Deep Focus is a quarterly publication of the AVD Audiovisual Division (officially established on August 29, 2018) of the American Translators Association, a non-profit organization. Deep Focus is committed to raising awareness of the audiovisual translation profession.
DEEP FOCUS

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An MT engine developed specifically for subtitling can produce some ready-to-use suggestions including successful text division, omission and even idiomatic renderings. This can accelerate the subtitling process as long as the subtitler is experienced enough to avoid the pitfalls and to portray the register and tone of the dialogue.

Good KNPs can save precious research time and give better understanding of the content we are working on, thus rendering a much better quality translation. These tips can help us make the best of them and add useful contributions.

A first-hand description of how shows and movies were watched before audio description and the difference it makes for those who are visually impaired. We are encouraged to try it out and highlights how important it is to pay attention to detail.
Reopening or not, social media brings us closer. We are picking up where our Audiovisual Division’s Instagram Live sessions left off with renowned guests. This article goes through the highlights of the interviews from March to June 2021, all of which reaffirm how wonderful it is to work in AVT.

The Uruguayan Translation and Interpreting Conference seeks to create a space for continuing education and networking. At this virtual event, you will learn about audiovisual translation (subtitling, dubbing, and accessibility), video game localization, translation, interpreting, translation technology, and marketing. Join us online on August 27th and August 28th, to learn, improve your skills, and connect with colleagues.

Translators facilitate communication between different cultures, even when these cultures share the same idiom, such as in France and French Canada. Deconstructing the issue involves delving into its historical background, cultural exception, Canadian particularities, long-term exposure, and French in Québec’s survival mode.
Dear Audiovisual Division Members,

For this issue, I spent several weeks researching to write about how to catch misgendering mistakes when reviewing a translation of material with nonbinary or gender nonconforming persons. I found several very interesting articles about the translation step of this content, but none about the QC step specifically.

It is different, you see, because when we translate, we type, and when we review, we read. Also, if the translation is of audiovisual content, we have images and sound to contend with.

There are other factors that affect the normal QC process and, in researching, I found myself out of my depth reading, for example, a dozen neuroscience articles that explain how your brain can trick you when it confuses your perception with reality, when it skips words while reading, by interference, etc. My letter has grown from a simple solution for doing this type of QC and IDing nonbinary or gender nonconforming people in SDH (subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing) files to a full-blown article with dozens of references. So, in this issue of Deep Focus, I will just leave you with an example to illustrate the complexity of this kind of review with some definitions.

In the source English video, a famous cisgender female actor plays the role of a nonbinary person who chooses to speak about themselves using both masculine grammatical gender and nonbinary pronouns. Let's say it's Julia Roberts.

Our eyes recognize the person on screen as a cisgender woman because we know Julia from other roles, and we will not catch misgendering mistakes in the translation as long as we are flying on autopilot. An image of a cisgender female actor with a feminine voice along with a feminine-gendered subtitle will appear to be a grammatical match for the brain of the reviewer, so steps need to be taken in order to circumvent this audiovisual interference so as to avoid misgendering the nonbinary or gender nonconforming character.

Definitions from Merriam-Webster online

- **cisgender**: of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth
• **gender nonconforming:** exhibiting behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits that do not correspond with the traits typically associated with one's sex; having a gender expression that does not conform to gender norms

• **misgender:** to identify the gender of (a person, such as a transsexual or transgender person) incorrectly (as by using an incorrect label or pronoun)

• **nonbinary:** relating to or being a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female

• **trans:** transgender: of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity differs from the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth

You'll see my full article in the next issue! I wish you a healthy summer or winter break, depending on your hemisphere. Hemispheres of the Earth, not the brain. Or maybe both?
Dear readers,

It is my pleasure to introduce our summer 2021 Deep Focus issue.

Nothing lasts forever, so why can't a virus, even as stubborn and mutating as this one, follow suit? That is my hope this summer, to continue to see vaccination limit the spread all over. And as things stand in our audiovisual field, in-house and on-site operations are in different stages of reopening, within the US and around the world.

We celebrate the fact that productions continue to pick up and increasingly more content is being wrapped up for localization, so we have been seeing workloads grow for most language pools.

Our beloved annual and biannual conferences are slowly coming back and they have managed to boost participation by going completely online or, those taking place either later on this year or next year, by implementing a mix of in-person events and a virtual component, which is the tentative plan for the ATA's 62nd conference in Minneapolis this year that a lot of us are hoping to be able to attend. We're looking forward to reconnecting and getting our Audiovisual Division's gang rounded up!

Our eleventh issue features, as usual, industry-relevant content, which this time around includes machine translation for subtitling, tips and best practices for KNPs, audio description's value from a fresh point of view, Canadian French weighed up against France's French, CUTI's Latin American interactive effort, and our Live Events Coordinator's highlights from the three latest AVD's Instagram Live events with highly sought-after personalities from our industry.

It is constantly gratifying to be part of this effort put together by translators and made —so lovingly— for translators. Deep Focus wouldn't be possible without our amazing contributors, our exceptional publications team, and our hard–working AVD leadership council, all of whom are part of our global audiovisual translation community.

Happy reading while sipping on a piña colada!

Ana Gabriela González Meade, M.A.
Deep Focus Editor
Testing AppTek’s Machine Translation Engine for Subtitling

BY STAVROULA SOKOLI

Most professional translators, including subtitlers, always look for new ways and tools to enhance their productivity. In my case, checking the most recent advances in technology is also necessary for teaching and research. For these reasons, I decided to test AppTek’s machine translation (MT) engine specifically developed for subtitling and recently deployed by PBT-EU in their media localization management platform, Next-TT. My goal was to see whether it could be useful for producing high quality subtitles for fiction and entertainment shows, i.e. correct, readable subtitles depicting the dialogue’s register and tone.

But before we get to that, a bit of relevant background: I am a translator with more than 20 years of experience in subtitling and technical translation, but not a professional post-editor, nor have I have training in post-editing. However, I have used select neural machine translation (NMT) engines to enhance my productivity when translating technical texts. As for MT in subtitling, it’s been less than a year since some of my clients have implemented it on their platforms. Netflix, as announced at the Media for All 8 conference in Stockholm in 2019, presents it to linguists as a tool, named Assisted Translation. Subtitlers working in Netflix’s online platform, the Originator, have the option to either populate the whole subtitle file with MT suggestions and post-edit them or work from scratch on an empty file and selectively use specific suggestions. For my language pair, the percentage of the MT suggestions I could use without any editing has been relatively small: 5%-10%, depending on dialogue complexity. Such a low percentage means that even reading the MT output seems counter-productive, let alone trying to post-edit it.

The news that AppTek’s MT engine, developed specifically for subtitling, was deployed in Next-TT and could now be used in Subtitle Next, sparked my curiosity. To test it, I used the film Christmas Wedding Planner, a typical rom-com where dialogue is the main aspect driving the story and character development. I used a high quality English template together with the video file to create the project in Next-TT. This involved uploading the video and the subtitle file to the platform, clicking on “Translate” and choosing my language combination in order to get the machine translated file.

Subtitle Next does not feature a dedicated functionality for using MT yet, which means that I could either use the MT file and post-edit it or create a parallel view of three files: the English template, my translation and the MT file. I went for the second option, even though it was not convenient for copying and pasting machine translated segments/subtitles, because I initially thought there wouldn’t be much copy-pasting.
In total, I was able to use almost one third of the proposed MT subtitles, i.e. 393 out of 1,225 subtitles, without modifying them. Many of them were simple greetings, negations or affirmations, but there were pleasant surprises such as the successful treatment of omission as shown in Example 2. In this example, the discourse marker “Okay, see” has been omitted in the MT, which I would also omit.

Example 1: Unchanged MT suggestion is a literal but successful rendering.

Example 2: Unchanged MT suggestion: Successful omission

Example 3 involves successful line division, according to grammar rules, taking into consideration the character-per-line limit. It has to be noted that the line division is not dependent on the English template, which consists of only one line.

Example 3: Unchanged MT suggestion: Successful line division

Apart from the expected literal but successful renderings, there were also effective MT suggestions for idiomatic expressions, for which a literal translation would be incomprehensible. In Example 4, a literal translation of “grab a bite” in Greek would make no sense, whereas the expression “pinch something” suggested by the MT system is one a native Greek speaker would use. “Starve” is also correctly rendered.

Example 4: Unchanged MT suggestion: Successful idiomatic renderings

Apart from that, there were 428 suggestions (a bit more than one third) that I could use unchanged, including line breaks and punctuation. This includes cases where I would use one of the two lines, as in Example 5. This is an interesting example, because the Greek MT text has been condensed in an acceptable, but not perfect way.
The words “you think” and “of course” have been omitted, resulting in a subtitle within the character-per-second limits, with the kind of omission a subtitler would normally perform to keep within reading speed limits. But a more effective solution would be to further condense the first line and include “of course” in the second.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English dialogue</th>
<th>Greek unedited MT</th>
<th>Back translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Ισαν κάπων μπορείς να κάνεις; -Πώς είναι ο γάμος σου;</td>
<td>-Λεία το είναι ένα γάμο σου;</td>
<td>-Is that something you can do? -When is your wedding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek post-edited MT</td>
<td>Back translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Μπορείς να κάνεις κάτι πάνω; -Θυσε! Πώς είναι ο γάμος σου;</td>
<td>-Can you do something like this? -Of course! When’s your wedding?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 5: Lightly post-edited MT suggestion**

A total of 404 boxes were unusable (there was an abundance of examples worthy of becoming internet memes), either because no part of the text could be used or because the time needed to edit them would be longer than the time to type the translation anew. The threshold of the number of changes - or keystrokes - needed to render an MT suggestion useless is hard to establish, but deciding whether to use a part of a text or not can be time-consuming in itself. Establishing such a threshold is quite personal too, as it depends on specific skills, such as fast typing or touch-typing. If the subtitler can type very fast, it might be easier to write everything from scratch than to click multiple times on different words to even slightly edit them. In any case, unusable MT suggestions included the types of errors that I had also encountered in my previous experience with MT: literal translations that ranged from non-fluent to nonsensical, gender errors affecting several words (Greek is a highly inflected language), and issues involving formality as Greek has two levels of formality (like Spanish or German) whereas English has only one. One of the aspects heralded as an advantage of MT, namely consistency, was absent in the MT file. One of the most striking examples was the word “scone” which was rendered in three different ways: a) with a word sounding like scone in Greek, but meaning something entirely different (σκονάκι /skonaki/, a word with various definitions, ranging from “small dose of drug” to “cheat sheet”); b) another type of food which was inappropriate for the context (λουκάνικο which means “sausage”); c) left untranslated. This lack of consistency could be considered an asset as sometimes different translations may spark the subtitler’s imagination and trigger creative mental processes.

This piece is not about what MT is, how engines are trained or other aspects relating to the ways its use affects professional subtitling, such as prices and possible long-term effects caused by the increased use of MT in subtitling. Rather, I have tested a specific MT engine as a tool to find out whether it could be useful. Given the high number of ready-to-use subtitles, the conclusion is that yes, Apptek’s engine can accelerate the subtitling process and increase productivity in certain cases, depending on the type of dialogue, while maintaining high quality at the same time. Of course, the engine itself is not enough, its proper integration in the subtitling tool is also necessary, like being able to insert an MT suggestion with a touch of a button. Copying and pasting suggestions or having to post-edit each one slows down the process. As with all tools, if not used properly, it may result in a decrease in quality. Improper use includes utilizing unedited non-fluent solutions that fail to portray the register and tone of the characters, also known as the “good enough” approach. Prior experience in subtitling is needed in order to exploit the advantages offered by MT to the maximum, while avoiding the pitfalls.

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Unexpected things happen, and if you are forced to stop work in the middle of a project due to, for example, illness, providing your client with a glossary of the portion you have completed will be invaluable for the new linguist that picks up where you left off, helping them speed up their work. The project manager will be very impressed and forever grateful!

If you are a template creator, a “templater”, to use the term Jorge Díaz-Cintas coined and taught us in the AVD hosted with him a few weeks ago, populating the KNP is within the scope of your job description. At Netflix, terms are entered in a special database interface called Lucid that will link to the terms in the template. Linguists of every language will see keywords or phrases underlined in blue when they work in Netflix’s subtitling software. That is a cue for them to check the KNP for the translation of that term or add it themselves if it is not yet translated in their language.

One solution that could be helpful is text-to-speech (TTS) technology. Synthetic speech provides an alternative to human-voiced audio descriptions unequalled in terms of production costs (Szarkowska 2011).

Yays and Nays
What to include: Include terms you had to learn, terms you had to re-learn, and terms that are commonly confused (The Lone Technical Writer 2015). Basically, if you researched it, include it. Even though you might think it’s silly to include a certain term or expression, if you had to look it up, other translators would most probably have to as well. Save them the work and add it to the glossary. And remember to include your references!

What not to include: Glossaries do not need to contain terms found in standard glossaries or dictionaries (Lionbridge 2016) unless they are used in an unusual way, as described below.

NTBT (“not to be translated”): Sometimes adding a term in the source column just to duplicate it in the translation field without
translating it is also a way of contributing to the glossary, because we are indicating that it is to be left in the original language. For example, in the Harry Potter saga, the term muggle was left untranslated in several countries, so the KNPs in those cases would have included the source term—with a pertinent note about usage in this context, as described below—and the same untranslated word in the target language column.

**Tips for Creating a Good KNP**
Whether you are creating a KNP for your own reference or collaborating on a large-scale franchise or multi-episode or -season project, starting the KNP from scratch or adding to an existing one, the following are good practices:

◎ **Category or Type.** Categorize the entries, as this might shed light on the way the term is used. A common list of categories is:
  - **Person:** for the names of characters. Most will remain untranslated, but here is where the notes field comes in handy and allows you to provide context, like for minor characters that could be referenced in subsequent episodes or for things that are revealed as a backstory or that change over time. A good character note looks something like this: “Goobler—Alien pretending to be a female human teenager. She is the most senior officer in the mission and about to retire after this mission” or “Jon—Kate’s husband. They divorce in season 6, and he remarries Hailey”;
  - **Location:** for the names of places, real or fictional, that are relevant to the plot. Even though many will not get translated (such as the names of real cities in most languages), others might need to be localized, for example, if they include a play on words (e.g. Central Perk) or have words in the name that do need to be translated (e.g. Madejski Stadium). If we are populating the KNP, it is a good idea to include all relevant locations, even seemingly untranslatable places, because they might need transliterating or translating in other languages (for example, Disneyland is Disneylandia in Spanish);
  - **Organization:** for the names of fictional or real companies (e.g. Bluth Company), guilds, associations, agencies (e.g. ACME Detective Agency), organizations (e.g. KAOS and CONTROL), groups, orders (e.g. Jedi Order), etc. As is the case with many locations, some organization names will not be translated, but it is still a good idea to include them, even if it’s only for the sake of being able to provide an explanation in the notes field or adding stylistic information on the use of capital letters, hyphenation, italics, etc.;
  - **Term or Phrase:** for the terms and phrases that are used repeatedly and need to be translated in the same way each time they are used. Terms can be either existing or made-up words pertinent to the episode, show or movie, such as quidditch, lightsaber, or flux capacitor. It is important to include acronyms, abbreviations and what they stand for (e.g. TARDIS, S.H.I.E.L.D., SVU) even if they are used consistently as acronyms or abbreviations, as some languages need to add gendered articles before them. Phrases can include catchphrases (e.g. “I’ve made a huge mistake”), the way a character answers the phone in several scenes (e.g. “Hello, IT. Have you tried turning it off and on again?”), the phrase a cashier is forced to use when greeting her clients (e.g. “Thank you for shopping at Cloud 9, have a heavenly day”), an explanatory opening, such as “In the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups: the police, who investigate crime, and the district attorneys, who prosecute the offenders. These are their stories,” or even the ubiquitous “Previously on...”;

◎ **Season and Episode Number.** Including the season and episode number (for example “season 2, episode 8” or a simple “S01E08”) can come in handy to figure out at what point in a series something specific happens or a certain character is introduced. This field could also be used to identify a film in a saga, considering the amount of cross-overs there are in franchises.
like the Marvel superheroes movies; identifying the film where something happened, a character was introduced or a term was first used could help the next translator focus their research to one single film instead of having to look through a dozen.

**Notes and Comments.** If both notes and comments fields are available, include any background or explanation that can be taken from the context or from your term research in the notes. Notes such as character or event history, background, circumstances, or relationships are usually very helpful. The comments field can be used by different translators to include the specifics of their language, or to add a remark on something another translator has included, such as a suggestion, a different use of the same term that they encountered, or some new information that was revealed in their portion of the work. These fields are particularly useful to highlight a term that seems unimportant but is actually relevant in that particular context. Another good practice is to finish the comment with your initials, to help clarify who was the author of the note (example: “My contact who works in a hospital suggests that this could be translated as “hospital administrator” or “admissions secretary” (MC)”.

Other things to include in the Notes or Comments fields:

- **Reference.** Try to leave a reference—such as a website, a book, dictionary, manual or a show guide—to where you got the translation or information. If available for the content you are working on, wikis can prove particularly enlightening (you might be so lucky as to find a wiki in both the source language and your target one). Make sure you include the link to the Wiki you found in a prominent section of the KNP or mark it in a different color to draw other linguists’ attention to it and save them precious research time and efforts.

- **Style.** Include style considerations, such as the use of italics (e.g. “Since it is the title of a fictional book, it should be italicized”) or capital letters (e.g. “Because ‘Bear’ is used as a nickname, it should be capitalized.”).

- **Usage.** If you find a common word that is being used in an uncommon way, include the term and give a thorough explanation in the notes field. For example, for Dr. Jeremy Johnson, you could add three entries: “Dr. Jeremy Johnson–aka JJ or Jezza”, “JJ–nickname of Dr. Jeremy Johnson (only his sister Felicity calls him that), aka Jezza,” and finally “Jezza–nickname of Dr. Jeremy Johnson, aka JJ.” Some might argue that this makes a glossary too long, but it is also a good way of making searches easy. Netflix even has a code for these instances, so that different pseudonyms are linked to the main name and all appear underlined in blue for translators (Netflix 2021). If working on SDH, it is advisable to add a note indicating how that character will be IDed throughout the show (“Marie L’Angelle, aka Miss Marie–ID: Miss Marie.”)

- **Characters.** Be as descriptive as you can with character names. If possible, include their full names and any and all nicknames, pet names, or aliases. Since most glossaries will be in alphabetical order, it could be a good idea to add a separate entry for each name a character goes by, with references to all other names in the notes field. For example, for Dr. Jeremy Johnson, you could add three entries: “Dr. Jeremy Johnson–aka JJ or Jezza”, “JJ–nickname of Dr. Jeremy Johnson (only his sister Felicity calls him that), aka Jezza,” and finally “Jezza–nickname of Dr. Jeremy Johnson, aka JJ.” Some might argue that this makes a glossary too long, but it is also a good way of making searches easy. Netflix even has a code for these instances, so that different pseudonyms are linked to the main name and all appear underlined in blue for translators (Netflix 2021). If working on SDH, it is advisable to add a note indicating how that character will be IDed throughout the show (“Marie L’Angelle, aka Miss Marie–ID: Miss Marie.”)

- **Gender.** The most helpful KNP will give indications of the gender of all the characters listed, as some languages have genitive declensions that can affect how a term is translated and some plot aspects can be influenced by the gender of the characters involved.
While they are more widely used for languages that have a grammatical need for them, it might be a good idea to create a companion Treatments list to go with the KNP. In this list, we would record the way the different characters address each other.

For example, in Spanish there are different pronouns to formally and informally address a person, usted and tú. So we would include the names of characters in the Treatments list and indicate how the characters address each other: “Elizabeth Bennett to Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy: formal; Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy to Elizabeth Bennett: informal,” and so on.

There are different ways and formats for noting this information, but a double-entry Excel sheet generally does the trick.

Moreover, it is also useful to add a Notes field in this sheet to indicate if the way characters address each other changes. Example, when two characters meet for the first time, they might address each other formally and that could change at a later moment, when they develop a deeper relationship. A line such as “Now that we are engaged, you can stop calling me Miss Clarke and start calling me Gertrude” will have an impact on the Spanish translation, which would have to change from usted to tú. Indicating the subtitle number or timecode of the change in

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**Fig. 1 and 2: Different ways to express the same information.**

Note how the first one is quite complex, but the second one makes for a longer sheet which can make it hard to find the information quickly.

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Notes is also a good idea; you always need to think about a fellow linguist who for some reason is stepping in mid-project.

It takes a village to localize audiovisual content, and KNPs are a way of building camaraderie among fellow linguists around the world. Hopefully, these tips will come in handy when approaching your next KNP, whether you are creating it from scratch or are adding on to an existing one.

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Envision the Importance of Audio Description

BY ASHLEY ALVEY

I have been blind since birth due to retinopathy of prematurity. Before audio description, I could follow along with most TV shows or movies. Based on the dialogue, as a scene would play out, I would imagine what they might be setting on a table, or based on sound such as being outside, I would imagine what the nature must look like. If birds were chirping, for example, I would imagine that there is sun in the film. When audio description came, those days of guessing were finally over, and just like my sighted friends I truly got to know what was going on. Knowing what was happening when there was no dialogue brought such joy for me. Instead of making things up and constantly wondering what really was going on, now I finally can know and not have to ask a sighted friend. Audio description allows me to be included.

So now it’s your turn. Imagine what it would be like watching a movie without vision. Imagine you are watching Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone. It’s night time on Privet Drive. You scramble to envision the details. What characters are present? What are they doing? Audio description details, “A great horned owl perches on top of a sign that reads: Privet Drive.” A cat with striped markings watches Dumbledore as he makes the lights in the lamps go out. Dumbledore is described as having long white hair and a long beard that goes to his waist and he is wearing a tall pointed hat. Without audio description at the opening of the movie, you would not know what is going on because there is not any dialogue.
As interpreters and translators, you are in a position to empower people like me with information. Whether it’s a magical experience like the Harry Potter series or perhaps a formal demonstration of an activity at a conference, please remember the importance of providing visual details to persons who are blind or visually impaired. Also, consider that the English language learners you are serving may benefit from clarification of concepts they may not be familiar with. In this way, the details that audio description provides actually serve multiple audiences.

Audio description also allows me to be able to talk about the visual parts of a movie with friends like anyone else would. Just because I am blind does not mean that I am not interested in the visual details of Diagon Alley or in the Muggle world. Everyone else gets to delight in the visuals of Diagon Alley. I want to know everything about this magical world as well. Hagrid and Harry enter Diagon Alley by going through an opening in bricks from a courtyard outside of a pub called The Leaky Cauldron. Diagon Alley is where Harry collects all of the supplies needed to start his journey at Hogwarts, School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. As Harry approaches Ollivander’s, the wand shop, to buy his wand, the audio describer narrates the following, “Ollivander’s, makers of fine wands since 382 BC. Inside the shop, hundreds of tall narrow boxes line the shelves. The wand is about a foot long with a simple handle at its base.” The description of the shop lets me know that it is antique and small. With the first wand that Harry takes, a flowerpot is shattered. From that description, I know that the first wand that he chooses is not the right wand for Harry. Although the sound effects are vivid, a listener who is blind would not be able to predict or detect the exact details of what is happening.

Audio description is essentially what makes movies and TV shows inclusive for people who are blind and perhaps even others just like text-based captioning is inclusive for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. By providing audio description, a listener can learn about details that they are not able to visually observe. In the same way, audio description may even be helpful to some people with typical vision who have trouble following all of the details in action scenes. Offering audio description and captioning is an important step in creating a hospitable world for everyone.

As interpreters and translators, you are in a position to empower people like me with information. Whether it’s a magical experience like the Harry Potter series or perhaps a formal demonstration of an activity at a conference,

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The answer has much to do with the French language. Numbers speak for themselves, and in North America, they speak mostly English and Spanish. French speakers amount to only 2% of the North American population.

Canada is officially a bilingual country, and our current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks both languages fluently (better marks in English, though), yet Québec is the only Canadian province where French is the official language.

To put it bluntly, Quebecers have a gut fear of losing their French. So, they fight, if not for their independence, at least to preserve their unique idiom and culture.

Cultural Exception

Much has been said about the "cultural exemption" pursued by Canada since the 1980s, in its various trade agreements, notably with the United States, requiring quotas for Canadian and French-language content on the airwaves. Without these measures, Canadian culture would be in dire straits. Now, what distinguishes Canadian culture from, say, American culture? Well, there’s this je ne sais quoi, inherited from our French ancestors who discovered Canada in 1534.

Excuse Their French

What’s so special about the French spoken in Québec as opposed to the idiom spoken in France? The key word here is spoken. Well-written French, in literature, journalism, or song writing, for that matter, knows no boundaries. It’s all about grammar, style, and punctuation, whether you’re writing a novel in Paris, an essay in Montreal, or waxing poetic in Port-au-Prince. What fundamentally differentiates Canadian French and Parisian French, is first and foremost, the accent.
The moment a Quebecer opens his mouth in France, especially in Paris (uttering one word is usually enough), he’s spotted. Indexed, categorized, cornered, jinxed. “Je reconnais cet accent.” (“I recognize this accent.”) Of course, you recognize it. Your ancestors spoke that way in the 17th century. Don’t you have any recordings?

After spending 27 years in Paris, I speak from experience, and have pondered the issue many a time. How much of a hindrance, notably as an author-screenwriter, is it that I am perceived as a Quebecer in Paris’ audiovisual milieu? I’m still figuring it out, but in the meantime, I’ve had a few occasions to collate the two French idioms.

From 2009 to 2014, I was hired by SODEC (Quebec’s Film Fund) as translator/adapter for Cinéma du Québec à Paris, an annual event that presented the year’s best Quebec films to Parisian audiences and potential distributors. Most films were in Canadian French, meaning that about half of them had to be subtitled, since most Parisians couldn’t decipher the Québécois dialogue.

As might be expected, translating French to French entails a fair amount of redundancy, but also from time to time, real adaptation work, notably with regards to contextualization. Cases in point, teenager lingo and street talk require substantial adaptation, to say nothing of indecipherable mumbling and curse words. (Incidentally, when it comes to cursing, the Québécois hold a definite advantage over the French.) I guess we just have more colorful ways of expressing angst.

**Long Term Exposure**

Having been exposed to Canadian French and Parisian French since childhood through education, literature, film and television, most Quebecers have a keen ear for French, no matter the accent.

They can decipher any French curve balls thrown at them from any francophone mounds, even in a stadium packed with Anglos.

The French will never admit to it, but they admire what Québec is doing for the advancement of the French language. From our North American vantage point, we’re watching out for any linguistic intruders, especially from south of the border.

In the early 1960s, the Quebec government created the Office québécois de la langue française, a public institution that regulates French language use in Quebec. Since its inception, the OQLF has been a watchdog, making sure every English word finds its proper equivalent in French. Over 250 years of British rule and American proximity, a sizable number of English terms were literally imbedded in the Québécois idiom. In the realm of motor cars, for example, words such as wipers, power steering, clutch, brakes, gaskets, muffler, torque and exhaust, were in common usage in Quebec, until the OQLF gallicized all car parts and components, *de pare-chocs à pare-chocs* (from bumper to bumper).

Regarding automobile terminology, the OQLF simply "reminded" French Canadian car salesmen, mechanics, and motorists, lest they did not bother looking it up, that the French language already had perfectly suited terminology for all things motorized.

Baseball was a whole new ballgame. In 1969, when the now-defunct Montreal Expos joined Major League Baseball, French terms were created for every word of the game. French-speaking sports commentators and Quebec baseball fans were the only people in the field using terms such as *flèche au champ-centre* (line drive to center-field), *arrêt-court* (short-stop), *receveur* (catcher), *moyenne au baton* (batting average), *lanceur de relève* (relief pitcher), and *fin de la neuvième* (bottom of the ninth). *Les Expos balayaient les honneurs du programme-double* (The Expos sweep the double-header.)
Ever since the Expos left Montreal in 2003 to become the Washington Capitals, French baseball terms were benched and are now seldom heard outside of minor league Quebec ballparks.

**French in Quebec: Survival Mode**

It has been over 40 years since the independence referendum was narrowly lost by Quebec nationalists. Apart from political considerations, the biggest loss was suffered by the French language. To say it is not thriving would be an understatement. Outside literary circles, high-quality cinema and television programing, serious journalism, and higher education, the French language is slowly, but steadily losing ground in Quebec, and thus in North America. Little can be done to quell the onslaught of English on French culture. That battle’s long been lost, if hardly ever fought.

Just as at the time of the British conquest in the 18th century, Quebec is linguistically besieged from all sides, except perhaps the Far North, where Innu culture poses no immediate threat to the French language. Motherland France is not much help and certainly not an example of resistance to the English language. The French love their English, although a vast majority of them can’t speak it to save their lives.

French-speaking Quebeckers are not as fond of English as the French, but most will speak it, some fluently, if required, sometimes even just for the fun of mimicking Americans. Quebeckers are fine with American culture, they just try not to be completely overtaken by it.

*En somme* (all in all), Canadian French can be defined as a linguistic underdog in North America, historically linked to one of the most predominant cultures of the Western world.

**Minority Report**

Like many cultural minorities, French Canadians find solace in creativity. Given the size of its population, Quebec has a rather considerable number of artists: musicians, composers, playwrights, authors, poets, and actors, all practicing their craft in a French environment, as if Quebec was a culturally self-sufficient entity. The French language may be dwindling in North America, but culture thrives in Quebec. It also happens to be big business. The rest of Canada and the US know it. The big studios know it. Netflix is now investing massively in Canadian-content production.

Despite the formidable hurdles facing its future, Canadian French is not about to be lost in translation. It’s holding strong, and France should take heed, but will it? As Groucho Marx once famously asked: "How many Frenchmen can't be wrong?"

**Martin Fournier** is a Canadian-born screenwriter/director/translator, now living in France. Between 2006 and 2010, he wrote and hosted a documentary series entitled *Paris Bouche à Bouche* that explored Paris through the maze of its metro stations and aired on Canadian television. He currently works as a freelance editor/translator for Pixelogic Media Partners, providing translations from English to French and French to English.

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Continuing education is very important for all language professionals. It helps us improve our skills, leads to opportunities for career development, and can also contribute to more networking opportunities. These are the main purposes of the Congreso Uruguayo de Traducción e Interpretación (CUTI, Uruguayan Translation and Interpreting Conference), which was born out of the need for having more activities and events for translators and interpreters in Uruguay.

The Congreso Uruguayo de Traducción e Interpretación is a virtual meeting point where professional translators, interpreters, and translation and interpreting students can come together and connect. The CUTI will be held on Friday, August 27th and Saturday, August 28th, 2021. As this will be a virtual event, participants can join from all over the world.

The CUTI will have 12 sessions and 15 amazing speakers from Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, who are experts in their respective fields. They will talk about audiovisual translation (subtitling, dubbing, and accessibility), video game localization, translation, interpreting, technology, and marketing. Each session will last one hour, including the Q&A, so that participants can ask their questions in an interactive way. Recordings of the sessions will be available for limited period of time.

Besides these sessions, the CUTI will offer networking opportunities on both August 27th and 28th. The purpose is to connect with colleagues, make friends, share ideas and resources, and simply have fun.

The conference will be in Spanish and thanks to volunteer interpreters, will also be simultaneously interpreted into Brazilian Portuguese. Participants can learn more about the conference and find details about the schedule and registration on the CUTI’s website (https://www.congresodetraduccion.com). Tickets can be purchased at the CUTI’s website with a credit card or debit card. Payment via PayPal is also available by emailing congresodetradsaccion@gmail.com.

At CUTI, we want to create a space for continuing education in the translation industry in Uruguay and from Uruguay. We believe participants will enjoy this two-day event while learning from experienced colleagues.

Join us to learn together!

María Paula Plazas is an English to Spanish translator and a subtitler specializing in health, health insurance, and entertainment. She is originally from Argentina, where she got her BA in English-Spanish Translation. Currently, she lives in Uruguay, where she founded her translation business, Paula Plazas Translations. At the moment, she is completing a Master’s Degree in Audiovisual Translation. Paula is the ambassador for LocLunch Montevideo and one of the organizers of the Uruguayan Translation and Interpreting Conference.

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This summer marks three years since the Audiovisual Division debuted its Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Since then, AVD’s social media presence has steadily grown and even expanded its reach to Instagram.

2021 promises to be a banner year for AVD social media, as shown by statistics compiled since the publication of *Deep Focus* 10.

Twitter is the most visited platform in the AVD social media portfolio. Spring has brought a solid increase in followers, averaging one new follower per day.

Although the AVD Facebook Page does not generate as much activity as Twitter, both Likes and Followers continued to rise:
AVD Facebook Page followers represent a lovely mix of countries. As expected, followers from the United States make up the largest share (25.42%). However, Argentina and Italy come in strong, and “Others” make up a whopping 26%:

At the time of publication, Instagram statistics were being integrated into our metrics dashboard. We look forward to sharing those with you in a future issue of Deep Focus!

If you haven’t already, don’t forget to follow AVD on your preferred social media platform:
Follow AVD on Twitter
Follow AVD on Instagram
Follow AVD on Facebook

See you on social!
March: Jorge Díaz Cintas

Jorge Díaz Cintas needs no introduction. He’s a renowned author in the AVT field, and I talked with him about his new book, Subtitling: Concepts and Practices. Jorge told us how this book was born and what it took to make it happen. The book contains exercises and access to software like Ooona and Wincaps, and it’s a perfect combination of reading and technology. We discussed the role of technology and how working in the cloud helps companies provide their services faster, but also how it can make language professionals feel disconnected from their peers since everything is more automated. Jorge thinks there’s room for improvement and now that technology plays such a vital role in the translation process we’ll see more changes in the near future. We also addressed the differences between Ooona Pro and Ooona Create, and how these two versions of the software are useful in different stages of audiovisual translation.

We then moved on to discuss the role of machine or assisted translation in subtitling. Jorge believes that “there’s some mileage to go with some of the technology.” He concluded that machine translation is still experimental and is made available to translators as an alternative that can be used or not, depending on your specific needs.

Another interesting topic was the growing trend to translate foreign content using English as a pivot language and how template creators should be experienced translators who understand the nuances of the original language because, as Jorge puts it, “it does require a flair for the language”.

Jorge also told us about the Ooona Pool, a directory or platform where language professionals can register and companies can seek the talent they need.

April: Chris Fetner

Chris Fetner is the managing director of the Entertainment Globalization Association. This new initiative advocates for specific actors in the industry, including translators.
The association is focused on education, advocacy, standardization, and outreach, and brings together all stakeholders in the audiovisual industry. Chris talked about membership and stressed the fact that you don’t have to be a seasoned translator to join the organization. In fact, there’s an interesting fellowship program aimed at people who are newer in their careers, with 5 to 10 years of experience.

The most interesting feature is that fellows travel to EGA headquarters in Los Angeles and have meetings with the Hollywood creative community. As Chris said, “All of the translators are basically rewriting scripts. So wouldn’t it be great if they could be a little bit more connected to the original version writers?”

Chris also stressed the fact that filmmakers should be more aware of the localization process, and that that’s one of the association’s goals. He described it beautifully: “localization is an extension of their art.”

EGA also features a directory of companies and individual members, and job opportunities are posted on the Association’s website.

Last but not least, Chris told us about a licensing program, which started with a short film entitled Spirits of Greenwood Cemetery. He told us about how this idea was brought to life and their plans to licence more films in the future.

May: Kate Edwards

Kate Edwards is an experienced geographer and cartographer who introduced us to the world of culturalization. She told us about her beginnings and how she started working for Microsoft as a cartographer for the Encarta encyclopedia.

There she was able to explore culturalization, focused not only on language as a way of communication but also on symbols, colors, gestures, icons, etc.

As she explained it, “localization is a subset of culturalization” and “culturalization digs deeper not only to language but also to symbols, color usage, design and the use of themes.”

After leaving Microsoft, Kate founded her own company, Geogrify, which provides consulting services for the videogame and software industry.
Kate has worked on AAA video games and gave us very illustrative examples of how a simple gesture, a set of words or an image may be offensive in other cultures. We discussed the use of religion, even fictional ones, and how sensitive issues should be addressed to make content available in different markets.

We also talked about the role of the International Game Developers Association, which Kate chaired from 2012 to 2017, and how she created the Localization Special Interest Group, where localization stakeholders meet and share their experiences and concerns.

Kate’s stories about culturalization errors and their impact on different markets are fascinating, and this opened our eyes to the importance of cultural elements in audiovisual materials.

All in all, we had a great time with these three guests and there’s much more to come, so stay tuned for our next IG lives.

To watch these interviews in full, follow the Division’s Instagram account, @ata_avdivision, and watch them on IGTV.

See you next time!

Daniela Costa is an Argentine English<>Spanish translator and attorney at law. She has been working as a freelance subtitle translator for major subtitle localization companies since 2000 and has translated and proofread blockbuster films and series for theatrical release, dvds, Blu-ray and streaming. She is currently taking a masters in audiovisual translation at the University of Cadiz. She is also the Live Events Coordinator of the ATA Audiovisual Division.

Contact: dcosta@traductorapublica.com.
1) Translators in the Wonderful World of Filming - Webinar
Chartered Institute of Linguists, UK

When: July 16, 2021
Where: Online
Description: If you’ve been watching more films than usual during this pandemic, you will have noticed the rise in popularity of foreign-language films. From Call my Agent to Deutschland 89, you will appreciate the vital role subtitles play if you don’t speak the language.
https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4456659690805251853

2) 18th Audio Description Institute E-Course
The American Council of the Blind, USA

When: August 2 - 6, 2021
Where: Online
Description: Hosted by The Audio Description Project. Registration will close on July 26, 2021, and the invitation to attend the institute will be emailed on July 28, 2021.
https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E144393&id=69
3) Łódź-ZHAW Duo Colloquium on Translation and Meaning
UNIVERSITÄT DE BARCELONA

When: Sep 2 - 4, 2021
Where: ZHAW, Winterthur, Switzerland
Description: The ZHAW session of the Łódź-ZHAW Duo Colloquium has an applied orientation to this year’s central theme Contextuality in Translation and Interpreting.
http://www.duo.uni.lodz.pl/

4) Translation and Transformation in Audiovisual and Digital Culture XXV EFSS
New Bulgaria University, Southeast European Center for Semiotic Studies

When: Sep 3 - 6, 2021
Where: Sozopol, Bulgaria
Description: The media and entertainment industries have transformed successful narratives, characters and entire fictional worlds from the past into lucrative franchises for serial production of FX movies, TV series on demand, video games, reality shows and home robots. All this intense metabolism of the digital semiosphere calls for semiotic attention.

5) APTRAD International Audiovisual Translation Conference

When: September 10 - 11, 2021
Where: ISCAP, the Porto Accounting and Business School, Porto, Portugal
Description: Let us together explore the old and new paths and prepare for the future of audiovisual translation to the fullest extent, without fearing the unknown. Join us to break new ground in audiovisual translation, in what will be an historic event for AVT and its professionals!
https://aptrad.pt/1stAVTIntConf/

6) Curso MOOC "La traducción audiosivual y el aprendizaje de lenguas" (TRAVEL)
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, Spain

When: Sep 13 - Oct 29, 2021
Where: Online
The course offers educational use of audiovisual translation for foreign language learning, which aims to teach active subtitling, dubbing, voiceover, and audio description tasks to be applied to the teaching-learning context of any foreign language. Taught in Spanish.
https://iedra.uned.es/courses/course-v1:UNED+TraduccionAudiovisual+2021/about
7) TRANSLATA IV - 4th International Conference on Translation and Interpreting Studies
Future Perspectives in Translation and Interpreting Studies
University of Innsbruck

When: June 16, 2021
Where: Innsbruck, Austria

Description: The theme of TRANSLATA IV should reflect our interest in the rapid developments in the era of digitalisation that have changed the practice of translation for a number of years now. These changes also give rise to the question of how the field of Translation and Interpreting Studies can and should react to these developments. Under the main theme of “Future Perspectives in Translation and Interpreting Studies”, TRANSLATA IV provides those concerned with the theoretical, practical, didactical, and commercial aspects of translation with a forum to discuss current questions and problems in the field of translation and the training of translators and interpreters.
https://www.uibk.ac.at/translation/translata-2021/

8) 13th Languages & the Media Conference and Exhibition

When: Sep 20 - 24, 2021
Where: Online

The conference and exhibition will once again bring together leading academic experts and key industry stakeholders for a packed programme that will focus on the latest trends and technologies in the world of media localisation and access services under the overall theme "Riding the Wave". Language tools are being integrated and experimentation and reinvention abound. The need for research has never been greater. With the validity of older norms and standards under scrutiny, new models of good practice are emerging, forcing the audiovisual localisation industry to take stock and re-examine audience needs. Legislation and regulation are also whipping up the wind of change. As our 2018 keynote speaker David Padmore pointed out, our shared goal is to break down language and sensory barriers to audiovisual content that educates, informs and entertains the world. To achieve this, all stakeholders must come together and collaborate to address our industry's challenges with responsible, comprehensive and fair strategies.
https://www.languages-media.com/
The AVD has been bringing audiovisual translators together with happy hour meetups via Zoom, and we will continue moving forward. Unwind with friends and meet new people. Join us for our upcoming happy hour meetups for a relaxed chat among colleagues from all over the world, where we talk shop (or not!) and share our passion for audiovisual translation in a private Zoom meeting room, and then split up into smaller groups.

Follow us on social media to catch us every month!
AUDIODEVISUAL DIVISION

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Website

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Forum

How to join

Send an email to avdforummoderator@gmail.com

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