conference by Katharine Mears (pp. 4-5). It also includes a review of a talk by Ted Wigzell (p. 3) from the Federation of Small Businesses, and of the annual LRG Pub Crawl (p. 5).

I am also happy to include several other features. Former LRG member, Yilmaz Düzen, who recently moved to Turkey in order to continue his established career as an interpreter there, has contributed an interesting piece on his experience of relocating to Turkey (pp. 6-7). In preparation for the LRG's 20th anniversary in 2014, this issue features another interview, as part of an ongoing series with a long-standing LRG member sharing with us the highlights of working as a translator or interpreter. For this issue I had the great pleasure of speaking with Shelley Nix, medical translator and a former LRG Newsletter Editor. (pp. 7-9).

Last but not least, Peter Linton has kindly offered to contribute a tech tips and advice column to the Newsletter on a regular basis. For this issue he has written a piece on how speech recognition technology can be put to good use by translators (pp. 10-11). Finally, Hannah Davis has contributed a short piece filled with some translation technology tips and tricks from one of the ITI 2013 Conference Master Classes (p. 11).

As always, I would like to thank the many LRG members who have kindly taken the time to write and to contribute all of these reviews. I could not have put together this issue without their invaluable contributions.

I hope everyone has enjoyed the much-awaited summer sunshine in London and had a chance to enjoy some rest and relaxation in order to feel a bit more refreshed and energized for the coming autumn ahead of us. On this note, I wish everyone a *bonne rentrée*, as they say in France at this time of year!

Lina Molokotos-Liederman, Editor

Forthcoming LRG Events

The LRG offers a regular programme of CPD and social and networking events for its members. We also welcome non-members to these events.

For updates on all upcoming events, please always check the following:

Website: www.iti-lrg.org.uk

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/ITI-London-Regional-Group/420785661324621?ref=hl>

E-group: uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/iti-lrg/

Friday, 27 September 2013, 12:30 to 13:30 pm

**Europe House, 32 Smith Square, London SW1P 3EU
Nearest stations: Westminster, Waterloo, Victoria**

John will provide information on tendering for freelance work and the system of open competitions for staff positions, including short-term contracts.

Please note: this is a free event but registration, via Eventbrite (<http://eutranslation.eventbrite.co.uk>), is essential, for security purposes.

Places are still available for this event: please print and bring your ticket.

Note also: this event precedes the workshop, to be run by Judy Jenner (see below) which is now sold out.

Translation at the EU: Staff Positions and the Freelance Tendering Procedure

A talk by John Evans, Language Officer, DG Translation, London

No Pain, No Gain - Active Marketing to Direct Clients

PLEASE NOTE THIS EVENT IS SOLD OUT

A joint IoL/ITI London Regional Group workshop with Judy Jenner, author of *The Entrepreneurial Linguist*

<http://www.entrepreneuriallinguist.com/book/>

Friday, 27 September 2013, 2:00 - 5.00pm

Europe House, 32 Smith Square, London SW1P 3EU
Nearest stations: Westminster, Waterloo, Victoria

ITI/LRG Events at the London Language Show - Saturday, 19 October 2013

A Day in the Life of an Interpreter with Valeria Aliperta

11:45 - 12:30pm

Interpreters are the facilitators of oral communication in ways most people don't realize. While they need to have the same linguistic skills of translators of the written word, they require a certain sense of urgency and immediacy to make sure they get the message across and in the fastest and most accurate way. Although conference, court or business interpreters share the same spirit, they tend to work in different settings, so their typical day may vary - we'll be exploring how they do it and how they cope, via examples and anecdotes from colleagues and my personal experience.

LRG Open Networking Event

12 noon - 1:30pm

The ITI London Regional Group is hosting a Networking and Speed Dating Event for members and non-members at this year's London Language Show.

Come and meet fellow translators and interpreters; if you are a newcomer, meet people who have experience of starting up as a professional; discuss the issues of the day; share news and information.

Speed dating and free chocolate bars!

A Day in the Life of a Translator

Panellists: Elizabeth Dickson, Philippe Galinier, Kari Koonin, Lina Molokotos-Liederman

2:15 - 3:10pm

Our panel of speakers will, once again, be sharing their advice and experience. This is a free seminar for those entering the profession, those already established but who want to know more, and career changers.

The panel will describe what daily life is like for translators and interpreters and offer some guidance on getting into the profession, developing the necessary skills and growing one's market. It's the A-Z of freelance translation work!

London Language Show, Olympia Central, Hammersmith Road, Kensington, West London.

Nearest station: Kensington (Olympia); Shepherd's Bush; Hammersmith; High Street Kensington; West Brompton

For more information see the ITI-LRG website, www.iti-lrg.org.uk, and click on the left-hand tab, "ITI at London Language Show".

Entrance to the Show is free. Register for your ticket at: www.languageshowlive.co.uk

Tips, Trips and Traps for Interpreters (and Others) with Valeria Aliperta

Wednesday, 13 November 2013, 6:30 pm

The Devereux Pub, 20 Devereux Court, London WC2R 3JJ. Nearest station: Temple

Tips: latest useful technological aids; trips: something we wish we hadn't done; traps: bugbears - interpreters' trials and tribulations.

Free for LRG members, £3 for non-LRG members.

Details on how to register will follow nearer the time.

Looking Ahead: Upcoming LRG Events

LRG AGM and Christmas Party - Tuesday, 10 December 2013, 6:30 pm, The Devereux Pub, 20 Devereux Ct, London WC2R 3JJ.

December 2014 - We will be celebrating the LRG's 20th anniversary!

Information on this and other events to follow in the next LRG Newsletter, Website and Facebook page.

Recent Event Reviews

Talk by Ted Wigzell Federation of Small Businesses

10 June 2013, The Devereux Pub

Ted Wigzell was the guest speaker in an event organised by the LRG in June; Ted is Chairman of the London branch of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

Starting life as a shipping clerk in 1988, Ted found his slight knowledge of French and German an advantage and moved into the exporting of building materials.

The FSB was established in 1974 as a non-political union of small business owners created to promote and protect the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms. It now has 200,000 members – so bigger than the Institute of Directors or the Confederation of British Industry – across 33 regions and 194 branches, each one organising its own member events. Small businesses face a number of problems, not least the fact that banks are reluctant to lend them money and that clients are often late in settling invoices, something that freelance translators and interpreters know about.

He acknowledged that many people become self-employed because of a lack of staff jobs (again this resonates with freelance translators) and that not everyone is suited to that way of working.

He went on to offer some practical advice on taxation for the self-employed/sole trader and small business owners. He told us that with up to 97% of British businesses employing fewer than 20 people, the role of the FSB is more important than ever. With so many people now self-employed and so many parts and aspects of business being outsourced to the self-employed, HMRC has dramatically focussed its attention on that sector of the working population and intensified its investigations. This highlights the importance of good accounting practices, including invoicing.

More specifically, our speaker cautioned us, freelance translators, that working for only one client (company)

for an extended period of time could prompt HMRC to rule that they are part-time employees rather than true freelancers. In that respect, he also urged us to understand the difference between being a self-employed person and working part-time, as these are two different things from a taxation perspective.

Ted Wigzell differentiated between four trading styles: (i) freelance/self-employed, in which case you have to inform the HMRC within three months of starting work or risk a fine of £100; (ii) limited company- if your income is over £30,000, you can set up a limited company, pay yourself as an employee, up to £9,440 tax-free, and pay 20% corporation tax on profits; (iii) limited liability partnership (LLP) or (iv) a standard partnership (full liability company).

Moving on to VAT issues, Ted confirmed that if your annual turnover is over £79,000 you have to register for VAT. However, you can also register even if your annual turnover is well below this amount. Being VAT registered means you can add 20% VAT to your invoices, effectively turning you into a tax collector for the government. The advantage is that you can claim VAT back, especially for capital expenses. Even though registering for VAT can be off-putting to many self-employed people, he suggested that VAT registration makes you look a lot more professional to your clients.

In the second part of the talk, our speaker highlighted the benefits of becoming a member of the FSB; the first year's membership costs £150.

The Federation offers a broad range of services, including free business and personal legal advice 24/7; HR advice; insurance cover for legal fees; health and safety advice; a tax and VAT advice line; and a web site with free on-line documentation (directors' agreements, forms, information on health and safety, taxation, employment law). FSB membership also entitles members to the use of office services through Regus, compensation for jury service, credit card processing, and free banking with the Co-operative Bank.

Ted talked a little about using social media, e.g. LinkedIn and Twitter. He suggested that freelance translators or interpreters might think of starting their own group on LinkedIn and inviting clients to sign up, thereby establishing themselves as an authority on

matters to do with language, translation or cultural awareness.

The FSB is definitely worthwhile joining. Please check the FSB web site for further details: <http://www.fsb.org.uk/benefits>

Kari Koonin, Pamela Mayorcas, Lina Molokotos-Liederman

Three Days of Non-Stop CPD and Networking: the 2013 ITI Conference

17 - 19 May 2013

I was extremely keen to attend May's ITI Conference from the outset, with it being the first to come around since I embarked upon my career in freelance translation in late 2011. I knew it would be an invaluable learning and networking opportunity so as soon as I saw that there was a grant on offer from the London Regional Group to put towards the cost, I jumped at the chance to apply. Needless to say I was delighted when it was awarded to me and didn't hesitate to book my place!

There was plenty of conference-related discussion on social media sites prior to the event, which helped to build the anticipation and allowed me to get to know a number of fellow attendees. Fortunately, upon arrival, I immediately recognised a lot of names and faces from our virtual conversations, which made introductions much easier.

The theme of the conference was 'Professionalism – the Key to Your Success'. Over the course of the weekend, I attended as many sessions as the schedule would allow, fitting the wide range of fringe events and networking opportunities in and around them as best I could! It would be an impossible task to capture everything here but I hope what follows will give you a taste of my experience of the ITI Conference as a relative newcomer to the translation industry and of how it has impacted on my day-to-day work since.

Translation technology was the predominant theme of the sessions I attended on the Saturday and, having battled to get to grips with Trados over the last year, was something I wished and needed to learn more about. The first presentation I attended was by Terence Lewis, entitled 'Language Technology and Translators – How It Was, Is and May Be'. Terence provided a helpful overview of how Translation Environment Tools or TENTS (as I discovered CAT tools should rightfully be referred to!) have evolved over the years. It was particularly enlightening to hear Terence's

perspective on where translation technology is heading and his view that the post-editing of machine translation is likely to become much more commonplace. He emphasised that this could never be expected to replicate the quality of human translations and nor should it be passed off as such, but that in some cases, for example where the client simply needs to have the gist of a text and is seeking to keep costs down, it might be an attractive option. It certainly made me consider whether post-editing is something I would like to offer in my portfolio of services.

Later that day, I attended a presentation by Mark Shuttleworth of Imperial College, London, on 'New Developments in Translation Memory Technology'. This very practical session discussed options for connecting to online Translation Memories and for using automatic machine translation (requiring post-editing) within a TENT such as Trados Studio 2011. Whilst I have not found these tools to be useful for my translation work on a daily basis, I have since tested them out and found them to be helpful in certain situations.

The highlight of Saturday's sessions for me was Anne Diamantidis' enthusiastic and again extremely practical presentation 'Pathway Through the Social Media Jungle'. Having started to build up a small but invaluable peer network on Twitter and LinkedIn, I was interested to hear what else these social networking sites could offer my business and whether there were any other tools I was missing out on. I certainly wasn't disappointed! Anne discussed the importance of pinpointing exactly what you are seeking to achieve through social media, for example word-of-mouth marketing or improving your Google ranking. She then highlighted the more useful sites to help achieve these goals. I learnt about the importance of making regular updates to my existing social networking profiles and also about the increasing importance of other sites such as Google+. I subsequently set up a profile to help improve my Google ranking. I have also taken Anne's advice about keeping the professional and personal entirely separate on social networking sites and have set up an entirely work-focused Facebook account. This has brought a whole new element to my working day, allowing me to interact with fellow translators and join some extremely insightful translation-focused Facebook groups.

On the Sunday, I chose to attend presentations focusing primarily on business skills. Lucas Vogt outlined how to go about creating a business plan to build a niche market. Whilst specialisation in the international development field had been something I had been working towards, having previously worked

in this field and enjoying the subject matter, I hadn't fully grasped the range of benefits this could bring. Lucas clearly demonstrated, through his own success story, that a niche market brings quicker sales, increased productivity and ultimately increased earnings. He explained how a niche differs from specialisation, in that a niche has to be developed. This session helped me to realise that I would need a much narrower niche within the international development field to truly reap the benefits of a specialisation. I am now working towards this goal using a business plan I have drawn up based on many of Lucas' techniques.

Another presentation from which I was immediately able to put the learnings into practice was 'Being Contract Smart' by Andrew Leigh. Andrew outlined what constitutes a legal contract, which can simply be agreeing to a job by phone or by email, and some tips for minimising risk. We were also given some tips for negotiating with a client or agency should they present us with terms that we find not to be in our favour. I have since found that rather than accepting such contracts blindly, or assuming I can do nothing about unfavourable terms, I have been able to negotiate successfully on certain aspects with a number of clients, for example reducing payment terms from 60 to 30 days.

The wealth of learning I took away from the ITI conference has been truly invaluable. However, I had underestimated the opportunity that the conference also presented to meet potential new business contacts, make new friends and above all have fun! Through the fantastic fringe programme on offer I was able to meet fellow members of the Spanish Network, catch up with friends from the London-based *Tweet-ups* and have a professional photo taken for my website and social network profiles. The real highlight however was coming together with my fellow 'Singing Translators' to sing Stand By Me at the close of the event!

My one fear about changing career and becoming a freelance translator was that I would feel isolated and miss working as part of a team. Having heard from and met so many committed, friendly and professional colleagues, I left the ITI Conference feeling truly part of the wider translation industry and inspired about its future as well as my own future within it.

Thank you to all involved in the conference organisation and to the LRG for giving me the opportunity to attend.

Katharine Mears

LRG Pub Crawl

18 July 2013

Even the weather smiled on this highly successful informal event, which is surely one of the highlights of the LRG year. About 17 of us braved the heat and the hazards of Transport for London's provision to access three of London's finest, if relatively unknown, watering holes, ably chosen by Kari, who had also made sure that everyone knew exactly how to find them. The first, The Grenadier, which claims to have been licensed since 1818, looked duly historic on its narrow mews site, and refreshing real ales and other beverages were consumed outside as we built up to our (nearly) full complement of attendees. Already the atmosphere was thoroughly convivial, as acquaintances were renewed or, in some cases, made for the first time.

Soon it was time to move on and Kari shepherded us to the next venue, the excellent Nag's Head on Kinnerton Street, where the present writer waxed lyrical about the fantastic Adnams Bitter. Like The Grenadier, the Nag's is very compact. It is also noted for banning the use of mobile phones. Here the last few of us joined the throng and once again the relatively fresh air of the great outdoors was appreciated.

Further shepherding by Kari ensued as most of us transferred to our final pub, The Star Tavern, which is supposed to be notorious as the place where the Great Train Robbery of 1963 was planned. Nowadays it is more famous for having – I believe – featured in the Good Beer Guide every year since the latter's inception, and it certainly does a mean pint of Fuller's London Pride. This time, however, solid as well as liquid refreshment was on the menu as we tucked into our pre-ordered meals (some of which, it has to be said, were considerably more substantial than others – but all, no doubt, adequate for a hot summer's day) in the upstairs library-cum-restaurant.

For this special occasion, yours truly had dug out his 25-year-old ITI T-shirt, which bears the ITI logo and the Latin tag "*sensum exprimere de sensu*" – I'm sure we can all translate it for ourselves – and which was remarked upon by some of the more venerable members. This is a piece of ITI merchandise that would meet with a good response if revived today.

When the witching hour of 10 pm was reached, the talking of shop and other perhaps more entertaining conversations ceased as, no doubt wisely, we eschewed further imbibing of Fuller's splendid offerings and went our separate ways, our moods duly lifted by the agreeable experience of the evening and the excellent company.

It remains to thank Kari for organising, shepherding and everything else that made for a successful evening

– and, maybe, even for arranging fine weather!

Philip Slotkin

LRG Member News

Yilmaz Düzen: Bursa Calling

In late November 2012, my family and I emigrated to Turkey! Moving to another home a few miles away is difficult and traumatic enough, but moving to another country, is naturally an entirely different undertaking. Thankfully though, the British government's FWA (Framework Agreement) decision was like a wonder drug to me: nothing but nothing I could experience in Turkey would be worse than the prospects for me as an interpreter (and taxpayer) in the UK!

We chose to settle in Bursa, one of the most beautiful and most modern cities of Turkey. This is Turkey's fifth largest city, otherwise known as the "back garden of Istanbul". It is a mere 90-minute boat ride away from Istanbul with excellent nationwide transport connections. In 2015, as part of a massive road building programme, it will lie halfway along the Istanbul to Izmir motorway, cutting 9 hours from journey times. High speed rail is coming, too. Istanbul will be just an hour away! Bursa's future definitely appears to be bright and promising. Geographically, Bursa sits in a valley surrounded by majestic mountains, forests and nature reserves. The seaside is a short trip away and Mount Uludag, Turkey's premier ski resort, is 40 minutes by car. In hindsight, I think our decision to settle in Bursa was absolutely spot-on.



Having a cup of tea by the sea.

Our first few weeks in Turkey involved visiting family and friends and exploring our new surroundings. Hannan and I then quickly got down to the task of

rebuilding our life. First, we bought a little car that would get us around. Second, we hired a renowned interior designer by the name of Ayse Take. Third, we rented an apartment nearby. Then, the workmen came in to reconstruct the vast 240 square metre flat that would become our home.

Our neighbours were introduced to us via the deafening noise as everybody wondered who on earth was commissioning extensive building works in the middle of winter! People said to us: "This is unheard of. No one carries out building works on such a scale. Why didn't you buy a newly-built home, instead?" Well, this was not just another flat and it certainly was not just another estate. "Sayginkent Sitesi" is reputed to be Europe's biggest residential development set in 90 acres of parkland and it has won numerous design and environment awards. The renovation works took six months to complete: the result was truly awesome and well beyond our expectations.

We are determined to make the best of our new life in Turkey. Naturally there are so many differences in lifestyle in the two countries, both in the positive and negative sense. For example, whilst I was in London for a two-week interpreting assignment in July, I could not stop laughing when I saw people switching on air conditioning units at just 23 degrees. Turks would never resort to air conditioning at that temperature! With regards to driving, I have never seen so many kamikazes let loose on the roads as in Turkey. In the UK, 75% of these drivers would most certainly be disqualified from driving! So far, however, if my experiences are anything to go by, I definitely think there is more positive than negative to living here.

After a considerable absence from the interpreting and translation arena, I want to declare to the whole world that I am re-born, fresh as a whistle and eager to resume my career. There is so much I have yet to achieve. In the coming months, I want to analyse the Turkish market, write to my existing clients, introduce myself to new, direct clients, widen my network and cooperate with colleagues in Turkey. I am aiming to offer high-quality, reliable Turkish language services and give added value to my clients in the UK and EU. I am conjuring up slogans like: "British quality, Turkish prices".

Professional plans aside, I hope to enjoy the delights of these beautiful, sun-kissed, historic lands. I want to enjoy the gorgeous blue skies, months of guaranteed sunshine, magnificent cuisine. I want to visit the countless places of interest, tourism centres, mosques, shrines and historic monuments. I want to trek in the mountains, walk in the forests and swim in the sea. Maybe I will learn how to ski. I want to discover the culture and history of this amazing country and visit all its 81 provinces. Thousands of years ago Alexander the Great marched his armies across Anatolia and Marco Polo traded silk in the Kozahan market in Bursa. Her Majesty the Queen also visited here in her first ever royal trip to Turkey a few years ago and sent a letter of thanks, following her purchase of a silk item. A couple of months ago, I visited that shop and saw the letter and asked the shop keeper if he knew what it said. When he said "no", I translated it for him for free. It was such a delight to see his happiness.

At the ripe age of 51, it looks as if my life is just beginning...



I have many fond memories of Britain where I spent 41 years of my life, and I will always love the UK. I send you my sincere and warmest regards from Turkey and wish you all the very best of fortune and success, excellent health and a long life. If one day you should pass through Bursa, please give me a call so that we can meet up and enjoy an Iskender Kebab (speciality of this region), baklava, Turkish delight and a cup of Turkish coffee.

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LRG Member Interview

Shelley Nix - Medical Translator



**Long-standing
LRG member
since 1994.
Former Editor of
the LRG Newsletter.**

**Coordinator of the
ITI Medical and
Pharmaceutical
Network from
September 2001
to July 2013.**

I had the great pleasure of meeting Shelley Nix in north-west London over a quick lunch. We talked about her interesting career as a medical translator.

When and how did you start a career in translation? How did you train to become a translator? Did you come into the profession through another activity or job?

Even as a child I was always interested in languages. I discovered early on that I had a facility for languages so I studied them in school as soon as I could. I was born in Pennsylvania and lived most of my life in Virginia, but because of my father's job I moved around quite a bit with my family as I was growing up (Quebec, Bermuda, Washington state, Oregon, Texas). When we lived in Texas where I started high school, I started studying Spanish and really loved it. I graduated from The College William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia where I did two BAs in Fine Arts and Spanish, but I also studied Italian and German for two years (each). I've studied French since middle school, with some gaps here and there.

At the time I didn't really think about doing anything with translation. I didn't have a notion of what translation was until later on. In the 1980s I started thinking about translation but didn't really know exactly what was involved. At the time I was living in the Washington, DC area but I wanted to go to Spain to perfect my Spanish. So I moved to Madrid and lived there for a year, teaching English as a second language (for which I'd become certified before I left the US). While I was in Spain I had an unexpected job opportunity to come to London to work in a field I'd been working in before: information technology customer education and course development for a computer company. I had mixed feelings about this

opportunity, but I did come to London and worked for that company. One reason they hired me was that they were branching out in the UK and Europe from California and were looking for a trainer with other languages in order to break into those areas. I worked for the company for seven years, but as the company was then starting to wind down I started thinking about translation again. I finally decided to take the plunge and go into translation thinking that otherwise I might never have another opportunity to do so. I found a training course at the University of Westminster (Technical and Specialised Translation). I completed my Masters degree in 1995 and have never looked back!

What difficulties did you encounter in your first three years working as a translator and how did you overcome them?

The main difficulty was getting enough work. I was a mature student when I did the translation course, and I'd made a career change so I had other types of experiences, but when I started I was still setting out in a new profession. It took a few years for work to start coming in regularly, so I also did quite a bit of supply teaching at The American School in London.

Learning the subject matter and terminology was another challenge. It's so much easier now with e-groups and Google – this has really revolutionised how we work and hopefully made us better translators. When I was starting out we relied on telephoning a colleague or going to workshops so it was a very long, painstaking process. Things are much easier today and there are more opportunities for new translators now than when I started.

When you first started did you have a mentor?

No, not really. I asked many colleagues a lot of questions but no one worked with me in a formal, regular mentor capacity. I asked questions by telephone usually. I also joined many ITI subject, language and regional networks. I was trying to get started as quickly as I could, so I joined as many groups as possible pertaining to my language combinations and to the subjects I was interested in. I also became involved with the LRG in the early stages, serving on the Committee for four years as the LRG Newsletter editor. I was really working around other translators all the time and going to medical translation courses and workshops whenever they were offered. It was a fast and steep learning curve! I also did a great deal of reading on my own and some *pro bono* translation work.

What specialist subject areas did you choose and why?

I specialised in medical translation because when I was a child I was always interested in medical things. This wasn't for any particular reason – there are no medical people in my family. I was always interested in medical subjects so it was a “no brainer” for me and it continues to be a wonderful choice. It was always the right decision and I have never regretted it. It is a fascinating field – always interesting – and every day is different, never boring. As one of our colleagues says, “medical translation is not for the squeamish”. In the types of documents I translate this type of thing does not come along in any graphic form very often, but even if it did it wouldn't really bother me. In fact, I wanted to be a vet at one time when I was in middle school but obviously didn't pursue that option.

Do you specialise in particular areas of medical translation?

It's such a vast field. An early job opportunity meant that I started to work on patient reports, examination reports and hospital discharge summaries. They usually include all kinds of things: imaging studies, laboratory tests, general physical examinations, operative reports, drug and prescribing information, and so on. I also do a great deal of work in the clinical trials area and that's massive - it involves everything including drug regulatory material and correspondence about getting a drug to market, ethics committee documentation, patient information sheets and informed consents, serious adverse event reports, and so on.

What was your first break in translation? What was it like? What were some of the highlights and low points of your time as a translator?

I met someone during one of the intensive medical translation courses ('CMETI' – the Course of Medical English for Translators and Interpreters) led by Karin Band. The organisation was looking for someone to help with translation into English so I did a test and passed and did a considerable amount of work for them for many years. This was effectively an 'apprenticeship' as I was working alongside their more experienced French translator. As time went on, my client base began to grow so I had the challenge of learning how to balance several main clients.

Did you ever work for a translation agency?

No, not in-house. I didn't want to do that. I had been working in an office environment for several years and I was ready to go freelance. I really wanted to work freelance from the very beginning. I was so busy in the beginning trying to get work and now I am still very busy as I get a great deal of work, so I have nothing to complain about. Time management is always a challenge, but it's a nice problem to have. I think

working as a translator is better now because of all the internet resources, search engines and other online resources. The ITI and its e-groups have really grown, and so many more things are on offer to translators, such as seminars, groups, mentoring schemes, the ITI Professional Support Group (PSG) and the ITI Orientation Course (OC).

Before all these internet resources came about, how did you do your research?

I went to the British Library and other libraries and made photocopies and checked out books. I know this seems antiquated now! We had paper directories for the Medical Network and I remember trying to think whom I could call to ask a question, but I didn't want to bother people too much. It's so much more efficient now since you can send an email to so many more people who can see your query and respond to it when they have time.

This is definitely an advantage but does it also mean that they expect you to turn around work faster? The resources are definitely better, but is the pressure on translators greater?

It probably is. The pressure for me in the beginning was different and hopefully I grew with that and am now able to work more efficiently.

How has the translation profession changed since you started? How do you think the profession is evolving and what are your thoughts on its future?

In addition to all the resources I already mentioned, there are also CAT tools and translation memory products, and social media. It seems to me that now there is a greater and sometimes better awareness of translation and interpreting as professions compared to, say, 20 years ago. I think many more people now have a concept of what translation is and hopefully how they can benefit from it. The media usually get it wrong about translators vs. interpreters, but I have to say I now hear this being used correctly more often. I also think translation and interpreting are more in the public eye because of the ITI. People often contact me saying they found my name and details in the ITI Directory. People look for a translator using the internet, but previously this resource wasn't available.

How is the present economic climate likely to affect translators and interpreters? What are some of the issues to look out for?

The situation hasn't affected me that much, but I hear from other colleagues and e-groups that there is a lot

of pressure to lower rates and work under faster turnaround times; that's like everything else. Everyone is trying to drive down prices but you can only make something so cheap! Translation and interpreting are special and unique skills that people have invested in, and just as in other professions payment should be commensurate with such skill and expertise.

When you look ahead what challenges or trends do you see? What are some of the issues to look out for?

In addition to addressing the pressure to lower rates, I think customer education and maintaining your standards and terms of business are important in all areas of managing your business. Regarding rates, there may be some room for negotiation at times, but if translators, particularly the very experienced, consistently agree to very low rates, then they are letting the profession – and themselves – down, in my opinion.

What do you think are the most important attributes that translators should have and what advice would you give to translators that are starting out?

Beyond the language skills, you have to be super-dedicated, well-organised and ready to maintain a high level of attention to detail. You also have to be very rigorous regarding working practices, namely being very focused, organised and flexible. You should also be up to speed with technology, software, CAT tools, social media and smartphones. I'm ticking the boxes in most, but not all of those (yet)!

It's also important to stand by your principles in terms of rates and payment without being aggressive. I believe you can be firm without being hostile and this sends a positive message to clients.

In the early days I mentioned to someone once that I was working as a freelance. This person said, 'Wow, you're lucky – you can sleep late, work in your pyjamas and go for a walk in the park in the afternoons!' I wouldn't have any work if I operated that way! My clients don't keep those kinds of schedules. I keep office hours and I think it's important to accommodate the office hours of my clients. Of course, the flexibility freelancing offers does make it much easier to go to doctors' appointments, run errands, and so on – it's a balance. And it's still easy to be contactable – now more than ever.

LRG Tech

Technical CAT (Computer-Aided Translation) Tools

Speech Recognition

Speech recognition (SR for short) is a tool that offers the potential of increasing your translation productivity, both in quality as well as quantity. Not only that – it is a much more natural way to translate and also avoids the physical problems of typing. This article is about the technical aspects to help you decide whether SR is right for you or not.

You might at first assume that SR recognises speech in much the same way that humans do, by identifying the various components of a sentence such as nouns, verbs etc. But not at all – SR relies on guessing what you have said and presenting it on your computer screen as if you had typed it. In more technical terms what happens is that a microphone picks up the sound of your voice and converts it into an electrical signal (therefore called analogue). But that is no use to a digital computer, so the analogue signal is converted into digits in an audio card that samples the signal 22,000 times a second. In this way, every noise you make is converted into a series of numbers which in turn can be compared against the SR database of words and their numerical equivalents. The SR then finds the most likely matches and puts them on the screen – as if you had typed the words. It is therefore basically a statistical exercise selecting the results with the highest probability.

It also has a very large database of words that often go together. These are called bi-grams, tri-grams or quad-grams, depending on how many words are combined. Furthermore, SR is able to learn new words and new combinations, particularly when you correct any errors. An example – take the phrase “I wonder whether the weather will be better tomorrow”. Clearly, SR is going to have a problem with weather/whether which sound identical. But a bit of training and correcting will train SR, and now that phrase always comes out correctly (as it did when dictating this article).

One important implication of this is that SR does not make mistakes. It listens to what you are saying, then converts your sounds into text, and if you do not train it, correct it and enunciate clearly, it can produce garbage – sometimes quite amusing, but garbage nonetheless. The quality of the output is up to you. If it is wrong, it is your fault.

Another important implication is that results are better if you dictate in chunks or sentences, not in single words. People who are used to typing may find it hard to adapt to thinking out a phrase or sentence rather than just hammering away at the keyboard – but this “think before you speak” approach does produce better results.

Enunciation is the key to success. The advice is to speak like a television newsreader. Do not speed up or slow down or shout. Avoid the temptation to treat SR like a foreigner who will only understand English if you yell slowly and loudly.

SR has some other useful facilities up its sleeve. You can generate macros – for example you might train SR to output your name and address whenever you say a particular word not already in its library. That library is huge – particularly in the Professional version. There are also ways of executing commands while dictating. Some people prefer to dictate absolutely everything, while others use a combination of dictating words but using the keyboard for commands. Either way, you can achieve a remarkably high level of accuracy – 98% is achievable although the vagaries of the English language mean that you are unlikely ever to achieve 100%. But if you can talk faster than you can type then SR will increase your productivity both in quantity and quality. SR can also be used to convert text to speech, which provides a smart way of proofreading a translation – you listen to one language and read the other.

Speech recognition is now beginning to appear on smart phones, but for translators the best solution is to have this software installed on your laptop or PC. Microsoft’s SR comes bundled at no extra cost. The other main product is Dragon Naturally Speaking from Nuance. There are 3 versions – Home, Premium and Professional. The Home version is adequate to start with but most translators prefer the Premium version. The Professional version has many bells and whistles, including large specialised libraries, but perhaps not suitable for beginners.

A microphone is included with the package. This will give good results, 95% accuracy or better, but if you are doing a lot of dictating a higher quality microphone is recommended. You may also need an external USB sound card because the sound cards in laptops are subject to electronic interference from the densely-packed components which may appear on your screen as random words.

Is SR right for you? It does take a little while to get used to a different way of working and in particular

how to achieve good results. As already mentioned, enunciation is critical.

Any more questions? Start a new topic in our e-group.

Peter Linton

Translation Technology Tips and Tricks from the 2013 ITI Conference Masterclass

As an incurable techno-phobe and a newbie to the translation industry, I was much in need of Jost Zetsche's informative Masterclass (17 May 2013), entitled "Keeping up with Translation Technology: Equipping Yourself with the Tools for Success". Jost started off by throwing out a few thought-provoking questions for the audience's deliberation, including "What is a translator?", and prompting a myriad of responses, ranging from "artisan" to "philologist" to "technology expert" (an aspect of the profession

which, if you are anything like me, requires some work!). Jost helped us to maximise windows applications by purging start-up clutter (selecting and deselecting programs to open when you start your computer), to manage computer installations and software licences using applications such as Belarc and WinDirStat and to use a programme called Secunia to automatically check when software updates are available. Throughout the morning, our speaker provided plenty of entertainment value, with handheld brain-teaser puzzles, plus prizes for those who were successful, and optical illusion puzzles. Other tricks of the trade he shared with us included "Rname-it", a program used to rename files and to change date and time stamps on file names (in case you don't want your client to know you were up until 4am finishing their project!), as well as tools for file compression, emailing and extracting software. By the end of the morning, I was beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel of my techno-phobia...

Hannah Davis

LRG News

ITI stand at the London Language Show

Olympia Central, Hammersmith Road, Kensington, West London

Friday 18 - Sunday 20 October 2013

Stand volunteers needed - The ITI London Regional Group is once again coordinating the volunteer rota for the ITI stand.

If you'd like to help on the stand, on the Friday, Saturday or Sunday, please contact: Peter Linton, LRG Co-Chairman, on peter@lintononline.net or enter your availability on this Doodle poll: <http://www.doodle.com/p72u73hqm4ny6ka4>

Alternatively you can also go to www.iti-lrg.org.uk and click "ITI at London Language Show".

Travelcard and reasonable subsistence will be reimbursed.

The ITI stand was very busy last year and we hope to have an equally busy three days this year. Many visitors were established translators or interpreters. This is a great CPD opportunity for ITI members; you will learn a lot as you give advice to practising and

hopeful translators and interpreters and network with other members.

This link will give you more information on the Show and you can also sign up for your free entry pass: www.languageshowlive.co.uk

LRG Publicity Officer

LRG is seeking a new Publicity Officer from the beginning of next year. This role involves publicising LRG events (usually one a month) in various channels such as the ITI website events calendar, the LRG LinkedIn and Facebook pages and Twitter account, and submitting event details for publication in the Bulletin and in the monthly ITI email updates. You will therefore need to be familiar with social media and will take over the LRG Twitter and Facebook accounts from Kari Koonin, the present Publicity Officer. (The Twitter and FB accounts are used solely for promoting events, so no other updating is required). If you are interested or would like more details, please contact Kari on kari@koonin.co.uk or via Twitter at @KariKoonin. Training will be provided! :-)

Welcome to Our New LRG Members

Belen Gonzalez, Fabienne Lannuzel, Alastair Macdougall, Lucy Miles and Elizabeth Zendle.
We look forward to meeting all of you soon!

Dates for your Diary

<u>Thursday, 22 August 2013</u> 6pm	LRG Guided Walk with Roger Bone Meet in the Ticket Hall of Chancery Lane station at 6pm.
<u>Friday, 27 September 2013</u> 12:30 - 1:30 pm 2:00 - 5:00 pm	Translation at the EU: Staff Positions and the Freelance Tendering Procedure with John Evans No Pain, No Gain - Active Marketing to Direct Clients with Judy Jenner PLEASE NOTE: THIS EVENT IS SOLD OUT Europe House, 32 Smith Square, London SW1P 3EU Nearest stations: Westminster, Waterloo, Victoria
<u>Saturday, 19 October 2013</u> 11:45 - 12:30 pm 12 noon - 1:30pm 2:15 - 3:10pm	ITI/LRG Events at the London Language Show: A Day in the Life of an Interpreter LRG Open Networking Event A Day in the Life of a Translator Olympia Central, Hammersmith Road, Kensington, West London Nearest stations: Kensington (Olympia); Shepherd's Bush; Hammersmith; High Street Kensington; West Brompton
<u>Wednesday, 13 November 2013</u> 6:30 pm	Tips, Trips and Traps for Interpreters (and Others) with Valeria Aliperta The Devereux Pub, 20 Devereux Court, London WC2R 3JJ. Nearest station: Temple
<u>Tuesday, 10 December 2013</u> 6:30 pm	LRG AGM and Christmas Party The Devereux Pub, 20 Devereux Ct, London WC2R 3JJ. Nearest station: Temple

For the latest updates and general information on forthcoming events please see:
www.iti-lrg.org.uk and <http://www.facebook.com/pages/ITI-London-Regional-Group/420785661324621?ref=hl>

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The views expressed in authored articles are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the LRG or its Committee.