

NOTIS

The Northwest Linguist

Issue No. 2 | 2019 | Volume 32

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Happy anniversary, NOTIS! This year marks **our 30th** as a professional and social association for translators and interpreters in the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

NOTIS membership actually expands beyond this corner of the US into four more countries. Due to a recent move overseas, I count myself amongst those within our global community. Here in Italy, I've been tongue-tied learning a new language. I've cried over a poorly "translated" menu that led to me, a vegetarian, accidentally eating meat on a pizza. Due to the languages I speak, my family thinks I'm able to understand Italian well enough, such that I've found myself acting as a horribly underqualified, ad hoc interpreter at times. It's in these moments I could use the comfort – and perhaps forgiveness – of my fellow linguists.

Through your contributions to this newsletter, I've been able to connect with my NOTIS colleagues. While reading Ángeles González-Aller's article review, I pictured myself back in the classroom, using my translator skill set in a new way, as an asset to learn the intricacies of another language. The essay on interpreter training further cemented an idea in my mind as Yasmin Alkashef prompts us to pencil in time for self-improvement and never give up on developing our skills. Ergo, I'll be hitting the books soon, as I've now committed to attending an intensive Italian course for the new year. Hopefully, these features, along with Yuliya Speroff's practical piece about dealing with idioms, will strike a similar chord with you, to educate and motivate you as we head into 2020.

For a taste of what trainings NOTIS has offered this year, flip to the events section for reviews on both the 2019 NOTIS Annual Conference, our biggest event in recent time, and a full-day workshop with tech expert Sameh Ragab. Cue my FOMO (fear of missing out) because there's also a little blurb about upcoming events, but keep an eye on notisnet.org and our **Facebook** page as we continue to plan out the coming year.

On behalf of the Board, I'd like to say *grazie mille* to each and every one of you for making NOTIS the vibrant, inspiring organization that it is today. We're looking forward to the next thirty years!

Alicia L. McNeely

NOTIS Board of Directors

Chair of *The Northwest Linguist* Committee

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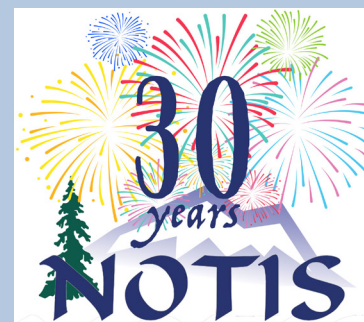
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Research from the Field: Translation as pedagogy in the second language learning classroom

An article review by NOTIS member Ángeles González-Aller

Panzarella, Gioia, and Caterina Sinibaldi. "Translation in the language classroom: Multilingualism, diversity, collaboration." *E-JournALL, EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages* 5, no. 2 (December 2018): 62–75.

<https://doi.org/10.21283/2376905x.9.140>.

As I was reading in preparation to teach my Theory and Practice of Translation course to undergraduate students, I recently came across an article which caught my attention, titled: "Translation in the language classroom: Multilingualism, diversity, collaboration." It caught my attention because, unlike most research on second language learning, this particular article shed a positive light on the role of translation in language learning. The authors, Gioia Panzarella and Caterina Sinibaldi of the University of Warwick, propose that the use of translation in language teaching actually supports students' multilingual growth, as well as the growth of multicultural competencies. Having worked in language teaching and translation for more years than I would care to admit, I have witnessed the constantly turning wheel of the "best" language teaching methodologies. When I read this article, I was both excited and grateful to see current research that captures the positive side of translation in the context of language learning.

The article provides a brief summary of the historical evolution of language teaching methodologies, beginning with the 18th-century grammar-translation method to the shift in the 1970s towards more functional, communicative language instruction. It was this shift, according to Panzarella and Sinibaldi, which resulted in the rather harsh and wide-spread dismissal of the use of the grammar-translation method in the classroom. The authors support the revival of the use of translation as a teaching tool in the language classroom and propose that translation can be successfully used to expand students' linguistic abilities, as well as foster students' intercultural competencies by means of the careful selection of source texts. They also present a series of collaborative translation activities that strengthen students' confidence in their multilingual and multicultural competencies.

Translation is defined in the article as a process which "creates a productive, dynamic environment and which encourages movement among language, within and beyond the source language and the target language."¹ This definition reminds us that translation is an active, energetic, and vibrant movement between languages and requires, from the student, substantive critical thinking. Panzarella and Sinibaldi further propose that, in the classroom, translation functions as a highly flexible pedagogical tool that promotes brainstorming, and the ranking and selecting of ideas, as well as develops skills in evaluating and negotiating meanings, all of which require critical thinking. The collaborative translation activities described in the article are adaptable to different levels of language learning and designed to "challenge cultural stereotypes [that so often appear in] monolingual and monocultural assumptions."²

Panzarella and Sinibaldi explain that these collaborative translation activities include two key features which explicitly focus on process, rather than product: individual student contributions and the collaborative negotiation of meaning. These two types of participation on the part of the learner are accomplished through what the authors call "the conversation translation." This activity does not require students to create a written translation of perfect equivalencies. Instead, students are provided with a passage to translate which they first convert into the target language while they discuss and negotiate register and meaning, and explore the cultural implications of the passage. To accomplish this, students are encouraged to use their primary language to ensure they can adequately discuss the nuances of meaning and register in the source language. The authors stress the importance of the selection of appropriate texts by the instructor, as it is crucial that students have reached the level of language into which they are asked to translate. A careful selection of texts is also vital for the exploration of cultural nuances which encourage students to reflect on their individual assumptions, as well as to provide space for growth of cultural competencies. Panzarella and Sinibaldi, in summary, provide a

glimpse of the benefits of translation in the classroom for the development of transferable skills crucial to students in the 21st century: critical thinking, cultural awareness, and collaborative learning.

The implications of this article for the use of translation in the language classroom extend beyond the presentation of activities that may be used to foster students' learning and critical thinking. Panzarella and Sinibaldi have also, at least for me, reopened the discussion of the use of translation in language teaching. As someone who teaches undergraduate students of language, I often find myself engaged in discussions of "best practices" in the classroom, where the stigma associated with the use of translation continues. I have often heard colleagues in a variety of settings describe it as non-communicative or antiquated. As with anything, I suppose, there needs to be balance and variety in how we approach language teaching. Interestingly, however, students in the translation course often comment that they see

great improvement in their language skills after taking the course, particularly in regard to grammatical accuracy. They also express improvement in their cultural awareness and understanding as a result of learning to decipher the various meanings and cultural nuances behind words.

The article, "Translation in the language classroom: Multilingualism, diversity, collaboration" by Gioia Panzarella and Caterina Sinibaldi, provides an interesting and refreshing look into the use of translation in language learning. For those of us whose work constantly crosses the lines of teaching and translating, it is worth reading.

References

1. Panzarella and Sinibaldi, "Translation in the language classroom: Multilingualism, diversity, collaboration," 63.
2. Ibid., 62. ▲

Idioms Are a Slam Dunk...Not!

By NOTIS member Yuliya Speroff

As any medical interpreter will tell you, interpreting encounters in healthcare settings are not only full of dense medical jargon. Sometimes, it's not the name of a new advanced treatment that will give you pause, but rather an idiomatic expression.

Idioms are an indelible part of any language. *The Cambridge English Dictionary* defines idioms as "a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own."¹ Some examples of idioms are: "**to spill the beans**" (i.e., to reveal secret information) and "**to kick the bucket**" (i.e., to die, very informal).

Doctors, like all people, use idioms all the time. The thing about idioms is that while some are easy to figure out from the context, a great many others are tougher. For me, the hardest idioms are the ones that come from the athletic world since I'm not very familiar with American sports ("**Slam dunk!**" "**Home stretch!**"). Since there are at least 25,000 idiomatic expressions in the English language,² it would be impossible to write an article listing all of them. Thus, this piece aims to raise interpreters' awareness of idioms, suggest some strategies for dealing with idioms during interpreting

encounters, offer some ideas for learning idioms, and provide a practical interpreting exercise with real-life example sentences containing idioms.

As I was saying earlier, it's entirely possible to be very proficient in all things medical but stumble when it comes to a colorful idiom. Let's consider this example:

Doctor: "I can't tell you exactly what your treatment will involve until you have the surgery and the PET scan. When you ask me to lay the plan out now, you want me **to put the cart before the horse.**"

Here, an oncologist is telling a patient he is not ready to present a treatment plan because he needs to perform diagnostic surgery first to see the full extent of the cancer, as well as the PET scan, which among other things, would show if the cancer has spread. A very serious matter, so why is he talking about horses? The doctor is using the idiom "**to put the cart before the horse,**" which means to do things in the wrong order. Chances are, if you interpret this sentence word by word, the result would be nonsensical. So, what *do* we do when encountering idioms?

Idiom Strategy #1: DO NOT interpret idioms word

► FEATURE

for word unless you are sure that an exact idiom equivalent exists in your language.

An exact equivalent might not exist in your language, especially when an idiom is culture-specific, or, for example, comes from a sport that is not played or is not popular in your country. If you know what the idiom means, interpret the meaning, not the actual words. If you are not sure, clarify with the person who said the idiom. You could argue that idioms are not significant enough to interrupt the flow of the appointment, but consider this sentence:

Doctor: “I think you’re doing very well on this regimen. I looked at your test results, and you **knocked it out of the park!**”

In this example, the idiomatic expression conveys crucial information – the test results are very, very good. To understand this, you have to know that this idiom comes from baseball, and “**to knock it out of the park**” means to produce a spectacular achievement.

So, I suggest the following algorithm for interpreting idioms:

- If you know the idiom or can easily understand its meaning from the context, and you can think of the equivalent in the target language – proceed to interpret the idiom.
- If you know the idiom or can easily understand its meaning from the context, but you cannot think of the equivalent in the target language – proceed to interpret the idea behind the idiom.
- If you don’t know the idiom and cannot easily understand its meaning, clarify with the person who used the idiom or ask for permission to look it up. Make a note of this idiom to research later.

Idiom Strategy #2: Expand your knowledge of idioms

The more idioms you know, the easier it’ll be for you to deal with them when you encounter them. Below you’ll find some ideas for learning more English language idioms, and I encourage you to do the same for your other working language(s).

- Do lots of reading and watching, and not necessarily things related to medicine. Any text can be a source of idioms – from science fiction novels to articles in *The Economist*. Similarly, any movie or TV show can provide you with idioms in context. Just make sure to jot down the idiom as well as an explanation of its meaning and/or a

translation.

- Subscribe to a free e-newsletter from *idiom a day*,³ which delivers one new idiom into your email inbox every day.
- Instagram also has lots of idiom-related accounts. For example, in addition to providing the meaning of each idiom, *Idiom Land*⁴ posts short video clips of TV shows and movies to show idioms in context.
- Subscribe to a podcast for learning idioms. I’ve found several podcasts to be useful, such as: *Don’t Be an Idiom*,⁵ *An Idiom a Day*,⁶ and *Idiom Savant*.⁷
- Get a mobile app for learning idioms. Here are some ideas: *English Idioms Illustrated*,⁸ *Idioms and Slang Dictionary*,⁹ and *English Idiom Cards*.¹⁰ The article, “Top 5 Android Apps for English Idioms: It’s Not As It Looks!”¹¹ also suggests more options for Android users.

Idiom Strategy #3: Practice makes perfect

For more practice dealing with idioms, below are some example sentences, which I reconstructed from my own interpreting encounters. Translate these sentences into your language(s). For more authentic practice, get together with somebody who speaks the same language as you, take turns reading the sentences to each other and interpreting them, then give each other feedback.

“The surgery was a success, but he’s not **out of the woods yet**. We’ll know more once he wakes up.”

“I think you’re doing very well on this regimen. I looked at your test results, and you **knocked it out of the park!**”

“If you have any questions or concerns, please ask me or my team. It’s important that we’re **on the same page** before we start the treatment.”

“Now, I don’t want you to worry about the mass in your uterus being a tumor. If it is, we’ll **cross that bridge when we come to it**. For now, let’s focus on getting you ready for surgery.”

“Your annual physical went well, and aside from slightly elevated cholesterol, you’re **fit as a fiddle!**”

“While the treatment can have many side effects, they may not happen at all or may come on later. But you can definitely expect some fatigue **right off the bat**.”

“We want you to lose weight in small increments. Even though it might feel like you’re **moving at a snail’s**

pace, as long as you're losing a little every week, you're **on the right track**. I know you were hoping for fast results, but we don't just want you to lose weight, we also want you to keep it off. So, go slow, and remember – **good things come to those who wait.**"

"The good news is that the new medicine is working for you, and the fact that you're tolerating it so well is just **the icing on the cake.**"

Patient: "My insurance company is being very difficult. My daughter called them several times to make sure this procedure is covered, but we're still not sure. I wish I didn't have to deal with them!"

Doctor: "You're **preaching to the choir**. They can make our job difficult as well."

"I sent the referral to the hospital that is more local to you. **Fingers crossed**, they'll be able to give you your radiation treatments there."

Good luck out there!

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CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS & PAPERS

Have a unique idea for a workshop? Know an engaging speaker who might be interested in presenting for NOTIS? Interested in helping to organize opportunities for professional development?

Please contact:

- interpreting workshops- María Luisa Gracia Camón at graciacamonml@gmail.com
- translation workshops- Shelley Fairweather-Vega at translation@fairvega.com
- online webinars- Lindsay Bentsen at lindsayb.translation@gmail.com

Have a knack for party planning? Enjoy setting up or tearing down festive get-togethers? To get involved with NOTIS social events, please contact Maria Farmer at marsmiley@me.com.

If you would like to submit an article (500-1,500 words) or any other applicable content to *The Northwest Linguist* or our online blog, please contact Alicia McNeely at alicialynn3033@gmail.com.

For more volunteer opportunities and to learn about all of NOTIS's committees and divisions, visit our website at www.notisnet.org/Committees/Divisions.

Ten Strategies for Interpreter Self-Training

By Yasmin Alkashef, MA

Good interpreters know that their performance is never perfect. They realize that there is always room for improvement. They work on honing their skills, or else they start to erode and disappear. In a complex and demanding profession like interpreting where the majority of interpreters are freelancers, self-training and self-development are a must. You can, of course, attend webinars and courses here and there, but ongoing self-training is a surefire way to work on all the micro-level ingredients in the good interpreter recipe. Here are some tips that might help you with self-training whether you are a beginner or an expert interpreter:

1. Mark your calendar

Failing to plan is planning to fail. Try to set a time for training in your busy schedule. Two or three hours a month allocated for pure training sounds reasonable. However, if you are getting ready for a certification exam, this is not enough. You have to plan for studying, increasing the hours spent on actual interpreting skills as you move closer to the test date.

2. Be on the look out for good material

It does not matter where you are, you may very well find good material for training. This could be in your local newspaper, an in-flight magazine, a radio interview, or a TV show with long court scenes. Try to collect written and audio material that you can use for training. Save this material in an organized manner so that you can easily find it during training sessions. Including some metadata in your documentation may also be helpful. The source of the material, the topic, the dialect, and the speed are all useful when planning your training sessions.

3. Toolkit

Before you start, make sure you have all your tools in place. You will need a phone, tablet or laptop, good headset, notebook, and pen. Have these ready for action at your desk so that you can hit the ground running.

4. Shadowing

Shadowing is a very good exercise to start with if you are a beginner or have not been practicing for a

while. You play an audio recording and start repeating everything you hear in the same language. Some trainers suggest taking shadowing to the next level by reformulating the ideas, instead of repeating what you hear word-for-word in the same language.

5. Multi-tasking

Multi-tasking is another preparatory exercise that is very useful in interpreter training. In this exercise, the interpreter shadows or interprets while doing another task. You could start writing numbers and add by twos or threes, or jot down numbers from 100 to one. You can also print out a simple addition worksheet and try to answer it while shadowing or interpreting. The whole point is to increase your ability to focus and do more than one mental process at once.

6. Interpreting

Good old interpreting is of course the best exercise you need. Do not forget to practice consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. When you practice, do not try to interpret in your mind. It is important to work as if you are at an interpreting assignment with all your attention and seriousness. Take notes the way you usually take notes, and use the dialect or standard register you often use at work.

7. Appreciate feedback

Asking for feedback and accepting feedback are two difficult and different things. Asking for feedback involves putting yourself in a very vulnerable position. It takes a lot of courage to ask for feedback on your work. Accepting feedback is not any easier. Defensive walls tend to build up in a second. Of course, you cannot guarantee that the person giving you feedback will be very good at it, wrapping every negative comment in layers of praise. However, it is important to be professional and learn not to take criticism to heart. It is worth mentioning that there are two valuable resources for feedback: feedback from professionals who can listen to the source and the interpretation and can include some comparative analysis in their feedback, and feedback from listeners to the interpretation who have no access to the source. Their insights can shed more light on output coherence, comprehensibility, and delivery.

8. Sight, sight, sight

In many training programs, sight translation receives very little attention. In training at home, you may also overlook sight translation. However, in reality, interpreters need to perform sight translation quite often, be it to help a client sign consent forms or to read slides from the screen. Plan to practice sight translation as often as you do consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. Again, do not sight translate in your mind. Read out loud, and record yourself. It is easy to let intonation and other prosodic features slide while focusing on the text at hand.

9. Document

After you finish, remember to look up all the new terms you learned during training. Compiling well-

organized glossaries is very helpful in the long term. You could use one of the glossary tools now available, but a simple Excel sheet or Word file will do just as well.

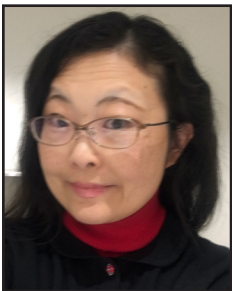
10. Don't be discouraged!

Listening to one's own performance is not fun. You might even be harsher on yourself than others. Try to be as objective as possible when listening to your recorded performance. Appreciate your strengths, and take note of areas that need improvement. Make these areas the focus of future training.

A final note: be patient. This effort needs time and patience to bear fruit. You will eventually be proud of your progress. ▲

Congratulations 2019 NOTIS Scholarship Winners!

This fall, NOTIS awarded scholarships to four dedicated and hard-working members! Two of these scholarships provide funding for the winners to attend a translation or interpreting conference, and the other two scholarships help to finance tuition for a translation or interpreting course.



Mariko Kageyama is one of the recipients of a NOTIS conference scholarship! She is a Washington State Court-Registered Japanese interpreter with a JD from the University of Washington School of Law. The scholarship will support Ms. Kageyama in June 2020 when she attends the Pacific Northwest Court Interpreter Conference in Lake Oswego, OR.

Olga Lucia Herrera is another recipient of the latest NOTIS conference scholarship! She is a DSHS Certified Medical Spanish and English interpreter and DSHS Certified Social Services Spanish and English interpreter. Ms. Herrera also holds a PhD in Applied Research and Community Psychology from North Carolina State University. She will use this scholarship to attend the fall 2020 ATA Annual Conference in Boston, MA.



Ángeles González-Aller is one of the winners of the most recent NOTIS tuition scholarship! She holds a PhD in Educational Leadership from Gonzaga University and is an Associate Professor of World Languages and Cultures at Whitworth University. Also, Ms. González-Aller is a DSHS Certified Medical Spanish and English interpreter, DSHS Certified Social Services Spanish and English interpreter, and DSHS Certified English to Spanish translator. Thanks to this scholarship, she will be participating in a legal translation course with the University of Arizona this winter.

Barbara Robertson is another recipient of a NOTIS tuition scholarship! She is a DSHS Certified Medical Swahili and English interpreter and DSHS Certified Social Services Swahili and English interpreter. Ms. Robertson also holds a Bachelor of Music with a secondary education certification from Western Washington University. She will soon be attending a 40-hour interpreter training course with Arcos Institute in Seattle, WA, with the help of this scholarship.





NOTIS Annual Conference

September 28 & 29, 2019 | The Museum of Flight | Seattle, WA

#NOTIS2019

NOTIS Annual Conference 2019 by the Numbers

By NOTIS Secretary Mary McKee

This year, the Board decided to expand its previous years' "International Translation Day" celebration from a small, one-day event featuring mainly local presenters, to a large, two-day regional Annual Conference with speakers from outside the Pacific Northwest and across the world. This was the largest event that NOTIS has organized in several years, and it was held at the Museum of Flight on September 28 and 29. We would like to provide some numbers and summary information about the event based on the responses to the post-event survey, as well as share the Board's vision for the future of the Annual Conference

On Saturday, the Conference featured a Keynote Address by Dr. Karen Tkaczyk, followed by our Language & Job Fair, panel discussions on Breaking into New Fields in Translation and Interpreting, and a networking reception with a cash bar. Sunday included an entire day of workshops in two tracks: translation and interpreting. The interpreter track included Interpreting for Forensic Drug Analysis, Interpreting in Immigration Court, and Interpreting for Special Education workshops. The translator track included Translating Long Projects, Introduction to Practical Subtitling, Editing and Proofreading, and Common Pitfalls in English<->Spanish Translation.

We received mainly positive and constructive feedback from attendees who responded to our post-event survey. Respondents mostly work with Spanish, but other languages were represented, including Finnish,

French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Laotian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Uzbek, Vietnamese, as well as 14% who reported that they work with other languages.

With regard to the Conference as a whole:

- 86% of respondents reported that the complexity level of workshops was mostly just right, while 14% thought it was mostly simple or basic
- 89% thought that the variety of sessions offered was good, better than expected, or excellent
- 93% said the location was good, great, or outstanding
- 98% would be likely to or would definitely encourage a colleague to attend a NOTIS event
- 95% would be likely to or would definitely attend the next NOTIS Annual Conference

With regard to the Language & Job Fair:

- 86% of respondents said that they would be likely to or would definitely attend the next Language & Job Fair
- Of respondents who attended the Fair, 77% rated it 4 or 5 out of 5 stars

Respondents' constructive feedback about the Language & Job Fair included comments asking for it to:

- be held separately without overlapping panel discussions
- have more exhibitors seeking to contract

NOTIS Annual Conference

translators and interpreters

- have a session on resume critique/feedback
- be held in a separate area so that exhibitors are not setting up while attendees are socializing prior to the event
- include a structured networking portion to meet people

The NOTIS Board also received specific and very helpful feedback from attendees on each presentation that we will use to inform our decision whether to invite speakers back in the future and to help us make organizational decisions regarding the Conference. We sincerely appreciate all detailed examples provided in the feedback regarding specific speakers and are saving this feedback for the future.

NOTIS has also received feedback about the difficulty of registering attendance at our events for continuing education credit purposes, and we are exploring a couple of potential options to streamline this in the future. Please stay tuned for more on these developments.

As NOTIS members, your opinions matter to the organization! As Board Members, our task is to provide events that appeal to our members with speakers

whom you respect and value. Thanks to everyone who was involved in the Conference as an organizer, volunteer, advisor, attendee, and survey respondent.

Given the huge effort and countless hours that it took to organize this Conference, and given that the Oregon Society of Translators and Interpreters (OSTI) and the American Translators Association (ATA) conferences are also held in the fall, the Board has tentatively decided to hold our next Annual Conference in winter or spring 2021, instead of in fall 2020, so as not to compete with these other wonderful conferences. This will also allow us to spread our continuing education offerings throughout the year and have a calmer timeline for organizing the Conference. We hope to form the organizing committee for our 2021 Annual Conference in the beginning of 2020, so if you are interested in helping with this event, please contact info@notisnet.org.

The 2019 Annual Conference was generously sponsored by Washington Courts: Court Interpreter Program and Supreme Court Interpreter Commission, Universal Language Service, The Language Group, and Nimdzi. Without their support, this Conference would not have been possible! Thank you, sponsors! We hope to see you again soon. ▲

Upcoming NOTIS Events

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| December 12, 2019 | Poetry Translation Workshop with The Northwest Literary Translators <i>Instructor: Sharon Bryan</i> | Folio Seattle, WA |
| January 16, 2020 | Literary Translation Feedback Forum with The Northwest Literary Translators | Folio Seattle, WA |
| April 4, 2020 | Legal Division Training Day *save the date* | Bellevue College Bellevue, WA |

For more information and to register for an event, please visit the NOTIS events calendar online at www.notisnet.org/NOTIS-events.

NOTIS Annual Conference

NOTIS Annual Conference 2019 in Photos



Thank you to our sponsors!



Translation Technology Deep Dive Review

By NOTIS President Shelley Fairweather-Vega

NOTIS hosted popular technology trainer Sameh Ragab in Seattle on October 19 for a full-day workshop featuring advanced tips and tricks for translators. Ragab flew in from Cairo and stopped in Seattle for a day before flying on to Palm Springs to present at the ATA conference.

Ragab insists that proficiency with technology is one of the core competencies of a professional translator, alongside more commonly recognized skills like linguistic proficiency, business smarts, and transfer skills. His presentation stressed the benefits to efficiency and accuracy to be gained by smart use of computer technology, mostly with a view of making it easier to use Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tools to leverage past work, save time, and ensure quality on new projects. To that end, he organized his workshop into training modules focused on a variety of areas where translators can benefit by better use of computing technology.

The first module was an in-depth introduction to web scraping, which Ragab predicts “will be the most important element in the future of the translation industry.” Web scraping uses special software or browser extensions to comb specific websites for data, which the user can then organize in a convenient manner and use to create glossaries, populate databases, or improve translation memories. Ragab shared his enthusiasm about the ability of web scraping to save significant time and result in better accuracy than manual copy-and-paste operations. He pointed out that harvesting online data for use offline has immense advantages when internet access is unreliable and websites come and go. The web scraping techniques he demonstrated can be used for monolingual or bilingual terminology data, with obvious applications for CAT tools, but also can be used to make quick contact lists of translation agencies (for advertising) or fellow translators (for outsourcing). The discussion also touched on tools that help with various parts of this data-harvesting process: sophisticated text editors, termbases, and RegEx.

Second on the agenda was a look at tips for handling PDF files. These are difficult to process directly with CAT tools. Ragab demonstrated various ways to

successfully convert PDF files to usable formats while addressing stumbling blocks that can arise from document formatting, fonts, source image quality, the “code soup” that comes with optical character recognition (OCR), and permissions. Especially interesting were his tips about using PDF software to improve the image quality of a scanned PDF file that might be smudged, skewed, or indistinct on the screen to get better results from OCR. He also shared efficient ways to digitally sign PDF documents to avoid printing and scanning documents.

Next, Ragab covered a series of plugins and software that make everyday translation tasks simpler, from predictive typing and autosuggest to ways to anonymize data in files and translation memories to comply with GDPR or other confidentiality requirements. He also demonstrated a brand new SDL plugin he had been personally lobbying for that uses Microsoft text to speech technology to read Studio files out loud. Ragab told the class that having the computer read the source text to him while he simultaneously checks the written target text allows him to quadruple his proofreading output each day.

A short module on subtitling and transcription included software recommendations and an easy way to caption videos directly in your YouTube account or using another new Studio plugin.

Finally, Ragab presented advice on computer care and maintenance, especially backup methods. He discussed the pros and cons of various software, hardware, and cloud-based tools for backing up data, as well as computer systems and software. This is vital because, as he advised the audience, we should “use technology, depend on it, but never 100% trust it.”

The workshop was attended by 24 NOTIS members, some of whom came from outside Seattle for the event, as well as three professors from the University of Washington’s new Translation Studies Hub, who partnered with NOTIS to sponsor this event. A recording of Ragab’s presentation and handouts by the presenter are available for everyone who registered for the workshop. ▲

Translation

A poem by NOTIS Board Member Candidate
Yasemin Alptekin

When I translate
I am in a trans state
whether I transform the
words of a work of fiction
or history, archaeology, sociology
or philosophy full of description
I go there, to that land, to the lives
of those times unbeknown
to mix and mingle
with the minds
of those who create the story
of the writers who write history
and share their ideas with humanity
I take them to another world
to another society
as if I am carrying a big Statue of Liberty
or a fragile memento of antiquity
walking on the eggshells
of terms and lingo and vocabulary
focusing on the meaning, the sense, and elucidation
questioning the connotation, and denotation
so that the words on the pages are conveyed accurately
to the minds of those who read those lines
in their mother tongue in their homeland
in their comfortable chairs
enjoying the journey
to other lands, lives and ideas
with their book in hand
without even thinking of the translator
who took them there!

July 17, 2019



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The Northwest Translators & Interpreters Society (NOTIS) is a non-profit organization and a regional chapter of the American Translators Association covering the northwest corner of the United States: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska. NOTIS membership is open to students, practitioners, educators, and fans of translation and interpretation located in our region.

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