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ATA65 RECAP



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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.

AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

DEEP FOCUS

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EDITORIAL

ANA G. GONZÁLEZ MEADE

There was something special about the atmosphere at last year's American Translators Association (ATA) conference in Portland. You could feel the energy in every conversation, in every session room—an unmistakable sense that the profession is evolving, and that we're evolving with it. Literally hundreds translators and interpreters came together, not just to learn, but to connect, to share stories, and to imagine what's next. It was a space where passion met purpose, and where ideas sparked genuine inspiration. Among the many memorable moments, the sessions on audiovisual translation led by Jennifer Ho, Sijin Xian, and Sameh Ragab left a lasting impression—reminding us that innovation in language work isn't just about technology or tools, but about people, vision, and the drive to keep building bridges through words.

As you read through these articles summaries, we hope you catch a glimpse of that same energy and insight—of the transformation our profession is living through, and the shared commitment that continues to shape its future.

Looking forward to what ATA66 will bring!

Ana G. Meade, M.A.

Deep Focus Editor & AVD Administrator

ATA IN PORTLAND: FORGING THE FUTURE OF AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

BY ANIELLA VIVENZIO

At the latest American Translators Association (ATA) conference in Portland, innovation, collaboration, and passion were palpable. Drawing over 1,000 professionals, the event emerged as a vibrant melting pot of ideas, marking a turning point in the fields of translation and interpretation. Three presentations in particular—by Jennifer Ho, Sijin Xian, and Sameh Ragab—stood out as beacons charting the industry's way forward.

BEYOND SUBTITLES

**BASED ON JENNIFER HO'S
PRESENTATION**

In her talk titled "Beyond Subtitles: The Role of a Translator Before the Camera Starts Rolling" (ATA Audiovisual Division Deep Focus Special Edition, January 2025), Jennifer Ho delivered a transformative perspective on a translator's role.

Key highlights:

- **Pre-production as a Stage for Innovation:** Ho emphasized that linguistic work begins long before the cameras start rolling. Her discussion underlined how translators can significantly influence the narrative and creative process, collaborating closely with screenwriters and producers to preserve the essence of the content.

Blending Experience and Creativity: Drawing on her extensive career—from cinematic development to courtroom interpretation—Jennifer argued against an overreliance on automated solutions. She made a compelling call for a strategic, specialized approach that elevates the creative standards of the industry.

Jennifer Ho is a former radio presenter in Australia, TV travel show producer in Taiwan, and creative executive who crafted notes on screenplays for an Oscar-



nominated producer in Los Angeles. She has been a California-certified court interpreter (Mandarin Chinese/English) since 2016. She specializes in legal translation, forensic transcription-translation, and language support for TV/film productions. She has a bachelor's degree in communication, an advanced diploma in interpreting and translation, and a certificate in legal interpreting and translation from the University of California, Los Angeles Extension.

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CONVERGENCE BETWEEN SUBTITLING AND INTERPRETING

BASED ON SIJIN XIAN'S PRESENTATION

Sijin Xian explored the intersections between subtitling and interpreting—two seemingly distinct practices that share fundamental skills and methodologies.

Key aspects of her presentation:

- **Transferable Skills:** Sijin showcased how both subtitling and interpreting require speed, precision, and the ability to adapt cultural nuances to visual contexts.
- **Shared Techniques and Methodologies:** Her discussion delved into how managing pacing, synchronization, and cultural adaptation in both fields synergistically enhances the final product.
- **Mutual Learning and Exchange:** By encouraging both interpreters and translators to explore the interplay between their domains, she demonstrated that expertise in one area invariably enriches proficiency in the other.

Sijin Xian, CT is an ATA-certified English to/from Chinese translator, audiovisual subtitler, and Mandarin interpreter based in Silver Spring, Maryland. Having started out in the language industry in



2014 as a translator specializing in research report translation, she branched out into entertainment audiovisual translation in 2018 and has completed over 600 files as a subtitler and quality controller. She expanded into interpreting in 2022 and is pursuing an advanced entry master's program in translation and interpreting at the Middlebury Institute of International

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AUTOMATION AND QUALITY IN SUBTITLE PRODUCTION

BASED ON SAMEH RAGAB'S PRESENTATION

Sameh Ragab's presentation, "Subtitle Automation and Subtitle Translation: Innovations and Best Practices," focused on how technology is revolutionizing the post-production workflow in audiovisual projects.

Key points and conclusions:

- **Automated Transcription:** Utilizing modern tools such as Subtitle Edit integrated with advanced AI models (for example, Whisper Models, Vosk/Kaldi) and powered by frameworks like PyTorch, NVIDIA CUDA, and FFmpeg, professionals can now generate highly accurate transcriptions for multilingual video content with remarkable efficiency.
- **Enhancing Subtitle Translation:** Once the transcriptions are produced, machine translation engines—such as DeepL, Meta NLLB, and Microsoft Translator—integrated within platforms like Subtitle Edit facilitate seamless translation into various languages.
- **The Vital Role of Human Post-Editing:** While automation dramatically reduces turnaround times and costs, Sameh stressed that human intervention remains essential. Post-editing ensures that linguistic and cultural nuances are preserved, resulting in subtitles that are both precise and accessible to global audiences.

- **Advantages of Automation:**
 - **Efficiency and Speed:** Eliminates tedious manual timestamp adjustments and accelerates workflows.
 - **Scalability:** Makes it feasible to manage large-scale multilingual projects cost-effectively.
 - **Enhanced Accessibility:** Empowers content creators to reach international audiences without compromising message accuracy.

Sameh Ragab's is an ISO 17100 lead auditor and certified translation provider, CAT tools and terminology management expert, UN and World Bank registered translation



vendor, desktop publishing (DTP) specialist, and certified localizer. An international speaker and trainer focusing on the technical side of translation, he has over 30 years of expertise in the translation and localization industry, with a focus on Arabic and Middle Eastern translation, localization, and DTP services. He also trains translators and localizers to excel using the latest CAT and terminology management tools.

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CONCLUSION

BY ANIELLA VIVENZIO

The ATA conference in Portland clearly demonstrated that the future of audiovisual translation rests on the convergence of human creativity and technological innovation.

- Jennifer Ho showed that translators are active contributors to a project from its inception, shaping a story's essence before filming even begins.
- Sijin Xian illustrated how subtitling and interpreting share common ground, each enriching the other's practice.
- Sameh Ragab proved that when automation is integrated with human expertise, the process of creating subtitles becomes both highly efficient and of superior quality.

Together, these insights open new horizons for translation and interpretation, inviting the industry to rethink traditional approaches and positioning professionals as essential players in global storytelling. The conference reaffirmed the sector's commitment to excellence, driving cultural and technological transformation in an increasingly interconnected world.

On behalf of the entire Audiovisual Division Leadership Committee, we look forward to welcoming you in Boston at ATA 66.

Aniella Vivenzio is Vice President of CATI, leading initiatives that have reinvigorated dialogue and spurred innovation in the audiovisual translation industry. Her work at the American Translators



Association has been pivotal in connecting with industry leaders in translation and interpretation. Her collaboration with CCHI in the ATA's Audiovisual Division has strengthened strategic alliances and cultural diversity. Committed to excellence, she works to break down cultural and technological barriers, establishing translation and interpretation as essential tools for global transformation. Her mission is to inspire progress and foster sustainable innovation in our sector.

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