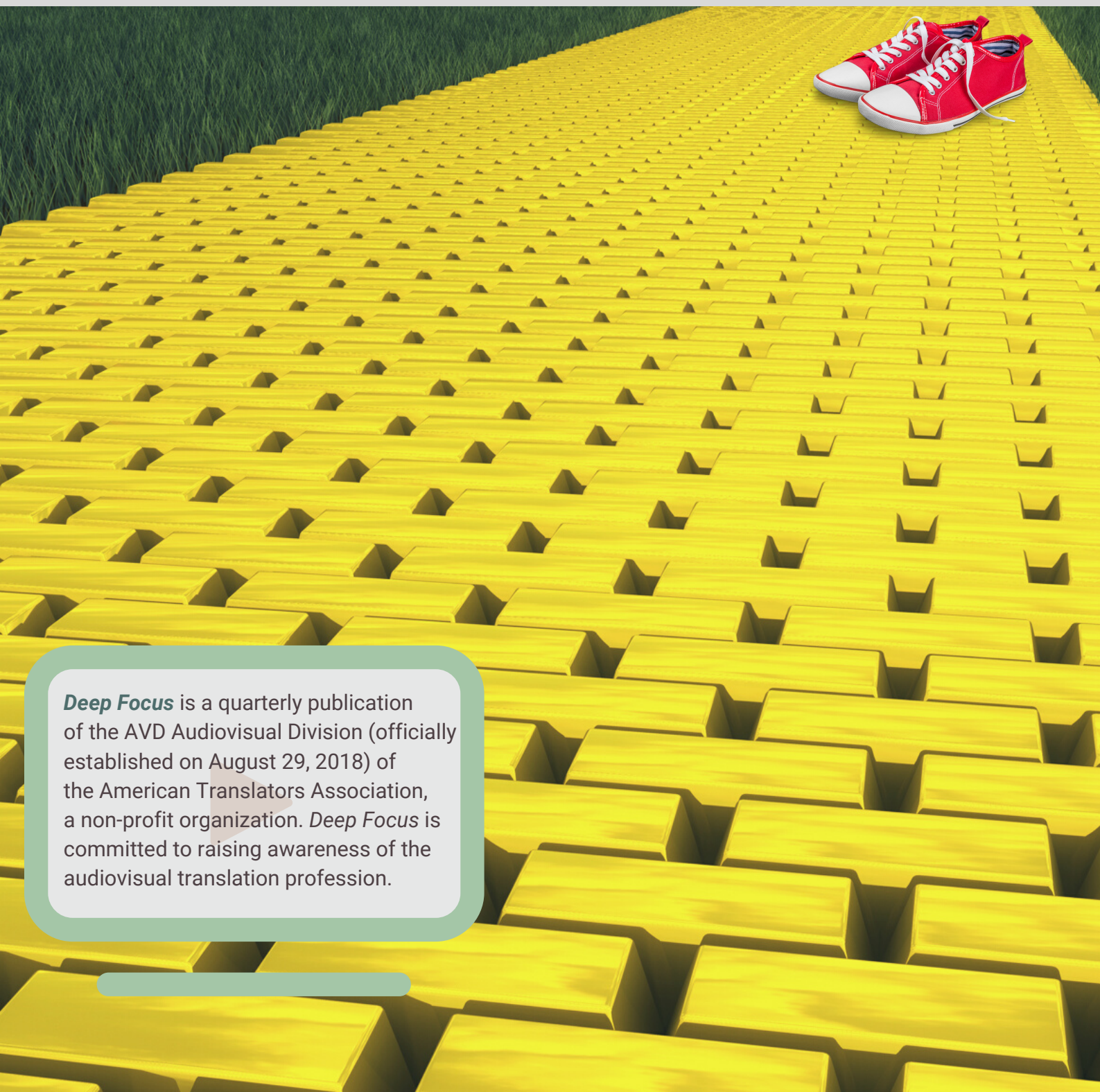


DEEP FOCUS

AVD NEWSLETTER



A division of the American Translators Association



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YELLOW BRICK ROAD ISSUE

DEEP FOCUS

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YELLOW BRICK ROAD (YBR)

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EDITORIAL

ANA G. GONZÁLEZ MEADE

Dear readers,

I'm thrilled to share this special edition of Deep Focus entitled Yellow Brick Road (YBR). Where audiovisual translators from around the world make themselves visible by sharing how they each started in the entertainment industry.

It took much longer than planned to wrap it up as we kept getting personal YBR stories from fellow translators. They graciously took time from their busy schedules, so we delayed the launch to include as many stories as possible.

It was heart-warming to see how even with such broad backgrounds somehow all our roads ultimately led us to a common destination.

I wonder if you will identify yourself with our YBR stories.

May we all keep on our yellow brick road to happiness!

Ana Gabriela González Meade, M.A.
Deep Focus Editor

DEBBIE'S YBR

As an audiovisual translator, the second most frequently asked question I get after, "Wow, do you really translate movies and series?" is "How did you get into that?"

I started at a state channel in Mexico called Imevisión that later became Televisión Azteca. A woman I knew worked there and one day she said to me, "They are urgently looking for someone who can translate the Italian movie *Ladri di biciclette*... by tomorrow!" and I was game. I spent all of that day and night translating the movie and stayed on after that.

Back then, they didn't call us "audiovisual translators," but "movie translators" (there were no "series" yet). I worked on paper since there were no subtitling programs available. We would listen to the dialogue on the video, pause it, write the in time and out time, and subtract the in time from the out time to get the duration of the subtitle. Then we would convert that number of frames into spaces, translate the dialogue mentally, count the characters to see if they fit in the space allowed, and write it down with a pencil. There were no spellcheckers available, so the writing had to be perfect from the start. We would take our enormous stack of pages to be typed by the Chyron operator so the subtitles could later be burned into film reels.

Then I worked for Televisa, Mexico's leading media company, on the night shift, arriving just in time to see them transitioning from a Moviola to computers and a three-quarter VCR. The Moviola was an editing machine that allowed you to view the film, but the translation and timing were done on paper. The new computers didn't have a hard drive, so the software (SoftNi, the first PC-based subtitling system) was run through a floppy disk drive in DOS.

After that, I worked for a bit at PCTV, the largest cable TV distributor in Latin America, until I immigrated to the United States.

There, I started working for an amazing company called Captions, Inc., where I later became the Director of Translation Services, in charge of over 500 linguists, until it was absorbed by the then start-up Pixelogic Media, which I now call home.

Somebody once told me, after having heard my laughter while translating a comedy, "People shouldn't be allowed to have so much fun while working!" It was said in jest, but it's a great way to describe how I feel about this work. I would not want to be doing anything else in the world. It's what I wished I could do when as a little girl I used to see the translator credit "Translated by Perla Moctezuma" at the end of subtitled movies on television. I still remember Perla's name, even though I never got to meet her.

Although it's had a few bumps, I like my yellow brick road story because I love where it has taken me. Today it's taking me to Seoul to train an amazing group of Korean editors in the art of subtitling. Both the typhoon Hinnamnor and I are scheduled to land in Korea tonight.

I hope you're inspired by this compilation of stories of how audiovisual translators ended up being a part of this fabulous field. This special edition of Deep Focus is dedicated to them.

Deborah Wexler is an ATA-certified English-to-Spanish translator and editor with over 20 years of experience, specialized in audiovisual translation and Spanish orthography. She has translated over 6,000 program hours for television, VHS, DVD, Blu-ray, streaming media and the big screen. Manager of Operations of the Americas at Pixelogic Media. She is also a freelance audiovisual translator and quality control specialist. She is the Administrator of the ATA's Audiovisual Division and a frequent speaker at international conferences, and she is an educator who has mentored and trained many translators.



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ANA'S YBR

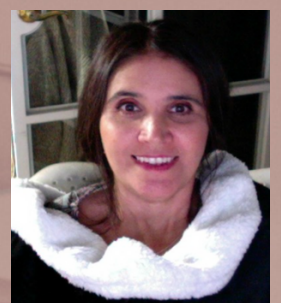
In the early 90s, while studying Foreign Languages and having translated romantic pocketbooks, cookbooks, contracts, and official documents in addition to occasional consecutive translation gigs since my teen years, the then only nationwide, government-owned TV network based out of Mexico City was looking for subtitling translators.

I decided to try my luck. I showed up at the gate and asked to see the head of Post-Production. He handed me a written test that, to my surprise, turned out to be heavy on complex Spanish linguistics, spelling, and grammar. But, of course! I'll never forget when he said, "We need experts in Spanish. Otherwise, how in the world would they be able to translate into it from any other language?" The written test was so lengthy it took me two whole days to complete. Then I was given a short documentary in English to be translated into Spanish in one of the booths they had set up for in-house translators. That was the fun part, of course, despite the fact that I had to learn how to operate the professional S-VHS Sony editing VCR player and corresponding remote in order to accurately spot the in-times and the out-times of each subtitle. But all of it paid off as shortly after they called to say I had passed both tests and they wanted me to start working right away!

My first paid subtitled movie in 1991 was *Silence Like Glass* (1989) about a ballerina who is diagnosed with leukemia, which entailed for me to look up medical terms in actual dictionaries and encyclopedias as we didn't have Internet. As soon as I completed my first movie, I was literally handed the VHS tape for my second movie, which I was hoping to be about a more practical topic so I didn't have to research "as much." Turns out it was *Stalin* (1992), which is 2 hours and 52 minutes long. In those times, subtitling was done on a mimeographed translation template and using a small table with aspect ratio calculations for characters per minute.

As a translator filled out the template pages using a pencil, a post-production data entry assistant would feed them into a Chyron character generator. When both the translation and the character input were completed, the manual master tape deck operator would come in and the translator would sit down and watch the whole movie as the Chyron burned in the subtitles. Each typo spotted by the translator as the characters burned into the tape called for the tape deck operator to stop the tape, manually rewind it to get to the exact frame where the faulty subtitle would come in, wait for the character generator assistant to fix the typo by retyping the text, and play it again so the process could continue until the next typo was spotted. Actual pioneering stuff! From there, I was hired by the largest cable TV provider at the time, with the first subtitling software and PCs in our workstations. In 2001, I was hired by the first Burbank-based localization company, several of which would follow. Then DVD's came along: our main market for over a decade. More recently, the largest streaming giant hired me in 2014, and the rest is history. But hey, watching your credit come up on TV, a DVD, streaming platforms or movie theater screens NEVER gets old!

Ana Gabriela Gonzalez Meade, MA in Translation Studies from the University of Portsmouth and certified by the Universitat de Barcelona in Spanish Proofreading and Style, has over 10,000 English<->Spanish translated and reviewed program hours under her belt for broadcasting, DVD, Blu-ray, and streaming media found on content from Netflix, Amazon, HBO, Fox, Disney, Apple TV+, and the big screen. A previous Territory Manager for Latin America at Pixelogic, she raises awareness as an active Audiovisual Translation educator and international speaker. She is a founding member of the ATA's Audiovisual Division, Head of Publications and *Deep Focus* editor.



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MARA'S YBR

When I was a teenager, my mother—a translator—got a job subtitling films for a dubbing company in Argentina that was owned by the parents of one of my classmates. I remember her working at home with VHSs, rewinding them a million times, typing up her subtitles on a green Olivetti typewriter, and then sending the client the pages through a courier.

A decade later, the same company hired me to do admin work. I also freelanced for them, translating scripts for dubbing. I learned so much by sneaking into the recording booth and watching how my scripts were dubbed! One of their clients requested we do closed captions for an American TV network, and I was entrusted with the project. It involved watching several hours of captioned television to figure out what CCs were (we didn't have them in Argentina, so they were very alien to me) and how to replicate them. I learned how to use the software and trained a team.

The following year, there was an ad in the classifieds section of the only English newspaper in the country, looking for translators with experience in subtitles and captions. I sent my CV, took a test, did a couple of interviews, and was hired by a company that is currently one of the biggest post-production studios in Burbank. There were eight of us in the Buenos Aires offices, and we were trained in captioning and subtitling for three months. My time working there was one of the happiest of my life and I made lifelong friendships. I started getting contacted by prospective clients, so, at some point, it made more sense for me to go freelance, which I did for about five years. The company I left has remained my client ever since. In 2009, my cousin partnered with me, so I went from freelancer to entrepreneur, working with a team of audiovisual translators, whom I trained and QCed.

Two years later, as my maternity leave was finishing, we got a call from the aforementioned Burbank company offering us work on the first project of a new (for Latin America at least) streaming service, Netflix! We had to grow our team threefold in two days, but we delivered a successful initial project of 63 episodes in a month. Since then, our company has grown exponentially, and now we handle thousands of minutes of subtitles and captions per month, and I have recently relocated to the UK to lead our European operations. I can't wait to see what the future holds!

Mara Campbell is an Argentine ATA-certified translator based in the UK who has been subtitling, closed captioning, and translating subtitles and scripts for dubbing for the past 20 years.



She has worked at several of the largest audiovisual translation companies in Argentina and the USA. She is currently COO of True Subtitles, the company she founded in 2005. Her work has been seen on the screens of Netflix, Prime, Disney+, Hulu, HBO, BBC, and many more. She teaches courses, speaks at international conferences, and is a founding member of the American Translators Association's AVD.

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BRITTA'S YBR

How I got my feet wet in the audiovisual field

I was working as a video game localization specialist at SOE. At the time, I oversaw a lot of in-game subtitle and dubbing projects. I was already pretty excited to work in a creative field such as gaming, and the combination of video games and media content translation were a dream come true for me. I had a very special team of creative minds surrounding me, and we always bounced ideas off of each other for cool content to incorporate into the games in our respective languages. I remember we went into the studio once to record voice-over snippets for a special event, and we were proud to see our translations come to life.

One day one of my former clients and collaborators contacted me to see if I was interested in editing subtitles that were translated by a group of talented subtitlers. It was a documentary called *Who Needs Sleep?* by Haskell Wexler. I was excited to work on my very first movie subtitling project, even if it was "just" the editing part. I learned a lot. It was my first experience with subtitling software, keeping consistency while working with multiple translators with different styles, template creation, reading speed, you name it. I was lucky to have worked with a client that was willing to welcome my learning curve and share their knowledge with me. Needless to say, after I got my toes wet, I wanted more. Shortly after that I was lucky again and another former client hooked me up with the translation of the Rolling Stones documentary *Shine a Light* by Martin Scorsese. I was very proud to provide subtitles in my language for this project and could not wait to see my words, my art, shown on the screen.

I eventually left the gaming industry after my second child was born and started collaborating with all the creative people in my professional circle. I was very fortunate to have had so many talented co-workers and fellow translators around me who helped me reach out to new clients and agencies, so that I could do what I fell in love with: subtitling. Fast forward to today: I am still at it, more than ever, and I still love it as much as I did when I received my very first project. These days I am helping the new up-and-coming talents get a feel for the AV field. A lot has changed over the years, but one thing is for sure: audiovisual translators are one of the most passionate bunch you will ever come across.

Britta Noack is the Mentoring Program Coordinator of the Audiovisual Division of the ATA, a veteran State Certified German to English translator and subtitler, and a longtime member of the ATA. She currently travels a lot between her two home bases of San Diego, CA and Osnabrück, Germany.



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DANIELA'S YBR

I started my career as an audiovisual translator almost by chance. I was fresh out of college and hadn't planned to specialize in AVT. This field hadn't crossed my mind until a good friend of mine told me that she had received an email from a new company that was looking for "translators to work on subtitles".

No prior experience was required and training was provided; we only had to take a short translation test. I knew almost nothing about AVT, but I'd always liked movies, so I saw this as an opportunity. I was so eager for my career to take off that I was immediately on board. I passed the test, and 22 years later, here I am, still collaborating with that company—I'm one of their senior translators now—and with others that came along the way.

Little did I know, I would make a living out of this specialization and that I would obtain a master's degree in audiovisual translation and localization many years later. It's been a long bumpy road, to be honest. To be a successful audiovisual translator, you have to juggle ongoing training, technological advances, and changing workflows.

I started subtitling for DVDs with software installed on my PC, and now I'm working in the cloud, mostly for streaming services.

You also have to fight hard for better working conditions, and I'm proud that both AVT professionals and professional associations have raised our voices and shown the world how valuable our work is. We've come a long way, that's for sure, and I think the best is yet to come.

Being a subtitler is much more than a job for me. I've made good friends and met wonderful colleagues, for whom I couldn't be more grateful. I took a leap of faith 22 years ago, and I encourage all fellow translators who are passionate about audiovisual content to do the same. You won't regret it.

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.



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MILBIA'S YBR

My name is Milbia Rodriguez. I've been translating advertising, publicity and marketing material related with the entertainment industry for most of my translation career.

I was always very interested in the "entertainment" industry and everything related to it. I took a workshop on subtitling and attended various presentations on the topic to try and learn as much as I could about it. After some time I decided to do a Master in Audiovisual Translation from the University of Cadiz that covered all areas of the subtitling industry.

Not knowing where or how to start in the industry, I set it aside and continued with my other translation work. Meanwhile I continued to look for work opportunities in the field.

One day I saw a posting for a Spanish translator position in a captioning company and decided to give it a try despite not having experience. After a couple rounds of testing, I got the position and now I work as a fulltime Spanish-to-Spanish captioner and English-to-Spanish subtitle translator.

Even though the subtitling I translate doesn't have anything to do with advertising, I feel that they both have the same challenges and rewards. I have to be creative with little space and at the same time stay true to the source.

I help viewers understand and enjoy a movie or TV show that they otherwise wouldn't. I enjoy both captioning and translating subtitles and much as I do advertising translation.

Milbia Rodriguez was born and raised

in Puerto Rico. She has more than 20 years of experience as an English to Spanish translator specializing in advertising, marketing and transcreation.

She now works as a subtitle translator and Spanish to Spanish captioner. She has a bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages from the University of Puerto Rico and a master in Audiovisual Translation from the University of Cadiz.



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MARIE'S YBR

That John Lennon saying, "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans," is pretty much how I arrived at the front door of audiovisual translation. I could say the trajectory started in 2011. At that point, I was in some very difficult life circumstances and was looking for a lucrative and stable job that I could begin as soon as possible. I considered becoming a cop, but no department around me was hiring at that moment. Then I thought of nursing, but then I remembered how much I had excelled in Spanish while I was in high school. So I googled "professional translator," and the ATA website came up. I searched the site for translation schools and found that the nearby University of Chicago had a Spanish to English certificate program. I applied and passed the translation entrance test with the minimal academic and in-country Spanish experience that I had, just because I happen to have a natural knack for languages.

Halfway through the program, I decided that I wanted to specialize in subtitling, because I had completed a Bachelor's Degree in Film and Video at Columbia College Chicago in 2005, but when I graduated a year later and searched for jobs, there were none. The entertainment globalization age hadn't taken off yet. So I got a job doing bilingual social science research for the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago while doing my best to not be a generalist when accepting jobs from translation agencies.

By the winter of 2020, I had gained a lot of excellent Spanish to English text translation experience, most of it in market research and legal transcription, and had also honed my Italian skills to the point that I was translating many headline articles for Watching America.

That was when a large LSP saw my LinkedIn profile and contacted me, asking me to subtitle a bunch of episodes of a Mexican reality show and some telenovelas. They thought that my combined film and translation background made me a good candidate. I said "Sure!" They had me take a subtitling test with their software, which I passed with flying colors, and those were my first jobs in audiovisual translation.

Since then, I have taken on much more artistic and sophisticated film and TV subtitle translation projects in both Spanish and Italian, as well as some dubbing script, template creation, and CC projects, all for major streaming and distribution companies and networks. I'm truly looking forward to doing many more.

Marie Winnick is a Chicago-based Italian and Spanish > English

translator specializing in subtitling and dubbing for cinema and TV, legal transcription, and market

research. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Film and Video from Columbia College Chicago and an Advanced Certificate in Spanish > English Translation Studies from the University of Chicago. Since 2020, she has translated, spotted, and proofread feature-length films and TV episodes for many of the major media companies. She is also the Professional Development Coordinator of the ATA Audiovisual Division.

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FEDE'S YBR

My yellow brick road, or *camino de baldosas amarillas*, as it was translated in Spain, started very early on, when I caught my father's interest in languages. Then both real and metaphorical doors opened for me, just as they did for Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*.

My interest in languages caused me to enroll in the Bachelor of English and German Philology at the Universitat de València. In my fourth year, our English literature lecturer casually mentioned that his brother worked as a movie and show translator at a dubbing studio in Valencia. When the class ended, I contained my shyness, summoned my bravery, and asked him about his brother. I wanted to know more about the job and where he worked. At a time without internet, I took the directions he gave me, gathered even more bravery, and got into my car.

I went to the town of Alborià and started asking anyone on the street if they knew where the studio was. A woman was able to direct me to the exact location of what was then called Tabalet. I was both afraid and embarrassed, yet brave enough to knock on the door. Someone answered and I introduced myself as a recently graduated translator with a desire to learn about their work and offer my services. After a conversation with the studio's directors, I left with my first dubbing translation project: an animated series called *Gokū no Daibōken*, known in English as *Adventures of the Monkey King*, prequel to *Dragon Ball*. Just like the yellow brick road to Oz, mine is windy. It has weaved between good and bad, highs and lows, has potholes and dead-ends, and was occasionally crossed by loathsome characters. But I'm glad to have taken it, and given the opportunity, I'd do it again.

This story was translated by Lucía Hernández, Spanish to English Translator.

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Frederic Chaume is a Full Professor

of Audiovisual Translation at Universitat Jaume I and Honorary Professor at University College London, Universidad Ricardo Palma, and Universidad

Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas. He leads the TRAMA Research Group and serves as a consultant for Netflix. He is the recipient of the *Berlanga Award* (2010), *Xènia Martínez Award* (2016) and *Jan Ivarsson's Award* (2020) for his constant and enthusiastic university training in this field.

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JOEL'S YBR

In 1971, I was in my late teens, studying theater and English as a sophomore in undergraduate school. I had always been involved with theater and music, using my voice in myriad capacities. I auditioned for and was accepted as a volunteer reader for a closed-circuit radio reading service, *The Washington Ear*, designed to provide access to the daily newspaper and other print material for people who are blind. One of my assignments had me reading aloud the Washington Post on Sunday mornings. But how does one “read” the comics—the visual images are integral to the experience. I simply described them as though we were telling a story to a friend over the phone. It never occurred to me at that point that I was a “translator”—translating visual images into words, expressing them in a form that would make those images accessible to someone who can't see them.

In 1980, Arena Stage, a theater in Washington, DC, assembled a group of people to provide advice on accessibility issues. Among the committee members was a blind woman, Dr. Margaret Pfanstiehl (née Rockwell). Margaret was the founder of *The Washington Ear*. When she learned that Arena was installing an assistive listening system for the benefit of people who do not hear well, she wondered if the same system couldn't be used to voice descriptions in the pauses between pieces of dialogue or critical sound elements. Arena was willing to experiment with the concept; Margaret came back to *The Ear* and gathered several of us together to consider how we might provide this description service and the world's first audio description service was born. I was already doing my volunteer reading at *The Ear* and I had a background as a professional voice actor and English teacher—so a match was made!

41 years later, I am proud to be known internationally as one of the world's first “audio describers,” a pioneer in the field of Audio Description, a translation of visual images to vivid language for the benefit, primarily, of people who are blind or have a vision impairment. Since 1981, I have introduced audio description techniques in over 40 states and 64 countries and have made thousands of live events, media projects and museums accessible.

In 2014, the American Council of the Blind published my book, *The Visual Made Verbal – A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description*. It is now available as an audio book and in Braille from the Library of Congress, in screen reader accessible formats, and in English, Polish, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Chinese print editions; a version in Italian is planned for 2022. My PhD is from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona with a focus on audiovisual translation and audio description. I am the President of Audio Description Associates, LLC (www.audiodescribe.com) and serves as the Founder/Senior Consultant of the Audio Description Project of the American Council of the Blind (<https://adp.abc.org>).

Dr. Joel Snyder is known internationally as one of the world's first “audio describers,” a pioneer in the field of Audio Description. Since 1981, he has introduced audio description techniques in over 40 states and 64 countries and has made thousands of live events, media projects and museums accessible. In 2014, the American Council of the Blind published Dr. Snyder's book, *The Visual Made Verbal – A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description*.



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ALEX'S YBR

Crisis—or a miracle, depending on how you see it—is what got me into the world of AVT. Financial, emotional, and existential crisis.

In 2008, as a recent college graduate with more questions than answers and the equivalent of a Summa Cum Laude in my pocket but completely burned out, I set out to find a job amid a global economic crisis. With no desire to work as a visual communicator for the rest of my life (see burn out), I sought something that'd pay the bills and take me far away (geographically too, hopefully) from my former life.

Cue the newspaper ad asking for people interested in languages and translation and movies and TV to apply for an apprenticeship.

Now, these were different times, and the advertiser was no big, fancy company, but a single freelance AV translator in need of someone to whom to delegate; a generous colleague eager to show a stranger—with the right skills and traits—the ropes of the dubbing-for-translation world.

I had already answered a similar ad (with disastrous results) but still went to the interview. Such was my desperation—and self-assurance around my command of the English language and my mother tongue. My sensei and I immediately clicked. They gave me a crash course in translation for dubbing (back then there were next to no educational opportunities to learn the trade) and plenty of chances to practice my newfound skills, assertively correcting my mistakes and constantly praising my “innate abilities” (their words, not mine). Eventually, when they thought I was ready, they recommended me to a dubbing studio.

We didn't tell them I was a newbie. It was time to prove myself. And I guess I did: 14 years later, after a stint living and studying in Scandinavia, another crisis, a certificate in AVT plus many standalone courses, I still translate and adapt for dubbing. I've even had the chance to close the circle, teaching that which I once learned from this incredibly giving, positive and supportive human being who believed in me and redirected my life.

So yeah... newspaper ad, word-of-mouth, a fair amount of trauma and more than a sprinkle of miraculous light—doused in bilingual education I received throughout life—got me to where I am.

Alejandra Ramírez Olvera began her professional life as a designer

and visual communicator rekindling her love for words and translation later in life.

With a specialty in AVT she has,

little by little, also immersed herself in the translation of traditional literary texts. She is based in Mexico City and a member of the Mexican Translators Organization (OMT), serves on the board of the Mexican Literary Translators Association (Ametli) and, since 2020, is an expert Swedish>Spanish and Danish>Spanish translator (perita) as appointed by Mexico's Council of the Federal Judiciary.



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FABIANA'S YBR

My name is Fabiana and I'm in my sixties. Let me tell you my story.

I first delved into translation was when I was 16. I had research work to do and I couldn't find a book in Spanish, my native tongue, which fulfilled the requirements. I found one in English, so I decided to translate the pages of the book I needed.

By the time I was about to graduate from secondary school, I had not made up my mind about a profession. I came to the conclusion that I could find it in translation.

I graduated as an English translator almost 40 years ago, in Argentina. In those days it was hard to find work as a freelancer. I could not contact any direct clients and as far as I knew, there were no local translation agencies. The internet did not even exist yet.

So, I accepted a position as a bilingual assistant in a bank where I worked until I got married, had two children and my housewife and mother roles "set aside" my professional one.

After 10 years, the marriage ended, and I returned to translation. I had direct clients, but I wasn't earning enough, so I started as an assistant again, this time in a psychiatric practice and then as multitasking employee in a leather rug manufacturing business.

Fortunately, in both positions I could translate from and to English. But when I turned 60, the owner of the manufacturing business considered it was time for me to retire.

At first, I was in shock because I was still too young to retire. But when one door closes, another one opens. I returned to where I began; I returned to translation.

I discovered a new world in social media: translators, agencies, and the possibility of returning to the profession in the subtitling field.

I looked for the best local teacher in this field, who was teaching the specialization online and so far I have completed two levels. The next three will take place in the coming three months and I hope I can take my first steps in the audiovisual industry soon.

Fabiana Vassallo is an English>Spanish translator and audiovisual specialist from Argentina who has worked partly as a freelancer, partly as an in-house translator.



This 2022 brought about new opportunities in subtitling, so she decided to specialize in this field attending a five-month course, which ended past July, and she is currently taking different AVT-related workshops. She will be attending the II HispaTAV Congress, which will be held in Buenos Aires, as well as several post-congress workshops.

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FLAVIO'S YBR

When I was 16 years old, I came back to Brazil after six months in the USA as an exchange student. I wanted to make some money from my (newly) fluent English, but hated the idea of being an English teacher—I wanted to work alone, at home.

Then I read a story in the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper about some “uncommon jobs”, and “subtitler” was one of them. And I loved cinema and TV series.

It was 1996, so I picked up the phone book (yes, no internet at the time) and started calling all the video producers, distributors and other businesses I could think of.

Some weeks later, someone called me back:

- You must have a VCR or two, because they’re gonna break frequently.
- Ok.
- Come pick up the tape near Avenida Paulista.
- Ok.
- Oh, and just one more question: we work only with porn movies, do you have any problem with that?

Well, it wasn’t even legal to give porn to someone under 18, but that work soon opened other doors: São Paulo International Film Festival, HBO Brasil, and MTV, among others.

From primitive computers and broken VCRs to sophisticated software and everything in the “cloud”, sixteen years later, here I am: a happy freelance linguist, and a journalist.

Flávio Silveira is a 45-year-old linguist, automotive journalist and subtitler who lives in São Paulo, Brazil, with his wife and two kids.



He loves translating, but doesn’t like working with QAs. He works as a freelance translator for Deluxe, Iyuno and also some Brazilian newspapers and magazines.

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OMBENI'S YBR

There is always diversity in how we approach things—as there is in how we pursue the same thing. For me, I began engaging in audiovisual translation in a way that was never planned. I am not a fan of movies or drama. As I am writing this, I have only managed to watch one series: Banshee. But I read five books per year.

However, one day I was watching a video of Dr. Myles Munroe. He was delivering a 2014 yearend speech at his ministry in The Bahamas. That day something clicked my mind and I started watching from another perspective. I started thinking of those who are not familiar with the language in the video.

And before this video, I had rejected two tasks from clients who wanted me to help them with Swahili subtitling. What a coincidence! The rejections were coupled with self-reflection: Can't I learn subtitling and start offering this service? When will I stop rejecting subtitling projects?

I had an excuse— I couldn't afford to pay for a subtitling course on Udemy or LinkedIn Learning. And I didn't have the time either. Later on, I came to realize that it was more costly to reject the work than to pay the course fees.

So, the first thing that came to mind was to find YouTube tutorials on subtitling basics. Thanks to this platform, I found helpful tutorials that walked me through the steps to master subtitling. I devoted my time to learn, and of course, I really enjoyed the lessons.

I learned how to use different software for subtitling. I understood how they work. I liked Subtitle Edit, and I am still using it.

I have completed multiple subtitling projects with it. It is a great software available for free.

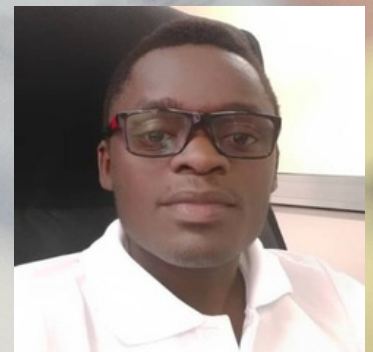
After that, I tested myself by subtitling that 14-minute speech into Swahili. At first, it was not perfect, but I was super excited to see my subtitles on the screen. I had no idea what it feels like to work on something you learned on your own. I did it!

English is my second language. So, it was sometimes challenging to get exact utterances. I wondered how I could overcome this. Transcription software came to mind. I downloaded Descript to help transcribe words or phrases I didn't hear well. Software like this helps a lot in audiovisual translation. It can help save time and improve the quality of the work.

Today, I consider myself a subtitling artist who can offer quality work, and I am happy to do it. It's thanks to YouTube tutorials, the Dr. Munroe video and the clients who made me develop an interest in learning and providing audiovisual translation.

Should you need Swahili subtitles, please do not hesitate to reach out. I'd be happy to help. Asante. Thank you. Happy subtitling to all subtitlers.

Ombeni Mtanga is a full-time freelance English linguist and English<->Swahili certified translator based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



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RITA'S YBR

I finished my degree in 2001, in Leiria, my hometown. After studying subtitling during the last semester of my degree, the plan in the back of my mind was clear: I needed to move to where subtitling companies were and contact them and offer my services. Easier said than done.

Within months, I finally found a fulltime job in Lisbon (incidentally, it was in the audiovisual industry!). I moved there and weeks later I started my search for subtitling companies. One beautiful and sunny May afternoon, I knocked at one's door—not actually knocked, there was a doorbell. They opened and I immediately asked, “Are you looking for freelance subtitlers?” They said they were. “Great”, I thought. They asked for my experience. I had none. They wanted to know if I had had any training. I did, with a wonderful teacher. “Okay, then we will need you to do a test”. “Of course,” I said. “Wonderful.” I thought.

The next morning, I did the subtitling test on their equipment (I did not have my own). It was a nice and not easy spotting and translation task. In the afternoon, I received a phone call, “Hi Rita, you passed the test. We want to assign you your first project. Can you come tomorrow to pick up a VHS and its script?” “Of course,” I said. “Wonderful,” I thought. Yes, back then we used VHS tapes and we were given scripts to help us in the process of subtitling.

We usually created a preliminary version of the subtitles in Word and if we didn't have one (which many of us didn't), then we had to book time at the company premises to do the spotting using their equipment.

Bottom line: I needed a couple of months to move my whole life to Lisbon and it only took me three days to get my first subtitling project.

Rita Menezes has been a subtitler since 2002 and reviser since 2005.

She has been in this industry for two decades now, collaborating with major stakeholders in interesting AV projects.

Finding links between audiovisual practice and audiovisual research has been one of Rita's professional goals. Currently Rita is working on her PhD dissertation in Audiovisual Translation.



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RYCHELLE'S YBR

I majored in Japanese throughout university and always dreamed of being a translator, but due to various life choices I ended up in a generic administrative career in Australia. I currently work as a court transcriptionist typing up legal proceedings in South Australia.

In 2020, with the advent of COVID-19, I decided I wanted to take charge of my life and seriously look at picking up freelance translation. I came across a Peatix event hosted by Japan Visualmedia Translation Academy, a subtitling school based in Tokyo, Japan, offering a free subtitling lesson online, so I thought I would give it a go.

I absolutely loved the experience and I learned that due to COVID restrictions the school had just recently started offering their courses online. I immediately signed up. Halfway through the yearlong course I registered myself as a sole trader and began officially introducing myself as a freelance translator. My freelancing career has since shot through the roof. I have also discovered I can combine my skills developed in court transcription to provide video transcription to English to Japanese subtitle translators who would not otherwise have access to a script.

For whatever reason, I had always felt that before I was allowed to translate within the entertainment industry I would have to do the hard yards translating generic or business documents. But through my journey with JVTa and discovering online translation and localization groups, I now realize that that way of thinking only serves to pigeonhole oneself, and the only way to get into the entertainment industry is to actually offer your services within that industry.

Ultimately, the global pandemic has ended up being a blessing in disguise for me. I was able to attend a school I would not have otherwise been able to, and I am able to continue living in Australia while interacting with my Japanese audience through Zoom and other online meetings. I sincerely hope that this will continue to be available even as the world opens up again.

Rychelle Brittain is Japanese to English

audiovisual translator, specializing in the entertainment industry.

She also works in game localization, court transcription, and provides

English transcription and spotting services to English to Japanese translators. Her recent work includes two short stories by Osamu Dazai published as part of an anthology and subtitle translation for Ebisu Endo, a famous sushi chef in Ebisu, Tokyo.



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