The **Linguist**

Bridging cultures

How translating a novel rooted in the Albanian landscape became a journey of self discovery

In brief

Are interpreters equipped to produce on-the-spot legal summaries in court?

Syria retold

Conveying the nuances of conflict-related slang after the fall of Assad

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The Linguist

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S NOTES

One thing I find interesting with languages is the extent to which, when you don't use them, they go a bit rusty – but also the extent to which they can quickly come back… I've often wondered is this more of a confidence thing or a genuine attrition and loss of capacity. A recent blog from Duolingo about their English Tests offers some interesting insights (https://cutt.ly/DuoTest). They note that High Stakes English Language Tests, particularly those used for academic admission or professional certification, carry significant weight. Their results can shape educational and career trajectories, making accuracy crucial. However, language proficiency isn't static – it can both improve and decline over time.

Research reveals fascinating patterns in language attrition. While basic vocabulary (like greetings) often remains stable, productive skills (speaking and writing) typically decline faster than receptive ones (reading and listening). This explains the common experience of feeling 'rusty' in a language: you might understand more than you can produce. However, interestingly, higher initial proficiency levels seem to correlate with better long-term retention.

That's good news for CIOL members and professional linguists more generally: higher proficiency levels provide protection against language attrition. But of course the other factor is language change. Languages themselves evolve – from technology to current affairs to social mores and memes, our daily verbal communication is constantly on the move. And this of course highlights what we know as linguists: that even for people with 'fluency', or who are bilingual, continuous language exposure and practice – particularly in productive skills – are vital to keeping up with language change and keeping the rust at bay. Duolingo's research underlines that maintaining active language use is vital for preserving professional-level competency. This is why many language test scores and assessments come with a 'health warning' and an expiration date.

For language learners, this is actually empowering news. The more proficient you become, the more resilient your language skills will be. For bilingual speakers, it explains why you might feel rusty but can quickly get back into the swing of things. And for language professionals, it underscores the joy and importance of continuous engagement with our working languages. For linguists, this is a reminder of why staying connected with living languages is so exciting, important and, frankly, so much fun!

Every conversation you have, every book you read and every TV show you watch in your target language isn't just entertainment – it's active CPD and language maintenance. Now that's what I call a win-win!

Do enjoy this issue of *The Linguist*.

John Worne

EDITOR'S LETTER

The gains that have been made by the Women in Translation initiative to counter gender bias in UK publishing are encouraging (p.18), with many interesting books now available in English that may not otherwise have been commissioned. But, as Helen Vassallo explains, there is still work to be done to ensure that more works by women from marginalised groups and underrepresented parts of the world are translated for the anglophone market.

Also in this issue, Eyhab Bader Eddin offers insights into Syria's conflict-related language and how translators can approach the nuances of such terms following the fall of Bashar al-Assad (p.8). Rona Castrioti writes a poignant and personal reflection on the process of translating her grandfather's novel, and the challenges of rendering language embedded in the Albanian landscape and culture into English (p.14). Sangi Gurung asks whether interpreters are equipped to provide summaries in immigration trials, as they are increasingly being required to do (p.16). And Sue Leschen gives an overview of the working conditions inside Britain's prisons (p.12).

The Editorial Board said farewell to three longstanding board members at our February meeting as their terms came to an end. It has been a pleasure to work with Chloe Fairfoull, Eleni Pavlopoulos and Jessica Oppedisano, who shared valuable insights and expertise in fields as diverse as audio-visual translation, secondary education, commercial business and public service interpreting. If you would like to find out about joining the board please express an interest at https://cutt.ly/CIOLEB.

Miranda Moore

Share your views: linguist.editor@ciol.org.uk

ciol.org.uk/thelinguist

News *The latest from the languages world*

Cardiff faces cuts

Philip Harding-Esch reports on the state of university languages as Cardiff moves to close its department

The new year has started with the dreadful news that Cardiff University (*pictured*) has announced plans to cut 400 full-time jobs, including the potential closure of modern languages and translation. Citing financial pressures, the university launched a consultation lasting just three months.

This is, unfortunately, increasingly familiar. Last year, Aberdeen University threatened cuts and closures affecting languages. In that case, the worst scenario was avoided following a concerted campaign from across the languages sector, triggering interventions from the Scottish government, national agencies and cultural institutes.

What makes these cuts particularly alarming is that they are happening irrespective of the reputation or strategic importance of the languages departments in the institutions concerned. Aberdeen University has a unique role in providing trainee languages teachers to schools across the Highlands, for example; as well as specific obligations under Scotland's Gaelic Plan.

Similarly, Cardiff University is the largest provider of modern languages degrees in Wales, accounting for over 60% of all undergraduate intake; and the university has an international reputation for leading on policy and advocacy work for languages, the influence of which can be seen in Wales and across the UK.

In December, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (APPG ML) held a meeting exploring some of the pressures facing languages provision in universities (for details, see 'Inside Parliament' in the last issue). The key point from Universities UK was that universities are having to make difficult choices within the constraints of the funding regime. The University and College Union (UCU) has shown that over half of all Higher Education institutions (88 of 166 universities) are undergoing redundancies, restructuring or departmental closures.

These choices are being made in isolation (i.e. institutions are having to act out of self-preservation), which is not necessarily compatible with ensuring strategic, nationwide provision. With the support of the University Council for Languages (UCFL), a series of recommendations was made at this ▶

What the papers say…

Fifth of Brits 'Never' Attempt to Speak a Foreign Language When Abroad, 27/12/24
53% said they would rather point to something on a menu than risk the embarrassment of saying a word wrong. The poll of 2,000 adults found that 30% often find themselves mispronouncing foreign words or phrases. 'Gyros', 'tagliatelle', and Vietnamese noodle soup 'pho' were the trickiest foods to pronounce.

The Challenges of Studying in a Second Language Have Made Me More Resilient, 19/12/24
I learned to approach language like solving a puzzle, piecing together meanings from nursing journals, patient leaflets and online articles. Every time I cracked a term, it felt like a small victory… Placements are where theory meets reality and where the real challenges happen. Navigating different accents, slang and fast-paced conversations in a hospital setting can be overwhelming. But I've learned to adapt. My favourite phrase during placements? "Could you explain that again?" Asking for clarification isn't just helpful, it shows that I care about doing the job right.

Irish Language Cuts 'A Total Failure from Both Governments', 1/2/25
[Foras na Gaeilge] is a cross-border body responsible for the promotion of the Irish language throughout the island of Ireland. It said it has to make savings of more than €800,000 (£669,000)… Dr Ó Tiarnaigh from Conradh na Gaeilge said the cuts "will leave local and national groups under even more pressure amidst a long-running funding crisis amongst the Irish language community".

News

▶ meeting covering short-, medium- and long-term goals. One area the APPG sees as a priority is to ensure language is categorised as a 'strategic priority' subject, which would bring more funding.

For institutions facing immediate cuts, including Cardiff, the hope must be that decision makers work with staff and stakeholders to agree a sustainable future that supports the strategic ambitions of the institution – to ensure they do not make the irreversible mistake of losing crucial scholarship in languages and culture. The experience at Aberdeen shows that this is possible to achieve.

On 5 February, the Welsh Senedd approved a motion which called on the Welsh Government to "work with the UK Government to identify sustainable solutions for the future of higher education". Longer term, this must be the right way forward.

Baroness Coussins, Co-Chair of the APPG ML and CIOL Vice-President, told *The Linguist*: "Universities have been under increasing financial pressure for several years and it is alarming to see modern languages often being targeted for cuts alongside other subjects. It is very short-sighted to lose linguistic expertise as the country's future requirements for diplomacy, security, trade and exports will become more complex."

She continued: "It is imperative that a nationally strategic approach to languages provision in HE is achieved. Currently, universities are making decisions in isolation, which has already led to 'cold spots' in provision – both geographically and demographically. One area we would like to see urgent action on is securing category C1 funding for Strategic Priorities for languages."

Manon Cadwaladr, Chair of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru (the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters), said: "The proposed cuts at Cardiff University are a shock. Languages and translation are essential for different nations to understand each other. Languages have commercial value as countries buy, sell, import and export. The loss of expertise in languages in our universities will lead in time to the loss of the ability to teach languages in our schools. We will all be poorer because of this. I call on Cardiff University to reconsider these cuts."

There is a petition to support linguist colleagues at Cardiff, endorsed by UCFL, at https://cutt.ly/CUpetition.

DNA and the origins of language

Modern science has been yielding some fascinating discoveries in languages stretching back thousands of years. A DNA study conducted by researchers at Vienna University traced Indo-European languages back to a single population living in steppe grasslands 6,500 years ago. By analysing DNA samples from archaeological sites across Eurasia, they newly identified an ancient population in the Caucasus and the Lower Volga which is connected to all modern populations speaking Indo-European languages today.

Meanwhile, researchers have digitally scanned and 'unrolled' charred scrolls from the Roman town of Herculaneum which were buried in burning ash during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD. Using cutting-edge X-ray imaging in the enormous Diamond Light Source synchrotron facility in Oxfordshire, they were able to produce a 3D scan "on the scale of a few thousandths of a millimetre".

Powerful AI is then applied to identify the ink on the charred papyrus. As both materials are carbon-based it is extremely difficult to achieve, but early results have been promising. Stephen Parsons, the project lead, is "confident we will be able to read pretty much the whole scroll in its entirety". Early indications are the scroll is a work of philosophy – very apt!

CHARRED REMAINS: *The Herculaneum scroll*

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In the media

PHILIP HARDING-ESCH

A series of government cuts hit language-specific programmes hard this winter. *SchoolsWeek* reported on the announcement that the Department for Education (DfE) was scrapping its Latin Excellence Programme immediately, saying it would cause "significant disruption" to 1,000 pupils across 29 schools preparing to take their GCSE Latin in the summer.

The publication also covered cuts to subject-specific 'hubs', including computing, science and languages. Funding for the flagship National Consortium for Languages Education (NCLE) and its network of 15 Language Hubs was cut by a third. This prompted Oxford academic Marie K Daouda to critique multiple policies and societal prejudices in *The Critic,* arguing such a move undermines language learning and "reinforces privilege".

Meanwhile, the education sector awaits the recommendations of the Curriculum and Assessment Review, which could have far-reaching consequences for the place of languages in our schools and colleges.

The Telegraph published several articles criticising the provision of public service interpreting. As part of their 'Waste Watch' series, they ran a piece claiming that interpreters for benefit claimants cost taxpayers £27m with the alarmist headline that "the true cost is incalculable". Another story arose from the case of an interpreter in the Foreign Office accused of running 'Chinese propaganda' websites.

But more nuanced reporting was published too. *The Law Gazette* ran several reports on the ongoing Lords Committee Inquiry into the procurement of language services in the courts. The committee was "so alarmed by what it has heard so far that it has taken the drastic step of urging the lord chancellor to halt a procurement process for new language services contracts until its concerns are addressed", a request the Ministry of Justice later 'rebuffed'.

Philip Harding-Esch is a freelance languages project manager and consultant.

Inside Parliament

The cross-party language group has launched a competition to encourage MPs to learn languages, says Philip Harding-Esch

In the new Parliament, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Modern Languages is concentrating on attracting new members from among MPs and peers. The last election saw a great number of seats change MP, with the result that the membership of the APPG has changed. In addition, the previous Chair, Dame Nia Griffith MP, became a Minister and therefore passed on her role to Tonia Antoniazzi MP.

As part of efforts to raise its profile, the APPG has partnered with Duolingo to launch the Westminster Language Challenge. From 1 January to 31 March, parliamentarians are asked to learn any language (or multiple languages) on Duolingo. The three individuals who do best win a share of £20,000 for a charity of their choosing, with the winner crowned Duolingo's Language Champion for 2025 at an event in April hosted by the APPG.

Tonia Antoniazzi has hosted two drop-in sessions in Parliament to encourage MPs and peers to come and sign up to the challenge – and find out more about the APPG's work in the process. It comes as

research commissioned by Duolingo shows that only 13% of current MPs are fluent in a second language – down from 20% when a similar study was carried out in 2004.

The Westminster Language Challenge has been popular so far. Several dozen MPs registered and it transpires that many parliamentarians are already fans of learning a language on the app. At the drop-in session, I met MPs and peers who had very different motivations for improving their language skills. Many are linguists themselves. For example, Callum Anderson, MP for Buckingham and Bletchley, studied German at university and worked for a period in Brussels, using his language skills.

Others have a multilingual background, such as Afzal Khan, MP for Manchester Rusholme, who speaks English, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic and Pothwari. At his swearing in, he swore the oath in English and Punjabi – the language of the region where he was born – and he has long been a champion of the multilingualism in the community he represents.

GETTING INVOLVED
Labour MP Dawn Butler poses with the Duolingo owl at a Language Challenge event

Wera Hobhouse, MP for Bath, was born in Germany and was a German teacher before public life. Several MPs were keen to showcase their region's Indigenous language. Anna Gelderd, MP for South East Cornwall, for instance, would be keen for Duolingo to add Cornish as an option for learners.

The Westminster Language Challenge promises to be a fun and engaging way to raise the profile of languages – and the APPG ML – across Parliament. Is your MP taking part? Ask them to sign up here: bit.ly/DuolingoWLC. And stay tuned to find out the winners in April.

TL **Philip Harding-Esch works on behalf of CIOL to provide the secretariat to the APPG on Modern Languages.**

Syria's language of war

From prison vernacular to 'survival slang', Eyhab Bader Eddin considers how translators can convey the nuances of conflict-related language in post-Assad Syria

*I*n the wake of Bashar al-Assad's fall in December 2024, Syria stands at a pivotal moment, its sociopolitical landscape irrevocably transformed. This upheaval has brought forth stories of those who endured unimaginable hardships in prisons and lived through many years of conflict.

How can such experiences, laden with cultural and situational specificity, be accurately conveyed in translation? Can language truly convey the depth of suffering, the weight of history, and the complexities of factional rhetoric? Or does it inevitably elude translation, resulting in a fragmented narrative of a nation with multiple perspectives?

Amid the challenges of the civil war and subsequent conflicts, Syria's various factions – ranging from secular groups to those driven by religious ideologies – crafted their own unique terminologies. These terms, deeply embedded in the nation's history, religious texts and diverse cultural practices, reflect a complex web of meaning that is difficult to translate. As the current government triumphantly leads the country into a new era, these terms serve as powerful symbols of a long-awaited return to stability and unity.

From the revolution's outset, Syrian society experienced a division that quickly solidified into two categories. One supported the regime, which the opposition labelled منحبكجية (Manhbakjiya), derived from the colloquial Arabic term منحبك (Manhbakk), meaning 'we love you'. This phrase originated as the slogan of Assad's 2007 presidential referendum campaign. His critics used the term to characterise regime supporters as blind to reality, invoking the proverb 'the eye of love is blind'.

Meanwhile, for Assad loyalist groups, even the term 'opposition' (معارضة; *mu'arada*) was tantamount to treason. At the same time, some viewed opposition members as simply 'the deceived' or 'tricked' (مغرر بهم; *mugharrar bihum*), a characterisation reinforced by the regime's paternalistic rhetoric.

Another term, 'infiltrators' (مندسون; *mundassun*), emerged early in the revolution to describe those accused of inciting unrest. It gained prominence in connection with the Bandar Plan (خطة بندر; *khitat Bandar*), named after Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan. Promoted by the regime's security apparatus and circulated by local media in April 2011, this narrative framed opposition actions as

GLOBAL IMPACT
International publications report on the fall of the Assad regime

part of a 'foreign conspiracy' to destabilise Syria. Translating such terms requires not only linguistic precision but also an understanding of their sociopolitical origins and connotations.

Expressions like 'tactical withdrawal' (انسحاب تكتيكي; *insihab taktiki*) became prevalent during military engagements, used by Assad's troops to rationalise losses and minimise the psychological impact on his supporters. Initially framed as strategic retreats, the term evolved into a cynical euphemism for failure.

Other phrases, such as 'liberation' (تحرير; *tahrir*) and 'cleansing' (تطهير; *tat-heer*), signified military victories and the expulsion of opponents. These acts often preceded widespread plundering (تعفيش; *ta'fish*), a practice so pervasive that it became synonymous with newly controlled areas. Gangs dismantled and sold everything of value, from industrial equipment to household items. Such actions left countless Syrians destitute, transforming them overnight into refugees or shelter residents.

Coined by revolution

Following Assad's fall, a new term, تكويع (*takwi'a*), gained traction, describing former loyalists who abruptly switched allegiances. This linguistic innovation reflects the volatility of political loyalties during tumultuous times. Revolution-coined terms like these often function as both nouns and verbs, and embed themselves deeply in Syria's cultural and political lexicon.

Among them are several covert terms for the US dollar, many of which play on the

Translation serves as a unifying force in Syria among divided factions

colour of the notes: نعناع (*na'na'*; 'mint'), أخضر (*akhdar*; 'green') and بقدونس (*baqdounis*; 'parsley'). Using the dollar was taboo during Assad's rule, often resulting in imprisonment or heavy penalties. These seemingly innocent words concealed acts of defiance and survival, acquiring a Syrian revolutionary connotation.

In the post-Assad era their meanings remain tied to the oppressive conditions under which they were coined. Translating them requires careful contextualisation to ensure their historical and cultural significance is preserved. 'Cash', or simply 'dollars', would ensure comprehension but lose the context of oppression. Therefore, an explanatory footnote or gloss, e.g. '"parsley" was a euphemism for dollars under the Assad regime', may be necessary.

Internationally recognised phrases like الفيتو الدولي (*al-fayto al-dawli*; 'international veto') can be translated literally, but there are satirical overtones here that could be imparted through an explanatory note. The term reflects frustration with Western inaction, particularly within the context of the UN Security Council's use of Chapter 8, whereby the veto power of certain members blocked effective international intervention, deepening Syrians' sense of abandonment.

In the regime's now infamous prisons, a unique vernacular evolved as an act of survival. This lexicon, shaped by decades of oppression and shared suffering, conveys

layers of meaning that are inaccessible to outsiders. For example, the term بيت خالته (*bait khaltu*) translates literally as 'his maternal aunt', but in this context refers to detention centres, prisons or concentration camps where the regime practised systematic torture and atrocities against civilians. Translating such expressions demands an appreciation of the emotional and cultural contexts they encapsulate.

The term تشبيح (*tashbih*), which symbolises violence and mafioso-like practices, has a particularly storied history in Syria. Initially tied to the Latakia province's suffering in the late 20th century, it reemerged in 2011, permeating political discourse and media. When translating such terms, a suitable approach involves a combination of transliteration and descriptive translation, depending on the context. In cases where the target audience is unfamiliar with Syrian political history, retaining the transliterated term (*tashbih* or pl. *shabiha*) alongside a brief explanation ensures clarity. For example: 'The regime relied on the *shabiha*, government-backed paramilitary enforcers known for their brutal tactics.'

If the emphasis is on the criminal nature of *shabiha*, functional equivalents such as 'thugs', 'gang enforcers' or 'militia operatives' may be appropriate, but this would decontextualise the term and strip it of its Syrian spirit. In political discussions, where the focus is on

A NEW BEGINNING?
A child draped in the new Syrian flag at a popular protest in Syria in the final months of the Assad regime

state-sponsored violence, terms like 'regime enforcers' or 'paramilitary death squads' may better capture the intended meaning. However, in journalistic or scholarly contexts, a more detailed paraphrase might be necessary to maintain historical accuracy. By carefully considering the audience and context, the translator can preserve the historical significance while ensuring comprehension.

An ethical approach

When approaching culturally specific terms or prison testimonies, translators must strike a balance between literal accuracy and conveying the cultural and emotional resonance of the original. Language is sometimes sanitised to suit global audiences, but this risks diluting the raw intensity of the original accounts, which is especially problematic when translating testimonies for international human rights organisations. Conversely, overly literal translations may alienate readers unfamiliar with Syrian culture. Navigating this tension is one of the most significant challenges translators face.

The translator must also contend with the vastly different connotations these words hold outside Syria. Terms like 'tactical ▶

In the now infamous prisons, a unique vernacular evolved as an act of survival

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withdrawal' and 'cleansing' might be understood literally in a global context, stripping away the overtones of sarcasm, bitterness or euphemistic horror they carry within Syria. This discrepancy highlights the translator's critical role in bridging cultural gaps and ensuring these terms resonate authentically with international audiences.

Assad's fall also underscores the political dimensions of translation. Language choices shape international perceptions of the conflict and its aftermath. Prison testimonies often serve as evidence in international legal proceedings, where translation accuracy becomes critical. A mistranslation could undermine a witness's credibility or distort the severity of human rights abuses. Translators must exercise extreme caution, ensuring their work reflects both linguistic precision and contextual understanding.

Translation: the human dimension

At its core, translation transcends linguistic boundaries, serving as a profoundly human endeavour. Translators bridge cultural divides and amplify voices that might otherwise remain unheard. They therefore play a crucial role in ensuring that the experiences, struggles and aspirations of Syrians – whether survivors, activists or those in the diaspora – are accurately conveyed to global audiences. They help counter misinformation, maintain the integrity of narratives, and foster

PRISON TALK
The horrors of Sednaya Prison, also known as 'Human Slaughterhouse' (المسلخ البشري), were revealed after the fall of the regime

understanding in a world increasingly shaped by fragmented and often biased perspectives.

Moreover, translation serves as a unifying force within Syria itself, facilitating dialogue among divided factions and regions, thus contributing to the reconstruction of the nation's social fabric. In this context, translation is not just a technical task, but a powerful tool for empathy, solidarity and the rebuilding of a post-conflict society.

The aforementioned term تكويع (*takwi'a*) highlights a fascinating intersection of language, politics and social transformation in the context of translation. It can be used as both a noun ('one who switches sides') and a verb ('the act of changing allegiance'). A descriptor of personal transformation, it carries connotations of opportunism, survival and self-preservation, symbolising the unpredictability of human choices in the face of systemic collapse. Possible translations might be 'allegiance flipper', 'turncoat', 'flip-flopper' or, more freely, 'political opportunist'. Still, these options lack the dialectical dimension since the source term is vernacular.

At its core, the word captures a specific moment in Syria's revolutionary history, offering a nuanced linguistic reflection of the

volatile shifts in political loyalties during times of social upheaval. In translation, it becomes more than a mere lexical item; it encapsulates an evolving sociopolitical phenomenon. Translators must not only find an equivalent but also convey the emotional and ideological weight that such a term carries. How does one translate the complexities of shifting political identities in the context of revolution?

A tool for justice

Linguistic innovation is emblematic of the role language plays in revolutionary movements. Revolution-coined terms often serve a dual function: they communicate a shared experience of transformation and dissent while reinforcing the divisive nature of the political changes occurring.

In the aftermath of regime collapse, translators play a crucial role in preserving Syrian narratives. By grappling with the complexities of culturally specific terms and prison vernacular, they ensure that survivors' voices are heard on the global stage. However, this work presents ethical dilemmas, political pressures and the inherent limitations of language.

Translation is ultimately an act of justice. By bringing Syrian stories to the world, translators contribute to a deeper understanding of the country's struggles and resilience, making sure the lessons of its past are not forgotten as it embarks on an uncertain future.

A life with languages

In English and Kiswahili, Linah Makembu charts her journey from flight attendant to language business owner, and how the church inspired her to serve her local community

Nilikulia katikati mwa Kenya na tangu umri mdogo nilifanya vyema katika lugha. Pia ningechukua lahaja za kienyeji niliposafiri katika eneo hilo. Katika kazi yangu ya kwanza kama mhudumu wa ndege ilibidi nitoe matangazo katika lugha kadhaa, na pia kuwasiliana na watu tofauti, lugha na tamaduni. Hii ilifungua shauku ya kuelewa watu, haswa katika miji ambayo tulilazimika kulala kwa siku kadhaa. Walakini, safari yangu rasmi ya lugha haikuanza hadi 2019, nilipohamia Uingereza kama mfanyakazi wa kujitolea katika kanisa la mtaa. Nilitafsiri mahubiri kwa kutaniko la Waswahili, hasa kutoka Afrika Mashariki - huduma ninayoitoa hadi leo.

Baada ya kuona jumuiya ya kanisa langu inatatizika kupata huduma za ukalimani katika hospitali na huduma nyingine za umma, nilijiandikisha katika kozi ya Ukalimani wa Jamii ya Ngazi ya 3. Hii ilinipa fursa ya kufanya kazi kwa wanajamii kwa kujiamini na wataalamu.

Ninatafsiri kutoka Kiingereza hadi Kiswahili na Kikuyu na kinyume chake. Lugha inayozungumzwa zaidi barani Afrika. Kiswahili kinazungumzwa na takriban watu milioni 150 katika nchi 15 na visiwa. Lugha rasmi ya Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda na Rwanda, ina lahaja tofauti, zikiwemo Bajuni, Kiswahili cha Kongo na Kibravani. Ingawa kimuundo ni lugha ya Kibantu, baadhi ya vipengele vya sarufi yake vimeathiriwa na Kiarabu.

Nina shauku kubwa katika kazi ya utetezi na ukuzaji wa lugha adimu za Kiafrika ili kuhakikisha ufikiaji sawa wa rasilimali. Kiswahili kinakabiliwa na changamoto kadha wa kadha, ikiwa ni pamoja na kukosekana kwa sera za lugha za kukisaidia kikamilifu, uwakilishi duni kwenye mtandao, utafiti mdogo ulioandikwa kwa Kiswahili na mitazamo hasi dhidi ya lugha za Kiafrika.

Hivi majuzi nilijiunga na Diploma ya Ukalimani wa Utumishi wa Umma (DPSI) kwa lengo la kujiunga na Daftari la Kitaifa la Wakalimani wa Utumishi wa Umma (NRPSI). Ninaendesha Kampuni ya Jambo Linguists Ltd Kaskazini mwa Uingereza na ninapanga kukuza kampuni kwa kuleta wataalamu wa lugha waliohitimu na kuhakikiwa, huku nikishirikiana na washirika wa biashara wenye nia moja kutoa huduma mbalimbali katika Kiswahili duniani kote.

I grew up in central Kenya and, from an early age, I performed well in languages. I would also pick up local dialects when I travelled in the region. In my first career as a flight attendant, I had to make announcements in several languages, as well as interacting with different people, languages and cultures.

This opened up a curiosity in understanding people, especially in cities where we had to lay over for a couple of days. However, my official linguistic journey did not start until 2019, when I relocated to the UK as a volunteer in a local church. I interpreted sermons for the Swahili congregation, mainly from East Africa – a service I still render today.

After seeing my church community struggle to get interpretation services in hospitals and other public amenities, I enrolled in a Level 3 Community Interpreting course. This gave me an opportunity to work for community members with confidence and professionalism.

I interpret and translate from English to Kiswahili (also known as Swahili) and Kikuyu, and vice versa. The most widely spoken language in Africa, Kiswahili is spoken by around 150 million people across 15 countries and islands. The official language of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda, it has different dialects, including Bajuni, Congo Swahili and Bravanese. Although it is structurally a Bantu language, some aspects of its grammar have been influenced by Arabic.

I have a keen interest in advocacy work and the development of Africa's rarer languages to ensure equitable access to resources. Kiswahili faces a number of challenges, including an absence of language policies to actively support it, inadequate representation on the internet, limited research written in Kiswahili and negative attitudes towards African languages.

I recently enrolled for the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) with the aim of joining the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI). I run Jambo Linguists Ltd in the North of England and plan to grow the company by bringing in qualified and vetted linguists, while collaborating with likeminded business partners to provided assorted services in Kiswahili around the world.

BEHIND BARS

© Pexels

Sue Leschen reveals what interpreters can expect from various prisons as she travels from low-security facilities to secure hospitals

I have done time in a variety of prisons over the years – thankfully as a legal interpreter rather than as a prisoner – from open prisons with relatively relaxed security to high-security Category A prisons. 'Strangeways' (now known as HMP Manchester but almost never called that by Mancunians) is my local prison. Over the years, it has hit the headlines due to high-profile prisoners such as Ian Brady (the Moors murderer) and Harold Shipman (the serial patient killer).

Interpreting in Strangeways is generally a depressing experience as most of the building is an 1868 Dickensian time warp, forever in urgent need of modernisation. It only accommodates men – both remand prisoners awaiting trial in the local Manchester courts and convicted Category A prisoners. On arrival, interpreters' ID and booking documents are checked. Then, along with other assorted visitors such as relatives and lawyers, we leave our personal belongings, including phones and wallets, in lockers in the Visitors Centre. On one memorable visit, my instructing solicitor's locker was broken into while we were in the prison consultation room – bringing less to these visits is definitely more!

WITH LITTLE OR NO NATURAL LIGHT, YOU ARE CONSTANTLY BEING MONITORED BY PASSING GUARDS

On another visit, a solicitor who had been visiting clients at the prison for more than 15 years was refused entry because she had forgotten to bring her ID document. For prisoners' families, the Visitors Centre is also a place where they can gather before and after visits, and it is common to see children running around while their mothers chat with each other. It's not the best place to socialise, but better than nothing under the circumstances.

In order to access the prison wings, you then pass through standard security procedures (handheld and/or gated metal detectors) and sometimes pat-down body searches, which can occasionally involve sniffer dogs being led up and down the queue. Even so, security is not infallible – on one visit my solicitor succeeded in bringing in chewing gum in her mouth, a packet of polo mints concealed in her file of papers and a

cigarette lighter that she had forgotten to remove from an inside jacket pocket! The damage that could have been done with that lighter, had it fallen into the wrong hands, doesn't bear thinking about.

ALONE WITH A KILLER

Interpreters' prison assignments can be bizarre experiences. Imagine sitting alongside a convicted killer who is detailing the finer points of a fatal stabbing or strangulation to his lawyer. Alternatively, you might be with a prisoner who is on a video link to a court hearing room or on a pre-hearing video-conference with their barrister. On video links, the interpreter is the only person who is physically present with the client (other than the prison officer guarding them). These jobs usually take place in a working environment consisting of a small and claustrophobic consultation room with little or no natural light, where you are constantly being monitored by cameras and passing guards.

In my experience, most prisoners prefer to be physically present in court – if nothing else, it gets them out of prison for a few hours! It is arguable that not being physically present in court is a breach of their human rights because in some court video links there are times when neither they nor their interpreter is able to see and/or hear properly due to connectivity and other issues, such as wrongly positioned cameras in the hearing room.

Attempts by the interpreter to alert the court to these problems are often unseen and sometimes possibly ignored by the judge. Invariably, once the link has ended, the prisoner will start asking the interpreter for legal advice, which we cannot provide as that is not within our remit. The absence of their lawyers at this point is clearly problematic for both prisoners and interpreters.

MOTHER AND BABY UNITS

Interpreting at HMP Styal is a completely different experience. At first sight, on arrival in the pretty Cheshire village of Styal, the entrance to the prison looks like a pleasant housing estate comprising several attractive detached Victorian houses – albeit surrounded by tall wire fencing. In fact, HMP Styal used to be an orphanage for destitute children from Manchester, but it is now a closed prison for convicted and remanded female prisoners and young offenders.

There is also a mother and baby unit where prisoners can have their babies with them until they are 18 months old. One of my visits involved a mother who had been convicted of several immigration offences and the interview took place in a brightly decorated room in one of the houses on the site. It covered future plans for the care of her child at 18 months, and how mother and infant would be reunited ahead of her probable deportation back to her country. She told us that she was

studying catering at the 'Clink Restaurant', which turned out to be a training facility.

Different interpreting experiences again occur at HMP Forest Bank in Manchester, a privately run Category B men's prison built in 2000, so a relatively modern building. Housing convicted and remand prisoners and young offenders aged 18-21, it is unfortunately in the news regularly due to allegations of out-of-control drug and alcohol abuse, violence and suicides. While working in modern surroundings is a relief after Strangeways, the intense lighting and tiny consultation rooms can be difficult to cope with.

HMP Risley in Warrington, Cheshire, is another very different experience. A Category C (low-security) prison, it houses approximately 1,000 male prisoners, many who have been convicted of sex offences. Some attend sex offender treatment programmes, depending on the length of their sentences and the availability of places. It can be very hard emotionally to interpret for sex offenders (especially those who were themselves abused as children) but maintaining a professional approach, which neither judges nor seeks to excuse these behaviours, is the best option.

MEDIUM-SECURITY HOSPITALS

On another level altogether is interpreting in medium-security mental health hospitals. Here you are working in a cross between a prison and a hospital. Instead of prison officers, you work alongside nurses who fulfil a hybrid role, providing treatment and surveillance. Your client probably has mental health issues of varying degrees of severity (pending the outcome of assessments) and you may be interpreting visits for psychiatrists as well as lawyers.

While many people in ordinary prisons have mental health issues including stress, anxiety and depression those in these hospitals are likely to have more severe problems, such as schizophrenia and psychosis, requiring psychiatric nursing support. They may have been sent to the hospital from other prisons after being assessed or direct from the courts.

On one occasion, having travelled to a long-distance appointment, the psychiatrist and I were unable to conduct the interview because the prisoner refused to talk to us. Such are the ups and downs of interpreting in secure hospitals and prisons, with a wide variety of often unpredictable challenges.

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Shifting *the landscape*

Translating her grandfather Shemsi Mehmeti's novel, R B Castrioti learns what translation can reveal about ourselves, and others

*T*ranslation is an art – a delicate weaving of two worlds with threads that are at once fragile and unbreakable. It requires a translator to wrestle with the 'untranslatable', to balance fidelity with artistry, precision with poetry. This tension lies at the heart of my current project: bringing *Bijtë e Tokës së Djegur* (*Sons of the Scorched Earth*) by Shemsi Mehmeti (né Castrioti) – my grandfather – into the English language.

This novel is a landscape of loss and longing, shaped by the idioms and rhythms of a people whose history clings to every syllable. Translating it feels like trying to carry water cupped in both hands, knowing that no matter how carefully I tread, some will inevitably slip through my fingers. Take the Albanian word *mall*, for instance. Within its single syllable lives a universe – a longing so profound it becomes grief for what is no longer or what, perhaps, never was. How does one carry such a weight into English? I am considering using the phrase 'There was a lament in his soul' to express the deep, aching desire for something unattainable, though 'yearning' or 'pining' might be more fitting. None of these words, however, fully captures the grief embedded in *mall*, so I may rely on the surrounding text to convey its full emotional weight.

Every page of this novel presents a fresh challenge. There are idioms tied to Albania's harsh landscapes, silences laden with unspoken truths, and cultural nuances that defy straightforward translation. It is here, in the spaces where languages refuse to align, that the translator must become an artist, sculpting the ineffable into a shape the reader can hold.

Consider the phrase *Qëndro o Sokol Llapi, se burrat nuk lodhen për gjumë*. Translated literally, it reads: 'Stay strong, Sokol Llapi, men don't grow tired for sleep.' On the surface, it seems like a father's reproach to his son. Beneath that, however, lies an Albanian cultural ideal: resilience and fortitude in the face of hardship. Rendering this in English

requires careful negotiation to preserve its essence while ensuring it resonates with a different audience.

Similarly, expressions like *Hana nuk la pa e qortuar të shoqin* ('Hana spared no reproach for her husband') carry more than their literal meanings. I translated it as 'Hana made sure to reprimand her husband at every turn', which conveys the same sense of unflinching criticism, reflecting the cultural expectation of the time, while making it feel more natural to an English-speaking audience. These phrases whisper of familial dynamics and shared histories, of societal norms that bind individuals to a collective understanding. Translating them demands cultural fluency and a deep reverence for the original text.

Linguistic hurdles

The Albanian language presents its own unique hurdles. Shaped by centuries of history and isolation, it is rich with idioms and expressions that resist neat unpacking into English. Some words, like *mall*, carry layers of meaning that defy direct translation. Others thrive in what is left unsaid, in the spaces between words. Translating these nuances often feels like trying to explain a dream: perfectly coherent in its native form, but prone to unravelling in the retelling.

Consider the phrase *bëj kujdes* (lit. 'be careful'). While this might seem straightforward, in Albanian it is often used in situations where there is an emotional subtext – a warning given with love or concern, one that suggests 'I care about you and I don't want you to get hurt' or 'I hope

you are making the right decision'. The English translation loses the tenderness and deeper layer of emotional investment; it can come off as neutral, even dismissive.

Even the structure of Albanian resists translation. Sentences curve and stretch like mountain roads, weaving together ideas that English demands be broken into smaller, more linear pieces. In my translation, I've mostly kept sentences longer to capture the flow of the original, and sometimes broken them to fit English's more straightforward style – always trying to balance clarity with the original complexity. These extended sentences, though perhaps unnatural in English, are necessary to maintain the rhythm and cohesion that Albanian allows for.

Idioms that are tied tightly to the land and its people lose their breath when carried too far from home. One such idiom is *E ka zënë korrja në këmbë*, which literally means 'The harvest caught him standing'. It refers to someone who worked tirelessly until their final moment, evoking the image of a farmer passing away while still tending the fields. It symbolises a life of relentless effort, deep ties to the land, and the idea of duty persisting until the very end. In English, we might say 'He worked himself to the bone' or 'He kept going until his last breath', but these lack the poetic weight of the original – the idea of nature itself marking the end of one's life.

Cultural context adds another layer of complexity. Albania's history of occupation, isolation and resilience has infused its language with historical undertones, and sometimes the very act of translation feels like a betrayal – not of the text but of the world it represents. How do you translate the weight of a phrase that carries centuries of struggle? These challenges make every success, no matter how small, feel like a triumph.

A minor breakthrough was finding the right phrase for *E ka zemrën copë-copë* (lit. 'His heart is in pieces'). In Albanian, it conveys a deep, unspoken sorrow – grief so profound it feels irreparable. English offers phrases like 'His heart is broken' but they lack the rawness and fragmentation of the original. After much deliberation, I settled on 'His heart was shattered beyond mending'. It is not a perfect match, but it carries the weight of the original.

Familial responsibilities

Translation is an act of preservation – a conversation across time and space with the words on the page and the world they came from. Every decision is a negotiation, a question of how much you can bend without breaking the thread. At the heart of this translation lies my grandfather. As I work, his voice seems to echo through every line. This process has brought me closer to him in ways I never expected. He died when I was 22, and though I rarely visited him in Kosovo, our connection always felt unshakable, as if some part of his mind imprinted itself onto mine.

He was the first in our family to attend university – a visionary who brought education to a small, insular country starved of information, freedom and opportunity. To the outside world, he was an award-winning journalist and editor who was committed to revitalising the Albanian language at a time when its usage was prohibited. Known for his work with *Rilindja* newspaper, he worked tirelessly to bridge gaps, to illuminate truths. His influence shaped me long before I understood it.

Six days after my 22nd birthday, I visited him in Kosovo as he lay in bed, dying of cancer. "Rona," he whispered when he saw me, his face lighting up. "I missed you." He struggled to sit up, motioning me closer. "When I die, I want you to have something of mine. No one knows about it, not even your father. Behind the library cabinet, there's a safe. A hidden hole. Inside, I've kept some special things for you. You'll know what to do with them."

At the time, I didn't think much of it. Life moved forward. It wasn't until 2019 – three years later – that I returned to Kosovo. Behind the cabinet, just as he'd said, I found the safe. Inside was a treasure trove: unpublished manuscripts, secret notes, documentation of his undercover work, writings in Arabic and Russian, old Albanian poetry, and clippings of *Rilindja* articles he'd deemed significant. Among them was his novel, the one I now translate, along with photographs of him with Polish writers in the 1970s.

In that moment, I knew what I had to do. For years, I had wavered, unsure of my purpose. But there, in his words, I found it.

Translating his novel has given me a glimpse into the man he was – his humour, his wisdom, his profound love for the land and its people. It feels like I am having a conversation with him, one that transcends time.

There are moments when I agonise over a single word, rereading passages endlessly, wondering if I've lost something essential. There are nights when the weight of responsibility feels too heavy, when I fear I will misstep and fail to do justice to his legacy. And yet, there are also moments of pure joy – the spark of finding just the right phrase, the satisfaction of crafting a sentence that carries the same emotional resonance as the original.

This process has taught me that translation is about empathy – stepping into the mind of the writer, understanding their world and carrying their voice forward. It is an act of preservation, yes, but also an act of creation. Each choice a translator makes shapes how a story will be received, how it will live in a new language.

This project is profoundly personal. It preserves my grandfather's voice. Through his words, I have discovered not only who he was but also more about myself. Translating his novel feels like building a bridge – not only connecting languages but uniting generations. It is my way of expressing gratitude and saying thank you.

TIED TO THE LAND
Tending the fields in rural Tirana, Albania

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A summary trial?

What should interpreters do when asked to provide only a summary at immigration appeals, asks Sangi Gurung

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As much as one is prepared with legal terminologies in any court interpreting setting, interpreting a summary of submissions made by respective representatives at the end of an immigration appeal hearing can feel like information overload. Yet this is what interpreters are increasingly being asked to do. Indeed, where the appellant is legally represented, it has become common practice, regardless of how well versed the interpreter may be in providing such summaries.

Although we are usually given the choice of whether to interpret simultaneously or take notes and provide a summary at the end of each submission, it is not always feasible to opt for the former. Interpreters may feel obliged to agree to the judge's request for a summary interpretation in order to maintain the smooth flow of the hearings.

Although whispered interpreting is seldom an issue in a big courtroom, it can be problematic in small tribunal rooms unless interlocutors pace with the interpreters, ensuring there are pauses. This is true whether the interpreting is face-to-face or remote, conducted through a secure cloud video platform. Given the size of tribunal courtrooms, whispered interpreting creates the possibility of interference with the speakers, especially when appellants or sponsors are hearing impaired, as headphones are not readily available.

At times a legal representative may suggest that interpreting submissions is not required and that they will explain the details after the hearing is completed, perhaps via a family member or a staff member of the law firm who speaks the appellant's language. However, when an appellant is self-represented, sentence-by-sentence consecutive interpreting is instructed by the judges so the appellant gets a fair opportunity to understand the content thoroughly.

IN BRIEF
Judges increasingly ask interpreters to provide summaries of submissions in immigration appeals, rather than interpreting in full

Opting for a summary, or releasing the interpreter altogether, is often seen as a way of saving public funds, particularly when the appellant is absent and only the sponsor or family members are present. This is openly articulated by quite a number of immigration judges in the current climate of austerity.

A whirlpool of information

Making a summary of a submission in such cases involves impromptu analysis of the key points presented by either the appellant or the respondent (i.e. the Home Office). The submission serves to outline the basis for the appeal, the evidence relied upon, and the legal arguments made to challenge or support the initial immigration decision. With several legal principles, precedents and the facts of the case thrown in, interpreters unfamiliar with immigration tribunals can easily feel drowned in a whirlpool of information. Sentence-by-sentence consecutive or simultaneous interpreting avoids this issue.

In a typical immigration appeal setting, a submission on a respondent's part usually constitutes their stance on visa refusal and review or asylum denial. This is followed by immigration laws, human rights arguments or procedural breaches, as well as relevant case law or precedents and rebuttals of oral and written evidence, any medical or documentary evidence and country-specific reports. Likewise, the appellant's representative refers to legal principles, responds to the Home Office's arguments, relies on factual claims and cites past authorities to substantiate their appeal.

The duration of a submission could be anywhere between a few minutes and half an hour or more. It may well include complex ideas and sentences, and repetitive information, with the judges reminding representatives to skip certain information time and again.

What is expected of a summary?

Is the interpreter equipped or skilled to provide a quick and brief summary? How would you pick and choose what information to interpret? What are the strategies an interpreter can follow to provide a summary? How would you make a summary as you go along, taking notes while a representative is making a submission?

Interpreters are expected to keep summaries as brief as possible, making a spontaneous analysis of what parts of a submission to incorporate or discard. Since a key factor is saving money, the idea of 'keeping it brief' and filtering information remain at the core of a summary. I try to focus on points that I see as relevant, avoiding repetition, putting together all the precedents, and highlighting the respective parties' key arguments. I include each party's position, the legal principles engaged and the facts of the case. However, I am never 100% satisfied with the summary.

The format or sequence of submissions in these appeals does follow a standard pattern: legal stance/immigration laws, authorities, facts and evidence, whether an appeal should be accepted or dismissed, followed by the matters dealing with costs. However, given the different natures of appeals, the interpreter will only be able to recognise this pattern after doing multiple hearings. Only then will they be able to digest the whole sequence and content of an appeal, comprehend and process the complex set of information, and subsequently interpret the legal arguments as precisely and confidently as a professional interpreter can.

A way forward

Interpreters are trained and guided to interpret verbatim, sentence-by-sentence, as accurately as possible. We are known to adapt to unforeseen situations and requirements. In our day-to-day assignments, we interpret long sentences, often with no background information. We interpret most of the things we have managed to take notes of because that is what is expected of us, with an emphasis on 'no omissions'. Providing a summary is a whole new ball game and requires concise filtering of details.

Even though I interpret such summaries daily, only two judges have simplified the procedure. The first offered to provide a summary at the end of each submission to be interpreted consecutively. Each summary was about five sentences and only comprised each party's position, legal ground and a few facts stating why the appeal should be accepted or dismissed. None of the precedents were included in the summary. All the details, such as meticulous factual details and elaborate legal arguments, were omitted.

The second judge went straight into the facts of the case. Both judges summarised sentences succinctly, made interpreting easy to manage and appeared to make the summary as accurate as it could be. This is, of course, at the judges' discretion, but it is possibly the best way forward, at least as long as a brief summary is required.

Where interpreters continue to be called on to do the summarising, it raises the question: Should there be guidelines on what should be included? Should a summary of submissions be included in DPSI courses and assessments, or is it something to be navigated and learnt on the job? Should one observe summary interpreting before taking on an immigration appeal assignment in order to provide a quality and precise interpreted summary?

It is crucial that the stakeholder community discuss this issue, and consider whether we should equip interpreters to provide summaries of submissions or empower them to suggest to judges that it is beyond their remit and set of skills.

ANALYTICAL SKILLS
Submissions can last more than 30 minutes and include complex ideas, legal points and precedents, the facts of the case and more

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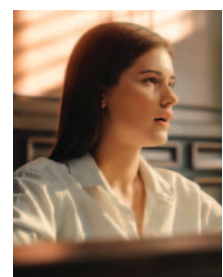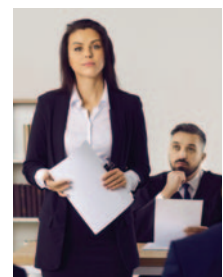
Breaking into the BOOK CLUB

As the number of translated novels by female authors increases, Helen Vassallo asks which women are being translated, and how activists can be more inclusive

For several years, a growing number of voices in both academic and industry contexts have drawn attention to the imperative to address diversity within publishing, where recent reports suggest that diversity has plateaued. In the past decade, the lack of gender equality has been repeatedly highlighted with regard to existing and pervasive imbalances in the commission and publication of literature in translation.

In 2013, translator Alison Anderson wrote an impassioned article asking 'Where are the Women in Translation?'[1] after her research into publications and prize lists indicated that only around a quarter of books in translation were written by women, and that books by women writers made up an even smaller proportion of literary translation prizewinners and prize shortlists.

The year after Anderson's observations, book blogger Meytal Radzinski declared

August 'Women in Translation' month, announcing that she would read only books by women in translation for the month, and encouraging her online followers to do the same. Over the last ten years Women in Translation month has grown in popularity, with a growing network of participants across the world. Many publishers regularly offer discounts on their translated titles by women authors in this month, and the #WiTMonth hashtag accumulates thousands of posts across social media platforms every year.

In 2015, the Women in Translation tumblr was co-founded by translators Margaret Carson and Alta L Price, bringing together articles, studies, reviews and news of book releases that support women in translation. And in 2016, translator Katy Derbyshire inaugurated a new series of articles on LitHub focusing on women writers from around the world as yet untranslated into English.

In 2017, the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation was established at the University of Warwick by Professor Chantal Wright, in response to male-dominated literary prize lists. Then, in 2018, I founded the Translating Women project to investigate and challenge the lack of representation of women's voices in translation. This coincided with the Year of Publishing Women, a movement based on a 2015 provocation by novelist Kamila Shamsie. It challenged publishers to release only books authored by women in 2018 to mark the centenary of the first British women gaining the right to vote.

All of these initiatives have worked to challenge ongoing barriers to gender parity in translation (barriers that have been analysed eloquently by Carson[2]), and have been part of a welcome shift towards greater gender equality in the publication of translated literature. In 2023, Chad Post

reported that the percentage of books by women in translation had risen to around 47% of all translated fiction, which indicates the impact of the dedicated work over the last decade to support and promote the translation of women's writing.[3] However, this positive change could hide another problem that is less quantifiable but nonetheless becoming more widely recognised: more women in translation are being published, but which women are they, and which are getting left behind?

A lack of diversity

A recent collection of essays on translation edited by Kavita Bhanot and Jeremy Tiang highlights the extent to which racial and geopolitical biases are additional barriers to equality in translation.[4] This lack of diversity is borne out by analysis of the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation. The long- and short-lists reflect – and sometimes increase – the predominance of European submissions. Though the number of submissions increases year on year, the range of languages, cultures and the social groups they represent do not shift significantly.

This indicates the limitations of both the prize and the Women in Translation movement more generally: gender is only one aspect of diversity. Uneven distribution of funding in source cultures is another impediment, with lack of funding contributing directly to lack of diversity. There are also entrenched biases within the industry – and within society more widely – that limit the possibility for a greater diversity of writing to come through.

While carrying out research for my recent book *Towards a Feminist Translator Studies*,[5] the translators I interviewed raised a range of issues that hampered them in getting publishers to commission books by women writers in translation. In one case, a publisher believed they had "done" women's writing from a large Latin American country because they had previously published one – as if the entirety of any country's women writers could be represented (forever) by one book.

Another issue they identified is the expectation for women writers from non-Western cultures to write in ways that corroborate Western preconceptions or stereotypes. This unquestioning complacency creates marginalisations and exclusions that

are compounded by more general trends that have been publicly criticised.

Nicholas Glastonbury recently expressed frustration with publishers' clichéd response of "there's no market for this book",[6] as if publishers themselves do not have a role in the creation of a market. Meanwhile Anton Hur deconstructs the notion of the "mythical English reader", a figure meant to represent the target market, which publishers and editors harness to reject pitches.[7]

However, the 'actual' reader appears to be more adventurous, as evidenced by a 2023 Booker Foundation survey.[8] This found that readers of translated fiction welcomed a "challenging read", suggesting that there is, indeed, a market for more diverse books – books that do not necessarily fall into our comfortable, mainstream or Eurocentric notions of what a book should be.

One significant intervention to foster greater diversity in translated literature is the research-led revival of PEN Presents. This digital platform is managed by the writers' association English PEN and aims to shift the landscape of literature translated into English by funding and promoting sample translations from diverse writers and contexts.

Rather than offering subventions or prizes to books that have already been commissioned or published, PEN Presents is a translator-led initiative: the applications come from translators wishing to champion a particular book. This format recognises the unique positioning of translators as advocates and readers,[9] and offers an opportunity to do more than passively reflect inequalities elsewhere, as prize longlists and shortlists often do.

The result is compelling: the invitation for submissions to the second round of PEN Presents (which was open to work from any language or region) received 125 proposals for work originally written in 51 languages from 53 countries. Although not exclusively focused on women writers, this spread was almost as linguistically and culturally diverse as the first six years of entries to the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation. Three have already been acquired by UK publishers, all by women writers and translators.

The success of the PEN Presents programme so far not only corroborates the importance of funding in increasing diversity, but also indicates the significance of literary institutions and organisations actively

supporting and promoting diversity, as well as the vital role that translators play as activists and advocates for bibliodiversity. So although the outlook for women in translation is more positive than it was in 2013, the work is not complete. We now need to look beyond a binary approach to gender in order to work towards a more genuine, sustainable and intersectional diversity in translated literature.

Notes

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CHALLENGING BIASES

Kavita Bhanot, who has written about racial bias in literary translation, at Literature Must Fall

Rethinking localisation

Dariush Robertson explains how working with industry leaders to reverse engineer university localisation courses helps prepare undergraduates for the world of work

I spent over a decade in the localisation industry working as a linguist, which involves translating or reviewing content during the production stage of a localisation project. What surprised me the most was that the IT skills needed for this role were far simpler than expected yet the required translation skills and cultural knowledge were more complex. Having transitioned to working full-time in academia, this was something I aimed to address when designing and delivering content on the Translation and Localisation MA at Newcastle University.

To balance industry-relevant IT with linguistic skills, it is essential that instructors understand the differences between the roles of linguists, project managers and localisation engineers. While they all work in the production stage of a localisation project and use computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, they focus on different tasks which require specific skills and qualifications, and this should be reflected in the classroom. There is, however, a tendency for localisation modules to be IT-heavy, cover more CAT tool tasks than is necessary for linguists, and miss some of the more creative and linguistic skills essential for localisation linguists.

Delineating roles in localisation

One practical way to understand the requirements of each localisation role is by checking the many job posts for localisation linguists, project managers and engineers. They list the essential skills, knowledge and qualifications for each role, which can be broadly divided into two categories: the linguists and the non-linguists. To clarify, the

'non-linguists' may be able to speak other languages but do not typically perform linguistic tasks.

The linguists are the translators and reviewers (also referred to as linguistic quality assurance reviewers), proof-readers and MT (machine translation) post-editors. These roles typically require translation skills, the ability to work in a team, excellent cultural knowledge of the source and target languages, creativity, and knowledge of CAT tools. It is now more common for a degree related to translation or localisation to be a requisite. Project manager and localisation engineer roles do not have the same linguistic requirements.

My research with Chinese-to-English translation teams at Keywords Studios demonstrated that project managers set up projects on CAT tools, including the creation of translation memories (TMs) and term bases (TBs), and linguists mainly translate and review.[1] The teams localised culturally specific content in video games, and there were no instances in which the project managers translated or changed the translations.

This is reflected in the many online adverts for project managers, which do not list translation skills but do include the ability to set up projects in a CAT tool, as well as interpersonal and cost management skills. Unlike the role of localisation linguists, these roles do not require a degree in translation or linguistics. As far as I know, there is only one MA course specifically for localisation management (at Middlebury University in California, USA).

In the case of localisation engineers, most adverts include the ability to recognise and

extract localisable content from the original files, perform IT-related troubleshooting during the production stage, and convert all localised content back to the original format. This involves a greater level of proficiency with CAT tools and many other types of software than the linguistic roles.

According to Benjamin Adcock, the Global Localisation Engineering Manager at Keywords Studios, a localisation engineer would likely either have a background in localisation, with advanced CAT skills and the ability to code, or a more IT-based background, perhaps with a degree in computer sciences plus experience with CAT tools and the localisation industry.

He highlights how the IT skills and knowledge for this role are beyond the capabilities of most linguists and project managers. The work involves utilising a range of complex software, or even building bespoke software scripts to extract localisable content and convert it back to its original format after the translation stage. For technically demanding projects, it is more likely that a localisation engineer would be setting up the projects than a project manager. Adcock also notes that as processes become more complex, and automation more prevalent, engineers are becoming more involved in project creation and management.

Another way to stay up to date with professional practice is to collaborate with industry. At Newcastle's annual Keywords Studios Online Video Game Localisation Workshop, a diverse team of localisation professionals speak to students, researchers and academic staff about current industry

trends in localisation and video game translation. This includes employment and training opportunities for our students.

Essential CAT skills for linguists

The first localisation module on our MA course focuses on the general CAT skills needed for localisation linguists, as well as post-editing machine translation (PEMT) and AI prompts. The second module builds on these skills, and frames practice with theories and concepts such as cultural specificity, functionalist theory, multimodality, censorship and transcreation. Both modules explore the localisation of digital interactive products, such as apps, video games and websites, as well as non-interactive products. While I am responsible for the creation of these modules, my colleague Dr Ya-Yun Chen designs and covers the teaching of AI and multimodality.

For CAT skills, we focus on the needs of linguists, which involves translating the segments of a TM, adding terms to a TB and performing quality assurance (QA) checks. Instead of teaching these skills in a computer lab, the CAT tasks are given as short homework assignments – each taking around 30 minutes.

For an inclusive approach for a variety of learners, I create short tutorial videos of myself completing these tasks with Panopto – an app that can record what I do on screen. Students can then follow along at their own pace on academic versions of the software at home or on the school computers. Once completed, the strengths and weaknesses of the software are discussed in class and contextualised with case studies and classroom-based tasks. Using this method, it is possible to cover the essential CAT tool skills a linguist needs within five rounds of homework. This prevents situations where less tech-savvy students become anxious and fall behind in a computer lab while more confident students race ahead.

There are many CAT tools on the market but we have found that covering two or three is more than enough, as most have similar essential features for linguists: the TM, TB and QA functions. To test this, I ran a research project with five students trained on memoQ and Trados through an existing localisation module.[2] They were asked to localise app and video game texts using unfamiliar CAT tools, which they completed easily, proving that these skills are highly transferable between different CAT tools. As such, we now start

students with memoQ, which is known for its user-friendly functionality, before moving on to Trados, which can provide more control and complexity, and then cloud-based CAT tools.

Authentic, dynamic assignments

Much can be done to enhance the authenticity of localisation practice within academia. In our case, we provide texts with the challenges of digital interactive products, such as app, video game and website texts, and non-digital products like advertisements. While students perform the role of linguists, the instructors simulate the tasks of project managers or, to some extent, localisation engineers. Instructors recreate the text of digital and non-digital products in Excel, which can be readily used in a CAT tool. This simulates typical localisation challenges, such as repetition, tags, spatial restrictions and various cultural challenges.

Professionals often receive different levels of resources, such as a client brief, style guide, images of the product and access to the product. Where a partial localisation would include fewer resources, and text only, a full localisation would include full access to the product. It is vital that students know how to respond to these situations. ▶

One early exercise gives them a few simple sentences of dialogue to translate. After that, they are given more resources – images of characters (robot, orc, dragon, elf) – and asked how they would translate the same sentences in a more suitable register. Finally, they are given a client brief and style guide, and asked if they would make further changes. This demonstrates the importance of context in localisation, and in future tasks students are given varying levels of resources.

We have developed numerous tasks requiring a creative approach and transmedial knowledge – as in an awareness of how the content of one product (e.g. a video game) can relate to that on other media platforms (e.g. novels, movies and comics), or indeed, the same media platform (i.e. other video games).

One involves a scenario in which a video game text has infringed on several franchises and contains content (such as character names) from existing franchises. The client brief states that students need to find the instances of copyright infringement and resolve them using transcreation. This involves more than simply changing a few letters, and needs to accurately reflect the client brief and any multimodal context, such as images or video clips, that are provided.

I would encourage academic instructors who design content for future localisation linguists to focus more on the core IT skills required by linguists (rather than by project managers and localisation engineers), and elevate CAT tool tasks by building in authentic cultural and linguistic challenges.

Notes
1 Robertson, D (2024) 'Chinese to English Video Game Linguists and Culture Specific Items in the Translation of a Wuxia RPG: A controlled partial-localisation case study.' PhD, School of Modern Languages, Newcastle University; and Robertson, D (2025, forthcoming) *Culture Specific Items in Chinese to English Video Game Translation: Transmediality and interactivity in the localisation of a Wuxia RPG*, Routledge
2 Robertson, D (2023) 'The Testing and Analysis of Cloud-based CAT Tools to be Utilised in Localisation and Translation Modules', Report, School of Modern Languages, Newcastle

The MT in the room

Lucas Nunes Vieira discovers that public services widely use machine translation, but almost never speak its name

In the spring of 2024, I surveyed over 2,500 UK professionals to learn about their uses of machine translation without input from a professional linguist. I selected professionals who worked in healthcare, social assistance, emergency and legal services and the police. I wanted to know whether they had used machine translation (MT) at work and, if so, how they had used it and what they thought of the experience.

I have been researching uses of MT in communication for some time. Evidence I collected in previous studies has shown that MT has made its way into courts, hospitals, police stations and a range of other high-stakes environments. I therefore knew that many of the consulted professionals would have something to say on this subject. Nevertheless, the extent of MT use was still surprising. A third of the professionals had used MT at work. They used it most often in frontline contexts such as communicating with service users in a shared physical space. In most cases, their tool of choice was Google Translate.

The presence of machine or AI translation tools in the professional sectors selected for the study raises complex questions. Readers will probably agree that high-quality translation and interpreting services,

provided in a timely fashion by a qualified linguist, will always be safer than a machine translation tool. But among the many factors that need to be considered in this discussion, it is worth noting that sometimes MT is used for purposes that are not currently fulfilled by language professionals.

Nurses used it to give directions and help patients find their way around the hospital. Emergency call handlers used it to tell callers that a professional interpreter was being contacted and would be on the line soon. MT here addresses a gap. It does not replace professional linguists. Some uses of MT were, however, clearly misjudged. Pharmacists used it to translate dosing information. Food service assistants used it to ask patients about allergies. Police officers used it to speak to foreign drivers.

Balancing risks and benefits
In most of these cases, safer communication solutions could have been used. But it is also true that sometimes professional language services are not available. Consider a social worker who has to act on a referral about a child who could be in danger. They need to communicate with Nepali-speaking family members who have low proficiency in English and no knowledge of other

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languages. The social worker tries to locate a Nepali interpreter but is unable to find one in the time available.

A project participant recently described this scenario to me in an interview. They resorted to a mixture of Google Translate and English-speaking family members to communicate. The use of MT in circumstances of this nature is fraught with challenges. For some of the reported problems there was no easy solution. All options had risks as well as benefits. Mistranslations can put lives at risk and so can delays or the wait for a language professional.

A concerning finding

Uses of MT in the contexts selected for the study involve complex risk-benefit ratios that can change from one minute to the next based on a long list of factors. An outright ban on MT tools is both unfeasible and ill-advised. But what is probably the most concerning finding from the study so far is that MT is not usually mentioned in public-sector workplace training. Its use is common and sometimes necessary but tends to go under the radar.

Official guidance on this issue is extremely rare in the UK. Apart from limited statements, or recent considerations on uses of AI more

broadly, the questions of language and AI-mediated cross-cultural communication are rarely addressed in policy. This silence is concerning because MT tools are widely available. They are convenient and easy to use, so what may in principle be a last resort can easily become a first port of call – whether for lack of resources or lack of training and information.

Initial findings from this study have recently been published by the Chartered Institute of Linguists in a preliminary report, which makes three basic recommendations:
• Organisations to recognise (in training, staff communication and the organisation's literature) that AI/MT exists, and that staff and members of the public may be instinctively inclined to use it.
• Institutional policies to address uses of AI in multilingual communication. Policies of this nature need to be flexible enough to keep up with change while also defining standards and the mechanism for assessing needs and for updating the policy itself.
• For AI and MT literacy to be embedded in the workplace culture. More emphasis on education and staff training, including when more appropriate solutions, such as

professional interpreting, are possible and/or required.

The report was not intended to provide detailed best-practice guidance. But hopefully its findings and recommendations will help to raise awareness about an issue that is, for the most part, institutionally ignored in the UK. This issue calls for nuanced discussions concerning not only machine/AI translation and its limitations but also the broader language services ecosystem.

Many of the project participants were unhappy with the bureaucracy involved in obtaining professional language assistance. Some complained about telephone interpreting and how sometimes a patchy phone signal, poor sound quality and other seemingly mundane issues got in the way of effective communication.

Some complained about the language services they received, which raises questions about standards and the working conditions offered to translators and interpreters. The project is on-going and a full discussion of the findings will be published in due course. In the meantime, a preliminary snapshot of some of the results is available at https://www.ciol.org.uk/ai-translation-uk -public-services.

Deceptive research

Mehmet Yildiz considers the academic risks of researchers using translations as if they are source text

Pseudo-retranslation refers to an academic author's appropriation of another academic author's translation without giving them proper credit, and presenting it as a translation of the source. It was in 2017 that I came across my first case. I was commissioned to translate a PhD candidate's manuscript into English, but I had difficulty understanding a reference (Drmrod), which turned out to be a typo (for Ormrod) in a reference that had been translated. An online search revealed that many other Turkish academic works incorporated this translation, including the errors.

It dawned on me that there was a pattern that I needed to investigate to describe its mechanisms and probable impacts on academia. I searched Turkish journal and thesis repositories for similar instances, only to discover that pseudo-retranslation is pervasive in Turkish academia – especially where institutional oversight is not stringent.

The graph below is illustrative of how this phenomenon operates. It begins with an academic source text (in this case published by the American Psychological Association in 1997; APA) which is translated (in this example for a thesis in 1999; T1999M). Through this target text, which I call the 'proto-translation', some scholarly knowledge is acquired by the target community. Then an academic author appropriates the proto-translation verbatim, partially or as modified, which constitutes our first pseudo-retranslation (Y2007M). The subsequent pseudo-retranslations (E2012A and Y2018M) can be derived from the proto-translation or the predating pseudo-retranslations.
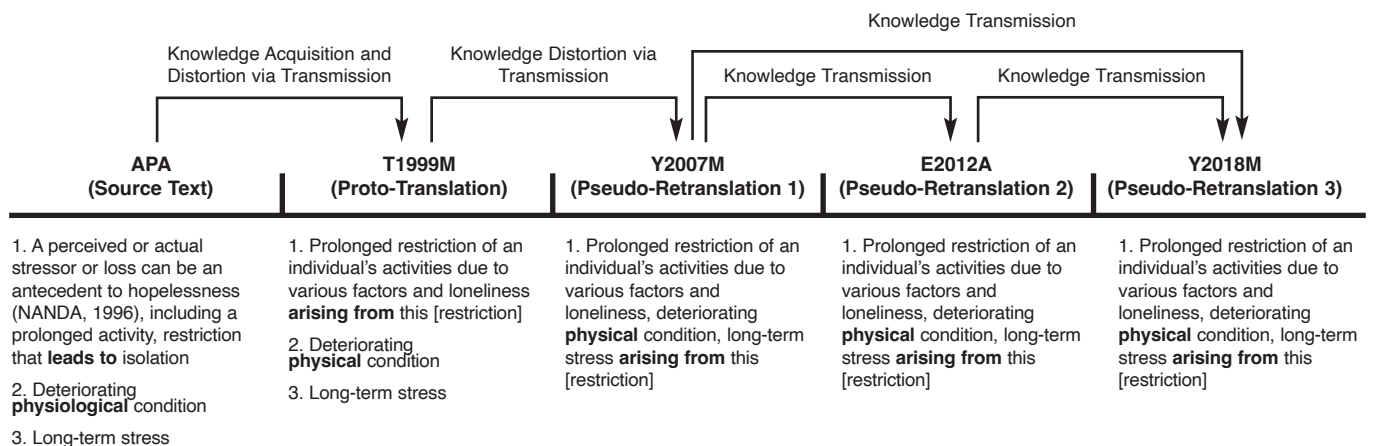
The graph draws on instances from the Turkish context,[2] but I have also observed pseudo-retranslations in other languages, including Spanish, Portuguese and German, while Michael Dougherty has identified it in English.[3] We can see how the process distorts meaning. For example, the graph shows how the word 'physiological' becomes 'physical' in the proto-translation. While the original text and proto-translation allege that "prolonged restriction of an individual's activities" leads to "loneliness", the first pseudo-retranslation proposes that it also causes "deteriorating physical condition" and "long-term stress". Interestingly, the first pseudo-retranslation is appropriated verbatim by the second, and reappears 11 years later in the third.

So what's the problem?

To understand why this is so problematic we should consider that academic knowledge is collectively and accumulatively generated – that academics avail themselves of previously produced knowledge. As the saying goes, 'we stand on the shoulders of giants', grateful for what they have achieved and bequeathed to us. However, this places some weighty responsibility on us as academic authors.

Graph showing an example of pseudo-retranslation[1]

APA (Source Text)	T1999M (Proto-Translation)	Y2007M (Pseudo-Retranslation 1)	E2012A (Pseudo-Retranslation 2)	Y2018M (Pseudo-Retranslation 3)
1. A perceived or actual stressor or loss can be an antecedent to hopelessness (NANDA, 1996), including a prolonged activity, restriction that **leads to** isolation 2. Deteriorating **physiological** condition 3. Long-term stress	1. Prolonged restriction of an individual's activities due to various factors and loneliness **arising from** this [restriction] 2. Deteriorating **physical** condition 3. Long-term stress	1. Prolonged restriction of an individual's activities due to various factors and loneliness, deteriorating **physical** condition, long-term stress **arising from** this [restriction]	1. Prolonged restriction of an individual's activities due to various factors and loneliness, deteriorating **physical** condition, long-term stress **arising from** this [restriction]	1. Prolonged restriction of an individual's activities due to various factors and loneliness, deteriorating **physical** condition, long-term stress **arising from** this [restriction]

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We are expected to be epistemically virtuous, as this is conducive to knowledge, and thus to truth.[4] Epistemic virtues include open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, courage, carefulness, perseverance, academic integrity, intellectual humility and fairness.[5] For instance, a member of academia is expected to welcome views challenging their intellectual stance, and to be inquisitive and courageous in challenging others' intellectual positions.

On the flipside, we should refrain from epistemic vices: "intellectual pride, negligence, idleness, cowardice, conformity, carelessness, rigidity, prejudice, wishful thinking, closed-mindedness, insensitivity to detail, obtuseness, and lack of thoroughness".[6] Such vices pose serious threats to existing knowledge. Culprits are "intellectually lazy", "incurious about topics about which they ought to have an interest" and "lacking in conscientiousness when dealing with evidence".[7] Pseudo-retranslators, for example, take shortcuts to avail themselves of a source text instead of taking the more arduous interlingual and intertextual path to academic writing.

They should refer to the original and translate it if they have command of the language. Alternatively, they could ask a colleague to translate it or commission a professional translation. If it is necessary to use a previous translation, its accuracy should at least be verified, either by comparing it with other translations or by asking someone who knows the languages to check it, and credit should be given to its renderer.

Epistemic laziness may lead to instances where available academic knowledge is distorted through translation – as in the proto-translation T1999M (see graph, left). Pseudo-retranslations may further mar the meaning and facilitate the propagation of flawed pieces of knowledge.

Seemingly unconcerned with accuracy, pseudo-retranslators do not refer back to the source but pretend to have translated from it with a referential mention. This results in the fallacy that the meaning was produced by the original author. In the graph, all three pseudo-retranslators purport to have referred to the American Psychological Association, but the recurring errors suggest they did not.

The lack of curiosity about the accuracy of the presented knowledge in a pre-existing translation might cause a degradation of academic knowledge. This issue may lead to a corrupted academic ecosystem, where trust in scholarship is eroded, inaccurate scholarly information is traded, lines of textual interdependency are blurred, academic codes of behaviour are discounted, academic integrity is compromised, and academic/professional aptness is undermined.

Pseudo-retranslation is difficult to identify and is hardly suspected because it is almost always accompanied by an in-text reference. To preclude pseudo-retranslations from happening, a couple of preventive and corrective measures can be taken. Education is key, because I suggest that linguistic incompetence is among the primary factors.

Academic authors should be informed of the existence of pseudo-retranslation and its detriment to scholarly knowledge. During training, researchers should learn how to observe the conventions of proper crediting and take a sceptical approach to previously generated academic knowledge. Moreover, they should be informed of the probable dangers of wanton text appropriations, such as pseudo-retranslations.

Some institutional precautions can also be adopted. Among them are scrupulous editorial oversight, where software-produced similarity rates are rigorously studied with attention to translation accuracy, authors are instantly warned of instances of pseudo-retranslation when detected, and if persistent, misappropriations are sonorously disclosed and the authors' affiliated bodies are informed.

Notes

1 Yildiz, M (2024) *Pseudo-Retranslation*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 66
2 The (pseudo-re)translations in the corpus are in Turkish but they are back-translated into English in the graph.
3 Dougherty, MV (2024) *New Techniques for Proving Plagiarism: Case studies from the Sacred Disciplines at the Pontifical Gregorian University*, Leiden and Boston: Brill
4 Pritchard, D (2024) *What Is This Thing Called Knowledge?*, London and New York: Routledge; and Fricker, M (2007) *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*, Oxford: OUP
5 Watson, L (2020) 'Educating for Good Questioning as a Democratic Skill'. In Fricker, M et al, *The Routledge Handbook of Social Epistemology*, New York and London: Routledge, 437-446; Zagzebski, L and DePaul, M (2003) 'Introduction'. In DePaul, M and Zagzebski, L, *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from ethics and epistemology*, Oxford: OUP, 1-12
6 Zagzebski, L (1996) *Virtues of the Mind: An inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge*, Cambridge: CUP, 15
7 *Op. cit.* Pritchard, 162-173

The fall of Urdu?

Aiman Khan looks at how India's language policies are affecting one of its most widely spoken languages

Language decline often unfolds gradually as communities face pressures to assimilate into dominant cultures. The fragility of linguistic memory is something even casual learners might recognise – for words, once cherished, can wither into oblivion when deprived of use. A language needs regular practice to thrive; otherwise it risks becoming a faint echo, its sounds obscured in the haze of forgetfulness.

In India, more than 1,600 languages are spoken and 192 are classified as vulnerable or endangered. Although the country has 23 official languages, including Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil,[1] the current government's prioritisation of Hindi over other languages, as the unifying national tongue, has ignited debates regarding the marginalisation of regional and minority languages.

In this context, Urdu, spoken by about 63 million people in India and as a first language by 4.2% of the population,[2] finds itself increasingly on the periphery. This is despite the fact that Urdu and Hindi differ mainly in script and share common linguistic features. Indeed, Urdu has long borne the brunt of deeply entrenched sociopolitical prejudices. The initial divide can be traced back to John B Gilchrist (1759-1841), a colonial linguist who promoted Sanskritised Hindi and Persianised Urdu, and linked them to Hindu and Muslim communities (the Nasta'līq script used by Urdu resembling Arabic script).

The nation's trajectory from monarchical dominion through colonial subjugation to post-independence democracy has tended to perpetuate, rather than dispel, the vestiges of colonial hierarchies. In the aftermath of Partition (which separated India and Pakistan), government policies and educational paradigms progressively diminished the status of Urdu in the spheres of public discourse, scholarship and artistic expression in India.

This can be traced back to the Official Language Act of 1950, which established Hindi as India's official language, and the National Education Policy (NEP) of the same year. Urdu was gradually excluded from curricula, reducing its public presence. This was reinforced by the 1986 NEP, which prioritised Hindi and English, relegating Urdu to secondary status and limiting educational access for Urdu-speaking communities.

The issue is not the absence of Urdu speakers but the curtailment of the language's influence through ostensibly curative but ultimately exclusionary measures. One example is the establishment of the National Council for the Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) in 1995. Intended to support Urdu, it was repurposed to promote the majoritarian agenda, according to Bikramjit Dé. The legal history professor argued that the NCPUL served to further marginalise Urdu and undermine its role in Muslim education and culture.[3]

In 2020, the government enacted a new National Education Policy that aims to promote equity and the use of regional and mother tongues.[4] Comprising 27 points, the policy emphasises multilingualism, but Urdu, one of the country's most commonly spoken languages, is not mentioned in the curriculum. At the same time, NEP 2020 makes Sanskrit, spoken by less than 0.002% of the population,[5] a central focus in language education and integrates Hindu religious texts into school curricula. The policy risks reducing access to Urdu texts and erasing narratives related to Muslim identity, such as Mughal history.

Public attitudes

In contemporary India, Hindi is culturally linked with Hinduism and promoted as a symbol of Hindu identity. The marginalisation of Urdu reflects many of the issues faced by Muslims in India today; the aim is seemingly to depict India as a land exclusively rooted in the ethos of the cultural majority. The association of Urdu with Muslim identity has been a significant factor in fuelling tensions in India, resulting in incidents of violence. Shockingly, several lynchings have occurred in recent years because the victims bore Urdu names.

In February 2021, the retail brand Fabindia was forced to withdraw its advertisement for its festive collection named Jashn-e-Riwaaz (Festival of traditions) due to objections over the use of an Urdu phrase. More recently, Mahant Ravindra Puri, president of the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad body of Hindu priests, objected to the use of an Urdu term in the Maha Kumbh Mela, a Hindu spiritual gathering held every 12 years. The Shahi Snan (Grand Bath) is a central ritual but Puri argued that the Urdu word *Shahi* should not be associated with Hindu culture.[6]

In June 2024, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) withdrew Urdu as a medium for high-school exams, ending a long-standing practice. In retaliation, in the first week of January 2025, a District Education Officer (DEO) in Bihar issued a directive mandating private CBSE schools to offer Urdu as a subject, only for it to be

SIGNS OF RESISTANCE
(Clockwise from top l) Urdu calligraphy at a poetry celebration in New Delhi; a station sign in Hindi, Urdu and English in Uttarakhand; there have been calls for Urdu words at the Kumbh Mela to be replaced; schools like this one in Katni Madhya Pradesh have been instructed to remove the word 'Urdu' from their name; a sign in Urdu at a rally in Kolkata against religious discrimination declares 'We all are brothers'; and a child in a madrasa, which may be monitored by the National Council for the Promotion of Urdu Language

withdrawn days later amid nationwide political debate.[7]

In 2022, 350 out of 407 schools in the eastern state of Jharkhand were directed to remove the word 'Urdu' from their names.[8] The year 2024 alone saw hundreds of events in which Urdu words were questioned or replaced with equivalents in other languages. These included the removal of Urdu terms from signboards, marriage certificates and textbooks. Cities such as Allahabad, Banaras and Aurangabad have been renamed (to

Prayagraj, Varanasi and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar respectively), partly to separate them from their Mughal and Islamic heritage. Such decisions prioritise one cultural and linguistic identity over others.

Are we losing a shared asset?

These changes are shifting Urdu from a shared cultural asset to a language perceived as belonging only to Muslims.[9] Although the policies may not reduce the number of people speaking Urdu as their mother tongue, they do greatly impact Urdu literature and language. For Indians who wish to pursue Urdu as a field of academic study, it has become increasingly difficult to secure stable employment.

This disenfranchises an entire linguistic community, obstructing the intergenerational transmission of shared language and culture. The ramifications shape the way linguistic identity is perceived and internalised. To preserve Urdu as a vital component of India's rich linguistic heritage, it is essential to move beyond such policies. Only through a commitment to pluralism can India maintain

its rich linguistic diversity and ensure that all of the nation's languages remain a living and integral part of its future.

Notes
1 Census 2001; https://cutt.ly/9rqxQA6T
2 Census of India 2011, *Language Atlas*; https://cutt.ly/5rqoQ6Cg
3 Dé, B (2004) 'Abuse of Urdu'. In *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39,48, 5085-5088; https://www.jstor.org/stable/4415828
4 Ministry of Education, Government of India, National Education Policy, 2020; https://www.education.gov.in/nep/about-nep
5 Census, 2011; https://cutt.ly/orwC0WWg
6 '"They Will Spit, Urinate": Mahant Ravindra Puri Opposes Non-Hindu Shops, Urdu Words at Maha Kumbh'. In *Times Now*, 1/1/25
7 'DEOs Order on Urdu Teaching in Kishanganj Stirs Row'. In *Times of India*, 1/1/25
8 '350 Jharkhand Schools Drop "Urdu" from Their Name, 460 Change Weekly Offs'. In *Hindustan Times*, 2/8/22
9 'Why Urdu language draws ire of India's right-wing'. In BBC News, 16/5/22; https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-61199753

Books

The Philosophy of Translation

Damion Searls
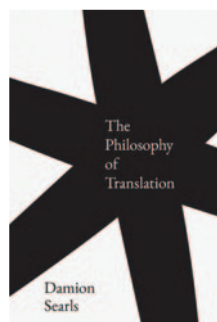
*Yale University Press 2025
248 pp; ISBN
9780300247374
Hardback,
£20*

The Philosophy of Translation sounds slightly dull and obscure, but in fact it is one of the most readable books on either philosophy or translation that I have come across in recent years. Damion Searls is an eminent translator (60 books across four languages) and he also has a background in philosophy. The book begins with two very handy chapters on the history of 'translation' (in inverted commas) and a curious discussion as to how one should actually read like a translator. The three chapters on philosophy do look quite intimidating ('Perception and Affordance', for example) and there are detailed references to the thoughts of particular philosophers. However, it is all very accessible and suggests that much of this writing is based on years of lecturing.

This is especially true in the final three chapters, which are also clearly based on Searls' years of experience as a professional translator. There is a wealth of examples taken from actual translation challenges, ranging from how to deal with the use of foreign words in the original text (*War and Peace* being an example) to the perennial question as to how to translate the untranslatable, with particular reference to cultural elements with which the reader is unlikely to be familiar.

Another key question is whether it is legitimate to improve on the original, and to take it as a point of departure rather than as a set text which should simply be lifted from one language into another.

Searls' key point (and a refreshingly welcome one) is that the translation process is not a mere mechanical process of switching words from one language into another (as some clients would have us believe!) without taking into account the items mentioned above or the general register of language to be used (speaking to a New York taxi driver being an amusing example).

The Coda is of particular interest as Searls reviews the thoughts of a whole range of translators from different times and different languages. He analyses the political context of translation as well as the social or historical ones and illustrates the limitations of both Google Translate and ChatGPT. The one acts almost like a bilingual dictionary, and whereas ChatGPT can "comb and cull and copy and crib and collage", it cannot cope with deeper meaning or specialised contexts.

The Philosophy of Translation covers a remarkable range of topics, with valuable insights into the actual process of translation and a practical element which makes it both fascinating reading and a practical source book for all translators.
Professor Tim Connell HonFCIL

Why Animals Talk

Arik Kershenbaum
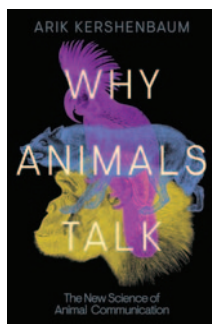
*Viking 2024
288 pp; ISBN
9780241559857
Hardback,
£20*

"If I could talk to the animals…" ruminated Dr Dolittle. With help from Polynesia, his parrot, he could! Zoologists of many stripes study animals' visual, tactile and olfactory communication. Recently, acoustics and audition have attracted interest and, to some, have challenged the notion of human exceptionalism in language.

Animals have accents. A group of a species can diverge from the normal call, howl or whistle after a degree of separation from its larger, parent group, in much the same way that humans develop accents. Wolves (Canis lupus lupus) in the Italian Alps howl in a more dog-like way, with shorter, steeper falls, in response to the howls of the Maremma sheepdogs keeping their flocks safe. This mimicking of the dogs' call could be an instance of accent development, or a diversionary tactic of the wolves to fool the dogs.

Animals imitate. The African grey parrot (Psittacus erithacus) is highly adept at mimicry, in the wild and in captivity. Each bird's name, or "signature contact call", is learnt from its parents by the time that it fledges. As well as calling their own name, they refer to others by theirs. African greys in regular contact with humans (Homo sapiens sapiens) display a remarkable ability to engage with their wingless companions by listening to and parroting a range of sounds: human voices, pet noises, ring tones and so on. Some develop a repartee with their owner (more on these beguiling creatures can be found at Cornell Lab's Bird Academy and elsewhere).

Do animals talk? We know that animals communicate and the reasons why. As Arik Kershenbaum tells us, they do it to mark out territory, announce their presence, warn others off, invite others in, raise an alarm, announce a hunt, express joy/grief/pain/anger/affection: "…traits evolve through natural selection only if they provide a concrete benefit to an actual living organism".

Why Animals Talk: The new science of animal communication feels at times sketchy and in need of sharper focus (e.g. "Wolf packs are a kind of extended family"). Also, I would like to have known more about the *how*, as distinct from the *why*. At what volume does a dolphin (Delphinus delphis) whistle to its pod-mates? What vocal apparatus allows a small songbird to sing so masterfully? How does animal communication feature ellipsis and redundancy? If only I could talk to the animals…
Graham Elliott MCIL

Race, Racism, and Antiracism in Language Education

Ryuko Kubota and Suhanthie Motha
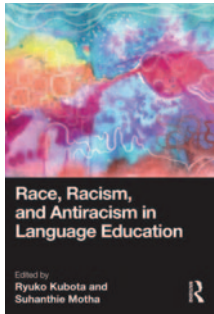
Routledge 2025 286 pp; ISBN 9781032245317, Paperback, £38.99

In Chapter 6 of *Race, Racism, and Antiracism in Language Education* we are told how Nneka, a US citizen of Nigerian descent who is studying Mandarin in China, learns foreign languages as a way to break free from the restraints imposed by English monolingualism and from the inherent racism she is used to in America. For her, knowledge of languages is a gateway to a better, more tolerant world, and she reports that she feels happier and freer from bigoted aggression in China than in her home country.

This positive experience is heartening, but there is another side to language learning in which racist oppression, far from being dispelled, is reinforced by the education system. Numerous examples are provided in the book, taken from a range of countries. In a San Francisco school, we are told how Indigenous Central American languages are treated with contempt in the classroom, triggering a movement by parents to defend their children's right to know and use their heritage language.

In Mexico, trainee language teachers from the Oaxaca region describe the discrimination and derision they suffered as schoolchildren due to their ethnic roots and native language use. This prejudice was reinforced by their learning materials: in an English textbook, affluent doctors and engineers are depicted as white, while those with a Latino appearance work as cleaners. The results of the research discussed in the book suggest that racism is as pervasive in the language classroom as it is in the rest of society, and that language policies, teaching practices and learner experiences are shaped by persistent post-colonial attitudes.

Having provided convincing evidence of the enduring blight of racism in these contexts, the authors discuss counter-racism strategies, offering a practical framework for implementing antiracist pedagogy in language education. They recommend that teachers actively address racial issues in the classroom context, encouraging discussion of language and identity, and creating inclusive learning environments in order to overcome these discriminatory currents.

The approach emphasises reflexivity, encouraging educators to examine their own biases and assumptions, which is crucial if meaningful changes are to come about. This book will be an invaluable resource for such professionals, and for all other members of the educational community interested in achieving equity and social justice in language learning.
Ross Smith MCIL CL

Nevermore

Cécile Wajsbrot; translated by Tess Lewis

Seagull Books 2025, 192 pp; ISBN 9781803093895 Hardback, £18.99

This masterful novel displays Cécile Wajsbrot's artistry in the fields of translation and storytelling through the narrative of an unnamed translator. After the loss of her good friend, and despite having little confidence in her abilities, the protagonist sends a last-minute application to translate Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, which surprisingly gets accepted. Full of self-doubt, she travels to Dresden to translate the 'Time Passes' section of the novel and escape her own painful memories. So begins a journey of meditation and recuperation through translation.

Living out of her suitcase, the translator longs for a stable home where she doesn't have to live like a nomad. As she considers whether to read a book given to her by her deceased friend, who also used to travel, we explore themes of loss and longing. Into this, Wajsbrot weaves absorbing anecdotes with startling skill: how Herman Melville had to resume his administrative work once sales of *Moby-Dick* began to fall; Wilhelm Reich's development of 'orgone energy'.

While traversing the landscapes of the words created by authors, the translator describes her own life. 'Time Passes' depicts the effect of WWI and as she works on it she reflects on her own visit to Dresden, taking the reader to two parallel worlds and exploring them together in her mind: "She measures the rhythm of Woolfian sentences against the city's movement."

Nevermore gives readers the rare opportunity to go inside a translator's mind. We get a glimpse of Wajsbrot's own journey of translation, as a Woolf specialist, but the story in some ways reflects every translator's journey, as we laboriously enhance our work while meticulously choosing the precise words and sentences.

Wajsbrot's use of both French and English is skillfully handled by *Nevermore* translator Tess Lewis. Although it took me a while to get used to the presence of both languages (neither of which is my first language), it does not interrupt the flow but simply lets the story unfold through the channel of different languages.

A journey that starts with the heaviness of memories and the loss of a friend gets lighter while translating *To the Lighthouse* in this poignant tale of self-reflection. It was pleasure to accompany the unnamed translator through this meditative and translational journey.
Lachhemi Rana MCIL

Speak like a robot

We ask how GenAI is affecting our speech as robotic 'language tics' increasingly enter human communication

CINTA GALLENT-TORRES
RUBÉN COMAS-FORGAS

In today's digital world, where Generative AI has become part of our daily lives, the line between human and computer-generated language is harder to draw than ever. Experts like Jess Hohenstein suggest that the more we interact with AI-driven tools such as chatbots, voice-recognition assistants, language translation apps and smart speakers, the more we begin to adopt the same linguistic patterns and structures they generate.[1]

These systems are no longer just tools; they subtly influence the way we express ourselves. They shape our choice of words and our tone in ways we might not even notice. With every interaction, it feels as if we're gradually picking up 'language tics' from our digital companions. When applied to linguistics and technology the word 'tic' refers to recurring expressions or linguistic patterns that emerge in communication, particularly when interacting with AI systems like ChatGPT.

These tics are words or phrases that AI systems tend to repeat based on their training data and text generation patterns.[2] The problem arises when people – whether consciously or unconsciously – begin adopting them thinking they sound more sophisticated, when in fact they are robotic and awkward. We refer to clichéd constructions commonly found in AI-generated responses ('I'm happy to assist you'), formal structures ('in the realm of', 'a tapestry of') and fillers ('in light of'). AI models often employ words like 'intricate', 'commendable' and 'pivotal' in ways that lack spontaneity and nuance, along with an overuse of adverbs such as 'methodically', 'strategically' and 'meticulously'.[3] As people mimic this form of communication we risk creating a kind of 'echo chamber' of empty expressions, contributing to a more mechanical way of interacting.

This is what some researchers are already observing.[4] People gradually integrate these phrases into their speech without realising. Although similar language shifts have

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AI's influence could weaken cultural identity and lead to a homogeneous global language ecosystem

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occurred in the past, with TV, books and internet slang shaping language, the influence of AI-generated content may signal the start of a new trend in communication.

Research into AI-driven change
While the influence of AI on written discourse has received considerable attention in the past two years, particularly regarding academic and scientific publications, research on its impact on spoken language remains scarce. However, it is clear that its influence extends across languages, with common phrases emerging in everyday speech, as seen in English ('navigating', 'unveiling', 'unlocking'), French (*se plonger dans*, *embarquer*, *révolutionner*, *vibrant*, *notamment*) and Italian (*fatto luce*, *profonda comprensione*, *approfondimento*), to name a few.

Some studies have begun to explore this phenomenon. Ezequiel López and Iyad Rahwan analysed over 300,000 academic conference videos and developed a model to track the buzzwords generated by ChatGPT.[5] Their findings revealed that terms which were rarely used until recently, or had specific contextual meanings, have become commonplace in presentations and speeches. One such term is 'delve into'. The frequency of its use has led to a broader interpretation of the verb, making it interchangeable with others like 'look at', 'explore' or even 'start talking about'.

From a scientific perspective, this shift in language use aligns with the concept of 'linguistic accommodation', a theory introduced by Howard Giles in the 1970s. The theory suggests that people adjust their speech to match the patterns and styles of those they interact with. When it comes to AI, this accommodation is reflected in people's tendency to attribute human-like agency and stereotypes to computers, as well as in the adoption of language tics.[6]

In fact, evidence suggests that whether humans are communicating with other humans or technological agents, the effects of accommodation are similar. This raises thought-provoking questions about how such adaptations might influence our communication dynamics, merging human and machine language styles over time.

HUMAN MACHINE: *An AI generated image*

The communicative consequences

Studying how AI affects human speech opens up new possibilities for exploring the development of language in the coming years, but it also raises concerns about its long-term effects. One significant issue is the potential loss of linguistic diversity. As AI systems rely on standardised language patterns, they tend to favour widely accepted forms of expression, which could undermine individuality and creativity.

The use of AI-generated language may also make communication less spontaneous and authentic, removing the natural elements that make human conversation rich in empathy and emotion. Moreover, AI's influence could threaten the preservation of less commonly spoken dialects, regional variations and cultural expressions, which may not be sufficiently represented in AI training data. This could weaken cultural identity and lead to a more homogeneous global language ecosystem, less reflective of the diverse ways humans communicate across cultures.

This extends to education, where AI-driven language could influence how English is taught and learnt by non-native speakers. As GenAI tends to favour robotic, set expressions, students may miss out on learning the cultural distinctions, regional variations and idiomatic phrases that are vital to mastering a language. These aspects are key to understanding a culture's values and communication style. If this trend continues, it could lead to a simplification of language learning, limiting not only how people speak but also how they connect with different cultures.

Can we take action?

To address these concerns, it is important to consider concrete strategies to preserve the richness of human language. For example, promoting diverse linguistic expressions and protecting regional dialects, as they carry cultural histories and reflect unique ways of thinking. Additionally, AI tools should be designed to respect human communication styles, rather than imposing rigid structures. By raising awareness about these issues and thoughtfully integrating AI into our communication, we can ensure that it complements, rather than diminishes, the complexity of natural human language.

As we continue to integrate GenAI into our daily experiences, we must empower individuals to make more informed decisions when interacting with technology. It is important to remain vigilant as GenAI tools evolve, ensuring they enrich, rather than oversimplify, human speech. We should find a balance between technological advancement and the preservation of authentic human expression. After all, the goal is not to let machines define our language – or our identity – but to preserve the essence of what makes us humans, with technology as our ally.[7]

Notes

1 Hohenstein, J et al (2023) 'Artificial Intelligence in Communication Impacts Language and Social Relationships'. In *Scientific Reports*, 13, 5487; https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-30938-9
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4 Pérez Colomé, J (2024). 'Humans Are Already Repeating Words Learned from ChatGPT, such as "Delve" and "Meticulous"'. In *El País* (English version); https://tinyurl.com/yeyt9e8e
5 *Ibid*.
6 Giles, H, Edwards, AL and Walther, JB (2023) 'Communication Accommodation Theory: Past accomplishments, current trends, and future prospects'. In *Language Sciences*, 9, 101571
7 Article elaborated within the framework of the projects PID2022-141031NB-I00 and the Ibero-American Network of Research on Academic Integrity (Red-IA).

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Letters

Multilingual city – London to NY

The recent book by Ross Perlin, *Language City* (reviewed in *TL*63,3), traces the over 700 languages to be found in New York. It perhaps reflects the work of *Multilingual Capital* by Philip Baker and John Eversley, which first identified the 300 languages to be found in London in the year 2000. There was a follow-up volume in 2003 by Philip Baker and Jeehoon Kim entitled *Global London*. They are both still available to buy or order from bookshops.

Tim Connell Hon FCIL

Not such an unusual combi?

I was surprised to read the article entitled 'A Classics combination' (*TL*63,4), which presents a combination of German and Latin at Oxford as a significant innovation. I can't speak for Oxford, but in Cambridge such combinations were routinely available when I was an undergraduate. French and Latin was the most popular of these but German and Latin would not have raised any eyebrows.

Various combinations of Modern and Classical (even Oriental) languages were possible, even encouraged. What prevented many of them from being realised was the A-level requirement for Classical and 'major' European languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian). French, German and Latin was a common A-level combination but French, German and Greek was not, so German and Greek (unlike German and Latin) would have been a non-starter.

Today, with the widespread abolition of the A-level requirement as a direct consequence of the decline in modern languages and Classics at secondary level, certain language combinations have become workable that formerly were not (so German and Greek is in with a chance). The question is: should we be welcoming this as a sign of progress?

Peter Butler FCIL

Comp for language lovers

What began as a light-hearted competition inspired by CIOL Vice-President Jean Coussins (*pictured*) is culminating in a celebration of linguistic creativity, as the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) reveals our Top 10 collective nouns for linguists. The contest, launched last summer, invited CIOL members, the wider public and readers of *The Linguist* to propose a collective noun which would aptly describe language professionals. "This is all about fun – but with a serious message too," said Baroness Coussins when launching the initiative. "Creativity, wit and wordplay are skills that linguists have in abundance, thanks to our exposure to other languages and cultures."

The competition aims to create a term worthy of joining the pantheon of memorable collective nouns in the English language, placing linguists alongside such classics as the Parliament of Owls and the Shrewdness of Apes, while avoiding the Pandemonium of Parrots! After deliberation by CIOL's Awards & Recognition Committee, Council and Educational Trust Board, a shortlist has been chosen from well over 40 entries. In alphabetical order these are:

An alphabet of linguists
A babble of linguists
A Babel of linguists
A chatter of linguists
A glory of linguists
A glot of linguists
A lexicon of linguists
A library of linguists
A polyphony of linguists
A symphony of linguists

Notable other entries that just missed the cut include a 'thesaurus', 'glossary' and 'confabulation' of linguists. With so many great entries, CIOL CEO John Worne noted: "The Top 10 reflects a wonderful blend of mutual appreciation, creativity and linguistic playfulness. Each noun captures something unique about the collaborative nature of working in languages, while also celebrating the joy we find in languages themselves."

The final winner will be selected in consultation with Baroness Coussins and announced at the CIOL Awards in March.

Quiz winner: League of the Lexicon

The 'League of the Lexicon' section of our 2024 quiz set readers a selection of multiple-choice questions from the game for language lovers. The winner, Pascal Virmoux-Jackson, receives the board game as a prize. The correct answers are highlighted in bold:

1 Which language has the longest alphabet? **a) Khymer**; b) Rotokas; c) Urdu.
The Khymer alphabet has 72 letters, though only 68 are in use. Rotokas has the smallest alphabet in the world, with only 12 letters.
2 Who is the odd one out? a) Michael Caine; b) Lewis Carroll; **c) Agatha Christie**.
Agatha Christie is the only name that isn't an alias. Lewis Carroll's proper name is Charles Dodgson and Michael Caine's is Maurice Joseph Micklewhite.
3 In the idiom 'flotsam and jetsam' what is 'jetsam'? a) Sea grass; b) Cooking waste; **c) Items thrown overboard a ship**.
4 Which word is not an eponym (i.e. named after a person)?
a) Dunce; **b) Magenta**; c) Mausoleum.
'Magenta' is a toponym, i.e. named after a place (a town in Lombardy, Italy). 'Dunce' is named after Scottish theologian John Duns Scotus and 'mausoleum' after Mausolus (d. 353 BCE), governor of Caria.

The AI toolbox

Which are the best free productivity tools for translators?

ANNA RIOLAND

AI-powered tools can significantly enhance a freelance translator's workflow, boost productivity and even improve the quality of translations – provided they are used judiciously. They can help with many aspects of our business, from improving productivity and writing quality to managing finances and time effectively. And there are now some surprisingly effective free tools on offer.

Nevertheless, vigilance is key. Free AI tools require careful oversight to ensure the final translation is accurate, culturally appropriate and aligned with the client's needs. Confidentiality remains a crucial aspect of the translation profession. It is vital to protect sensitive or private information shared by clients, so we should always ensure we are using reputable platforms and review their data security protocols. With this in mind, let's explore some of the best free productivity-boosting tools for freelance translators.[1]

Writing assistants

Freelance translators often work under time pressure and AI writing tools can help to improve clarity, paraphrase texts and refine the tone of translations. A few options I find useful include:

- **Grammarly.** Checks for grammar, spelling and style issues, offering suggestions to improve fluency and readability.
- **Quillbot.** Great for paraphrasing, refining drafts and enhancing the flow of your sentences.
- **Linguix.** Focuses on grammar, punctuation and tone to ensure polished text.

Managing finances

For freelance translators, staying on top of finances is essential. These free accounting tools can help:

- **Wave.** A popular accounting tool that offers invoicing, expense tracking and basic financial reporting.
- **Zoho Invoice.** An intuitive platform to create and send professional invoices, track payments and manage clients.

Time management and productivity

Translation projects require careful time management and AI-powered productivity tools can help you to stay on track. Favourites include:

- **Toggl Track.** Analyses your work habits and identifies productivity trends. This is ideal for tracking billable hours.
- **Clockify.** A time-tracking tool with smart insights into how you allocate your time across projects.

OCR and document conversion

When working with scanned pdfs or non-editable formats, AI-powered OCR (Optical Character Recognition) tools are lifesavers. Among the best free options are:

- **Adobe Scan.** A mobile app that converts images into editable text.
- **iLovePDF.** Document conversion with some AI features for enhanced accuracy.
- **Google Drive OCR.** Automatically extracts text from images and pdfs uploaded to Google Drive.

AI should be seen as an assistant, freeing up more time for translators to focus on the creative and human aspects of their work. It's important to use technology thoughtfully and remain vigilant regarding data privacy and confidentiality. By embracing AI in a careful and informed manner, freelance translators can thrive in a rapidly evolving industry.

Notes

1 For information on the AI-powered features of various CAT systems and AI-driven machine translation engines, see the previous instalment of 'The AI Toolbox' in the last issue (*TL*63,4).

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Growing resources

How CIOL is expanding its online resources to promote inclusive communication and support professional standards
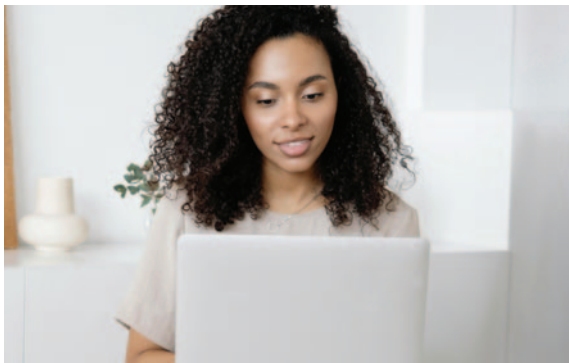
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In an ever-evolving linguistic landscape, the Chartered Institute of Linguists continues to develop our comprehensive online resource hub on the Resources tab of the CIOL homepage, now addressing two vital aspects of professional language practice: international standards and inclusive communication.

The ISO resources section provides essential information about International Organization for Standardization guidelines, including the new ISO 5060 (2024) for translation quality evaluation. This standard introduces seven main categories for error classification, from terminology to design and markup, supporting rigorous 'human-led' translation quality assessment. It is also worth noting that both the DipTrans and CertTrans qualifications are recognised by the Association of Translation Companies as meeting ISO 17100 requirements for professional translator competencies.

Complementing these technical standards is CIOL's growing collection of inclusive language resources, which acknowledge the constant evolution of language conventions and norms. The collection features authoritative guidance from leading international organisations, including the United Nations' guidelines for gender-inclusive language (available in six official languages) and the Council of the European Union's recommendations for inclusive communication. Additional resources from Oxfam and others provide practical insights into respectful cross-cultural communication. The CIOL Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee looks at inclusive language resources before they are shared.

CIOL is committed to maintaining and updating our wide range of free web resources to help language professionals have easier access to current, authoritative guidance on AI, international standards, inclusive communication and more.
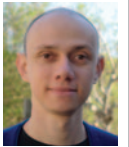
CONTRIBUTORS

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R B Castrioti is a distinguished composer, writer, and the founder and Director of Rilindja International, dedicated to research, cultural preservation and the global dissemination of Albanian and Kosovar literary works. *See p.14*

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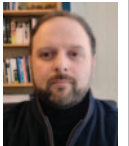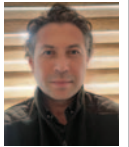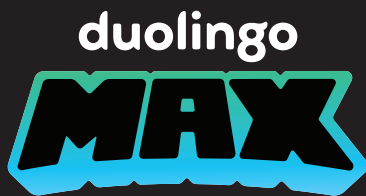

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Register, pay and succeed online

Qualifications for language professionals

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