

译风

The ATA Chinese Language Division Newsletter | Fall 2019 | 美国翻译协会中文翻译分会通讯



Good things come to those who wait, and our loyal *Yifeng* 《译风》 readers are no exception. Although this issue has been somewhat delayed from our regular publication cycle (and you will therefore see some out-of-date references, particularly to this year's ATA annual conference), your wait will be rewarded with a wealth of informative articles and engaging experiences shared by our readers and contributors. Join the conversation! Check out the submission guidelines on [page 28](#) or contact content editor [Trevor Cook](#) for more information.

Those who attended the recent ATA annual conference will fondly remember the **CLD's distinguished speaker, Mr. Chen Ji (季晨)**. He says “Hello” to our whole division on [page 5](#), so even those who couldn't attend the conference have a chance to meet him.

On [page 8](#), Vic Xu (许子爵) cuts through the hype to explain what **block chain technology** actually *is* and how it might concretely affect the provision of language services (English-language translation on the same page).

In *15 Minutes with June* on [page 16](#), June introduces us to the impressive translator and interpreter **Bing Qi (祁冰)**, who shares an interesting perspective on his career and meaningful advice for translators and, especially, interpreters of every level.

Next, find out what **literary translator** Kate Costello learned (and earned) from stepping out of her comfort zone to take on **commercial translation** work on [page 21](#).

Finally, Rony Gao (高嵘) rounds us up a review of the **language tutor matchmaking service italki** on

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[page 25](#). He explains how structured instruction from a native speaker of a second language has sharpened his professional skills as an interpreter and shares a particular approach to italki's unique features to get the most out of the service.

Don't forget to check out the **Bulletin Board** on [page 27](#) to see what's happening with your colleagues around the CLD and send in your own brief news for the next issue.

About the Editors

Trevor Cook has enjoyed editing *Yifeng* since the Summer 2018 issue. He is a professional Chinese-to-English translator and offers translation and other linguistic and cultural services through his company Cook Intercultural Services LLC (www.cookintercultural.com). He is interim vice president of Arizona Translators & Interpreters, Inc. (www.atiiinc.org), and likes to meet and work with fellow translators and interpreters locally, nationally, and abroad. Please send him your article submissions, ideas, suggestions, and complaints at trevor@cookintercultural.com.



Editor



Layout Editor

Pearl loves working in pajamas, but also in stylish blazers. For the past ten-plus years, she has translated and interpreted for clients in government, business, and academia. She is a court certified interpreter and holds a degree in conference interpreting from the University of Maryland. Let her know how you enjoyed (or disliked) the newsletter layout at pri.zheng@gmail.com.

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Letter from the CLD Administrator

Pency Tsai | 蔡晓萍

Life is a journey, and it's never a straight line.

The mist lifted and the terrain changed. My fancy white sneakers, with their non-existent tread, felt the friction of the scoria texture of the rock beneath me. A surge of excitement rose within me, and I moved forward, upward toward the peak. As I trudged ahead, the adrenaline started to wear off. The cloud thickened and cloaked the path in front of me.

A pair of hikers descending gave me an out.

"There's nothing to see up there. The clouds cover everything. You won't see the crater, and you can't see the island below."


All valid points and reason enough for this out-of-shape interpreter to call it quits.

Besides, it was getting late. It would take another hour to get to the summit and then another hour to get back to this spot. Add another 90 minutes to get to the bottom and it'd be dark before I made it down.

Needless to say, that was the end of my hike up Mount Pelee, but I'll be back... for sure, at least three hours earlier.

Life always throws things your way and it is your job, as the main player in your game, to navigate through the obstacles to reach your final destination.





It's never a straight line. You will veer off path and go different routes. Sometimes you will find a better route. Sometimes the path leads you to something entirely different. And sometimes that different can be unexpectedly satisfying and the beginning of a new journey.

October is near and it's that time of the year again where we gather together to catch up and meet new kindred spirits. Trevor is off to pursue his new adventure, but Palm Springs beckons to the rest of us—sunny Cali.

This year, our distinguished guest is a martial arts practitioner with an interesting take on the art of interpretation. Be sure to catch his seminar on Saturday afternoon at the conference. He will pull you in with his words and guide you forward with his

practices and experiences. Don't forget to check out our other members who will be speaking in Palm Springs. Their insights may well spark a fire in you, lighting the path down a new road that you didn't expect to see.

I'll see you all soon.

The Bird

Pency Tsai is a court-accredited interpreter currently serving as the CLD Administrator. Translating keeps her mind sharp when she is not interpreting in business, medical, and tribunal settings. She is the owner of VoiceOyster. Contact her at pency@voiceoyster.com



CLD Administrator



A “Hello” from this Year’s CLD

Distinguished Speaker

Ji Chen | 季晨

Pency Tsai, one of the most charming and vivacious ladies to ever grace this planet, with an inimitably infectious laugh matched by a sanguine, refreshingly earthy approach to life and an *unearthly* sense of humour, asked me to say a few words "to our readers and your prospective audience."

I said, "Okay, but what do you think I should say?"

"Oh, just say hi, and introduce yourself."

So, here I am, in a make-believe reality, speaking to an invisible live audience...


Hi, everyone, my name is Ji Chen (季晨). My day job is "staff interpreter of the United Nations." I don't have a night job. I am based in New York.

I have had a few professional incarnations before this one—less a checkered past, more a variegated career. I was a teacher of English and a lexicographer of sorts at my alma mater, Nanjing University. I got my second degree (in educational studies) in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the “Geordieland” of northeast England. When I moved to Hong Kong, I buckled down to some serious translation (to put food on the table) and lexicography (to feed my morbid fascination with words by co-translating the

"4th and greatly expanded edition" of Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

Fast-forward to 1994, and I was in the U.K. working for the BBC World Service (radio, that is) and then BBC World (the British answer to CNN, for want of a better analogy), as presenter, translator, producer, and editor (doubling as studio handyman/electrician, which we all did). I presented and produced a few reasonably successful programs, including *English of Current Affairs*, British and American Literature, and *Popular Science*.

During that time, I was also temping four days a week at the then-leading oriental language service provider in the country, Mitaka Ltd. I was the only in-house linguist in the company's nascent Chinese department, handling everything from translation, proofreading, editing, and freelance resources management to interpretation... On my watch, Mitaka quickly established itself as *the* leading provider of Chinese language services in the U.K. with a fast-growing clientele. And I was known in the industry as "the Ji factor." I was tempted, and persuaded by many, to start my own business. But, I didn't have the guts to take the plunge. I succumbed to the nagging whisper of trepidation: What if, God forbid, my



business took a nosedive and I had to lay off my staff? What was I going to say to them? (I stayed a sole proprietor throughout the intervening years, churning out "primary products," until I joined the UN full-time.)

The next milestone was the year 1997. I added simultaneous interpreting (SI) to my portfolio and became one of the most frequently hired conference interpreters on the roster of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. How I became an SI is an interesting but long story. I wrote a WeChat blog two years ago, on the anniversary of my first ever SI job. If you are curious, just search for "bilingualgoodies" in WeChat, find the account 双语隽妙, do a search with the keyword *Bloomberg*, and Bob's your uncle!

From 2001 onward, my SI work picked up, pushing translation to the back burner. I worked across continents and across sectors, for an eclectic mix of clients. Just to give you an idea: in February 2004 (it was a leap year, so February had 29 days), I did 24 days of SI. At one point, I was very close to leaving my profession and becoming a soccer agent—another long story that I have yet to write about. That didn't work out, so I went back to SI, a sort of homecoming for me, and it felt good, it felt right.

By 2009, I had grown tired of globetrotting,

so I joined the AIIC and relocated my domicile to Geneva, Switzerland, working exclusively for UN specialized agencies—WHO, ITU, WIPO, the lot.

In 2014, tired, again, of freelancing, I sat and passed the UN Language Competitive Examination for Chinese interpretation and joined the UNHQ as staff interpreter in August 2015.

I love my job. I put my heart and soul into what I do. When I am not interpreting, I write bilingual blogs and play with words. I am also into martial arts, Wing Chun (咏春拳) in particular—have been since 1997. I'm still a beginner, and, given my age, forlorn of the hope of ever becoming anything other than a beginner. I'm okay with that. Just like in my SI career, I'm forever a student, forever a beginner. In fact, in my upcoming two-part presentation at the ATA Annual Conference (entitled "Playing the Linguistic Ping-Pong: A UN Interpreter's Perspective" and "Simultaneous Interpreting Is a Tactile Experience"), I'll be talking about, *inter alia*, the parallels between SI and martial arts in the large and Wing Chun in the small.

Thank you for listening. I guess I'll be seeing some of you in Palm Springs next month! I very much look forward to it. *Zai jian!*

Mr. Ji majored in English at Nanjing University and later became an English teacher and lexicographer there. His abiding passion for language in general and for interlingual communication in particular has teleported him about, like something of an unstoppable self-driving juggernaut, into such 'domiciles' as Hong Kong, London, Geneva, and New York, where he counts among his clients the likes of Oxford University Press, the BBC World Service, BBC World, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Inns of Court, the City, leading overseas-listed Chinese companies, the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, and UN offices and agencies. His working life spans more than three decades and has been dominated by translation and interpreting, to which he is eternally indebted for putting food on his table and unfading joy in his heart. He currently works as full-time conference interpreter at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, a job that provides a catch-all conduit for his professional knowledge and skills, presents no end of adrenaline-pumping challenges, imposes a perennially precipitous learning curve, and sates his do-gooder compulsions.





LIC 语言公链区域总监 Vic Xu:

区块链将重塑语言服务行业

How Blockchain Technology will Reshape Language Services

许子爵 | Vic Xu


Translated by Trevor Cook

2009 年，比特币诞生，随着人们对比特币的关注度不断提高，作为比特币底层技术的区块链走入人们的视野。

对于很多人来说，区块链神秘且深奥。但归根到底，区块链是一种去中心化(decentralized)的数据存储方式。简单来说，区块链=区块+链。每一个区块都包含个体存储的信息，无数个区块连在一起，就形成了一条链，这就是区块链。如果要修改某一个区块上的信息，则必须同时修改区块链上所有区块的信息，这在技术上是很难实现的，因此它是不可篡改的(Tamper-proof)。同样，如果要修改某一个区块上的信息，则必须让链上所有的区块都认可这种修改，这就是共识机制 (consensus scheme)。

Public interest in the blockchain technology underlying cryptocurrency has been growing since Bitcoin's emergence in 2009.

Although the idea of a “blockchain” may seem a profound mystery to many, at its root, the technology is a decentralized form of data storage, a simple structure of “blocks” connected by a “chain.” Each block stores its own piece of information, and these blocks join together to form the blockchain. If the data in any particular block is to be modified, then the information in all the blocks must be modified at the same time. The practical effect of the technical difficulty of such simultaneous modification is that a blockchain is tamper-proof. Similarly, when the information within a certain block is to be modified, all the other blocks in the chain must acknowledge the modification, an important feature known as the consensus scheme.



举个例子，如果两个人结婚，他们必须到政府机构进行登记，领取结婚证，这才意味着这两个人正式成为夫妻，这种关系才能被承认。在这种模式下，政府机构就是一个中心化的媒介。如果没有政府机构的存在，那么他们必须把结婚这件事告诉这个世界上的每一个人，婚姻关系才能被知道和承认，这显然是不可能做到的。但是区块链技术能解决这一难题。他们只需要把结婚这件事写进一个区块，一旦区块形成并且被确认，那么其他的区块都会被通知，这样区块链上所有的人都知道他们结婚的事实并予以核实承认，而这一切，都将在短时间内被完成。如果全世界的人都在这条区块链上，等于全世界的人都知道他们结婚，政府机构也就没有存在的必要了，这就是去中心化。

Consider a simple example of how this might work in practice. When two people are married, they must present themselves at a government office and receive a marriage certificate before they become husband and wife and the relationship is formally acknowledged. In this common model of marriage administration, the government office is a *centralized* intermediary. If the government office did not exist, then the couple would have to inform every person in the world of their marriage before it could be universally known and acknowledged. Such *decentralized* notification, of course, would be impossible.

Blockchain technology can overcome the barriers to decentralized recognition. The couple would only need to write their marriage into a block, and then, as soon as that block was formed and recognized, all the other blocks on the chain would be notified, and everyone on the blockchain would verify and recognize the new marriage. This whole process would be completed instantaneously, and if everyone in the world were on this blockchain, then everyone in the world would become aware of the couple's marriage, and the existence of the original government office would no longer be necessary—decentralization of marriage administration would be achieved.



事实上，区块链走过了 3 个发展阶段。区块链 1.0 是比特币的发明和应用。也正是由于比特币去中心化的特点，人们发现了比特币背后的区块链技术。区块链 2.0 是以以太坊

(Ethereum) 为代表的智能合约。当交易的行为满足交易双方事先设定的条件时，交易即可被启动，不需要第三方的参与，这就是智能合约。区块链 3.0 是区块链技术在不同行业的广泛应用。在未来的 5 年内，不同行业的区块链应用将迎来爆发式的增长，区块链的去中心化将为高度依赖中间媒介的语言服务行业带来颠覆性的改变。

总而言之，区块链将对全球各行业带来巨大变革，这是已经得到广泛认同的历史趋势。


区块链对语言服务行业会带来什么影响？我们可以发现，区块链的每一个特性，都可在语言服务行业得以恰到好处的应用。企业如果能运

Blockchain technology development has occurred in three major phases. Blockchain 1.0 was the development and application of Bitcoin, when the public first discovered the technology behind Bitcoin thanks to its special decentralized nature.

Blockchain 2.0 arrived with the development of smart contracts, such as those enabled by the Ethereum platform. A smart contract can automatically initiate a transaction as soon as the conditions of performance previously agreed to by parties to the transaction are satisfied, without the need for involvement of a third party.

Blockchain 3.0 refers to broad adoption of blockchain technology throughout various industries and is expected to explode in popularity in the next five years. The decentralized nature of the blockchain will surely disrupt the language services industry that is currently so reliant on centralized intermediaries.

The potential for blockchain technology to transform industries is broadly acknowledged and anticipated. How will this transformation affect the language services industry? Each of blockchain technology's unique characteristics, as described below, can be applied to specifically benefit the language services industry in a different way. If an



用好区块链这一技术，将全面破解千百年来一直困扰语言服务行业的难题。

1. 区块链的永久记录 (Permanent record) 和

不可篡改 (Tamper-proof)。在目前的翻译行业中，译员能接到什么样的工作取决于翻译公司对这名译员的认可程度。这是因为译员对翻译公司的依赖程度高，翻译公司觉得某个译员的水平高，这个译员就能够得到高回报的翻译工作。因此，译员很难接到翻译公司以外的订单，最根本的原因是外界缺乏对该译员的了解，使得有时高水平的译员只能无奈做低报酬的工作，对于译员来说极不公平。如果译员的个人档案能够被公正客观的记录在区块链上，由于区块链的不可篡改性，译员的信息将更加透明可靠，这将有利于更多的语言服务需求方找到符合条件的译员，拓宽译员获取翻译工作的渠道。

organization can master the use of blockchain technology, it will be able to smash through many of the barriers that have historically constrained the language services industry.

1. **A tamper-proof, permanent record.**

In today's translation industry, the kind of work a translator receives is driven by translation companies' experience with the translator. This situation arises because translators are reliant on translation companies, and if a translation company thinks a certain translator provides a high level of product, then that translator can obtain well-compensated translation work. However, this model makes it difficult for the translator to receive business from clients outside of those translation companies, simply because those outside of this loop lack the means to learn of the translator. Thus, high-quality translators are sometimes limited to only poorly-compensated work, which is terribly unfair to the translator.

If a translator's personal file could be impartially and objectively stored on a tamper-proof blockchain, then such transparent and reliable information about the translator would enable more language services customers to find translators who meet their needs, thereby expanding the channels through which translators obtain translation work.


2. 区块链的可追溯性。对于译员和翻译公司而言，语料 (corpus) 是一笔珍贵的资源，尤其对于 AI (人工智能) 和翻译引擎技术公司而言，这将极大的优化他们的翻译引擎。但这笔珍贵的资源在交付后即进入沉睡状态。译员和翻译公司不会主动将语料进行分享，因为这并不能使他们得益。如果能在不泄漏语料信息的情况下对语料的所有权进行确认，一旦语料被翻译技术公司匹配并使用，语料所有者每次均可获得对应的奖励。一方面，这将鼓励更多的语料所有者对语料所有权进行确认，另一方面，随着语料规模的增多，翻译技术公司的翻译引擎将得到极大的优化，从而促进整个语言服务行业的发展。

3. 区块链的点对点交易和智能合约。翻译行业是中心化程度极高的行业，译员高度依赖中介机构，使得自身的收益大大缩水。通过引入区块链点对点交易以及智能合约，符合条件的译

2. **Traceability.** A corpus or glossary is a precious resource of both translators and translation companies, particularly companies that employ artificial intelligence (AI) and translation engines that are readily optimized by corpus training. However, these precious resources go “dormant” immediately after they are delivered: translators and translation companies will not willingly share corpora because such sharing cannot benefit them.

If the ownership rights to a corpus could be secured and the leakage of valuable corpus data prevented, then corpus owners could obtain royalties every time a translation technology company used their corpora. This would encourage more corpus owners to affirm the right of corpus ownership, and, as the general availability of corpora increased, the translation engines of translation technology companies could be optimized, thereby promoting the growth of the language services industry as a whole.

3. **Point-to-point transactions and smart contracts.** Within the highly centralized translation industry, translators must rely on a structure of intermediaries that greatly reduces their own income potential. Blockchain technology can decrease their reliance on this system of intermediaries. Qualified translators could



员可被自动匹配到相应的语言服务需求方，译员可获得来自合作中介公司和个人圈子以外的商业订单，降低对中介机构的依赖。

4. 区块链的通证 (token) 激励机制。在语言服务行业中，译员、客户、翻译引擎公司，技术公司等主体相互独立，高度分散。区块链的通证既具有使用及支付的功能，也具有升值的潜力，因此被区块链企业用于生态的激励。在语言服务行业的生态系统中，各方使用通证换取相应的资源或服务。随着生态系统规模的扩大，通证的价值会不断升高，通证的持有者可选择在数字货币交易所 (cryptocurrency exchange) 将通证卖出换取法定货币，或继续持有通证作为投资。

5. 区块链的共识机制。在翻译行业中，语言是难以被量化的，译员的能力和诚信水平只能由翻译公司来认可，缺乏统一的评判标准。区块链去中心化的共识机制，使得译员能被合作过

use the blockchain's capacity for point-to-point transactions and smart contracts to automatically match with appropriate language services customers and obtain business from outside of their network of intermediary companies and personal networks.

4. **The token incentive structure.** Within the highly diffuse language services industry, translators, end customers, translation engine companies, and technology companies are all independent entities. Since the “tokens” produced by a blockchain have inherent utility, can be exchanged for payment, and have the potential to grow in value, they can be used as an incentive by organizations within the blockchain ecosystem. Parties within the language services ecosystem could exchange tokens for desired resources or services. Token value would increase as the ecosystem expands, and token holders could choose to exchange them for legal currency through a cryptocurrency exchange or continue to hold them as an investment.

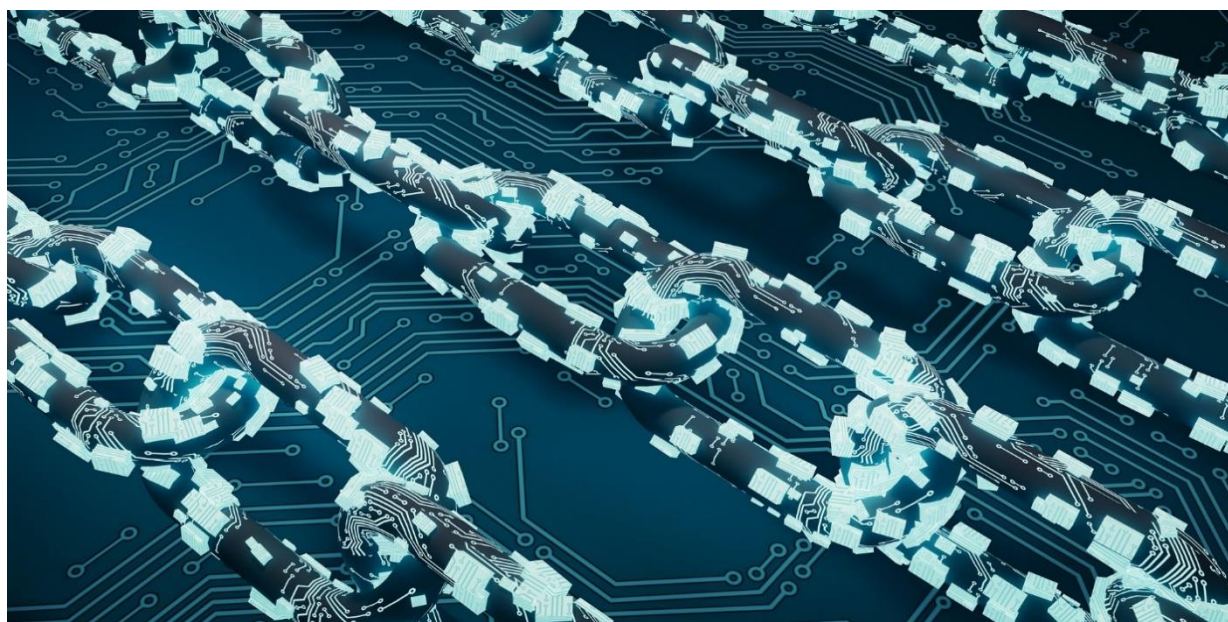
5. **The blockchain's consensus mechanism.** Language is difficult to quantify in the translation industry; only individual translation companies can recognize a translator's ability and integrity, and there is no centralized standard for evaluation. The decentralized consensus mechanism of the blockchain could enable

的公司以及圈子内的其他译员所评价，译员的能力水平和诚信水平将更加透明和客观，使得译员的个人档案更加真实可靠。

如果说互联网的诞生是第三次工业革命，那么区块链的诞生将会是第四次工业革命。区块链技术将从根本上重塑语言服务行业，让个体的价值得到最大的发挥，让资源最大程度的在行业内得以共享。相信未来会涌现出更多运用区块链技术的企业，为语言服务行业带来更多变化和发展。

translators to be evaluated by client companies and other translators in their network, increasing the transparency and objective assessment of individual translators' skills and increasing the reliability of their personal records.

If the birth of the Internet initiated a third Industrial Revolution, then the arrival of blockchain technology marks the start of a fourth Industrial Revolution. This technology will fundamentally reshape the language services industry by maximizing the value of individual participants and allowing resources to be shared within the industry to the greatest extent possible. I believe that in the future, more blockchain technology organizations will emerge and bring further change and growth to the language services industry.



Vic Xu(许子爵)在 LIC Chain (www.licchain.io) 担任区域主任，他毕业于新加坡国立大学 (National University of Singapore) 法律系并取得硕士学位。毕业后，Vic 进入一家新加坡上市金融集团并在两年的时间内成为公司首席法务顾问 (Chief legal counsel)，带领法律团队完成公司多起海外收购兼并，提供法律合规 (Legal compliance) 方面的建议。

文章截稿后，Vic 已转往传神 (LIC 的母公司) 服务 (www.transn.com)。

Vic Xu is a regional director at LIC Chain (www.licchain.io). Within two years of graduation with a Masters in Law from the National University of Singapore, he became chief legal counsel of a listed financial firm. While there, he led the legal team through the completion of multiple international mergers and acquisitions and provided counsel on legal compliance.

After this article was finalized, Vic took a new position at LIC's parent company Transn (www.transn.com).



Translator Trevor Cook is a professional Chinese-to-English translator and current editor of *Yifeng* and hopes to see more Chinese-language content submitted. If you would like to submit an article in Chinese or demonstrate your translation skill in the publicly available *Yifeng* (in either direction of Chinese < > English), please contact him at trevor@cookintercultural.com.

Fifteen Minutes with June

译者访谈录

Junqiao Chen | 陈俊巧

Interview with Qi Bing | 祁冰




Our lovely Pency has discovered a treasure in the field of interpreting and translation for this month's interview: Mr Bing Qi (祁冰). Mr. Qi is an ATA-certified English-to-Chinese translator and is certified by the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) as an English-to-Chinese translator, Chinese-to-English translator and Mandarin court interpreter. He is also fully accredited as a Mandarin court interpreter by Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General. Let's welcome Mr. Qi Bing!

June: It's great to meet you! I have heard so much about you from Pency. Would you like to introduce yourself to our *Yifeng* readers? If you would, please make it memorable so our readers will never forget you!

Mr. Qi: Although I meet many excellent and talented colleagues and have developed great friendship and relationships, I actually have much room for improvement in the area of self-introductions, as I suspect my opening line is less than memorable. In this line of work, we meet people every day, not just colleagues, and there are those with strong people skills that we can always learn from.

June: It seems we've discovered another characteristic of this "treasure"—modesty. I am sure our readers are eager to learn about your career history in translation and interpretation.

Mr. Qi: I started serious translation in 2000, when I was away from home, literally without a penny to my name and desperately looking for a job in order to survive. I had previously taught English at a college, and since I thought I was "strong" in English (Mandarin Chinese is



my first language), translation seemed a natural choice at the time. Armed, so to speak, with this deceptively natural misconception, I started sending resumes to translation agencies, gradually received some assignments, and very quickly learned some lessons in the language profession, one of which was that translation could be much harder than I imagined.

Before taking the leap into serious translation, I had done some sporadic translation/interpretation work, mostly as a result of people approaching me for free translation, people who shared my misconception that a decent command of two languages makes for a qualified translator.

June: I have heard and personally experienced a lot of similar stories. We both agree that translation is not just a matter of speaking two languages. Would you like to share how you overcame the difficulty of translation to master the skill?

Mr. Qi: I have this passion about languages. Over the years, I have been working quite diligently on continuously upgrading my language skills in various ways, including in those areas constantly emphasized for any student learning English as a second language: reading, listening, and speaking.

I read extensively. I read newspapers to keep up-to-date and a wide range of magazines for exposure to the language of different fields. *The Economist* and *The New*

Yorker are two of my favorites.


Being an interpreter has turned me into a compulsory listener. I would subconsciously “overhear” other people’s conversations all the time, though in a non-intrusive manner, trying sometimes to reproduce the conversation by shadowing or interpreting. I also enjoy watching quality documentaries, such as BBC and Discovery productions.

As for speaking, my current position as a court interpreter has, in a certain sense, done me a great favor by forcing me to speak up and speak in two languages constantly, which is great and valuable practice. I prefer to think of interpreting as swimming. With proper instruction, the best way of learning is to jump into the pool and start practicing.

Of course, this is just my personal experience. What has worked for me may not work for others. I’m sure there are different routes to the same destination.

June: I like your comparison of interpreting to swimming. Practice made perfect, and now you are very accomplished. What do you consider to be some important milestones in your career as an interpreter and translator?

Mr. Qi: There are memorable moments and events. Over a couple of weeks in the summer of 1999, I was interpreting for a Canadian company as a freelancer, which



was the first time I did serious commercial interpreting. It's fair to say I made many mistakes and learned from those mistakes and that short experience. I remember the first time I translated a book and saw it published. There was the first certification I obtained. Also, in 2014, I was hired as a court interpreter, which was for me a major milestone. I have benefited a lot from this job, have met and learned from brilliant colleagues, and enjoyed my work.

June: We are all the same when we start out, and it is very hard in the beginning. But the rainbow will only show up after some pouring rain.

So, I learned of you from Pency, the “big boss” Administrator of the Chinese Language Division (CLD). If I may ask, are you already a member of or will you consider joining this family?

Mr. Qi: Thanks to big boss Pency ☺. She has contributed hugely to the promotion of our beloved profession and is a highly competent and capable colleague, a truly great asset in the language profession. Although I'm a member, I have not been deeply involved in the CLD. I have been told of the great work it has done over the years. It has effectively raised the awareness of our profession and ATA certification. I sincerely appreciate the great job and efforts made by everyone that has been involved in and contributed to the CLD.

June: The CLD welcomes you anytime! You mentioned that you started serious translation in 2000, 19 years ago already! Have you ever regretted embarking on this journey of translation/interpretation? Share with us.

Mr. Qi: I did experience ups and downs, although I guess that happens in every career. The language profession is a noble one. It takes honest work and a strong work ethic to do a decent job. A lot of the time we interpreters are the only ones that are aware of exactly what is going on. It is up to us to help with communication. There are moments where my work is valued and appreciated, but sometimes frustrations arise when our hard and decent work is undervalued. Overall, this is a great job. It opens a window for me to see the world I would not have the opportunity to see otherwise. Working in court and hearing all the stories there makes me appreciate life, and working “in the middle” of a two-way conversation has taught me to view the same experience from different perspectives.

June: This is absolutely invaluable career advice for all beginners. What else would you say to the newer generation of translators and interpreters?


Mr. Qi: This is one of the rare occasions where being considered the older generation is a plus ☺.

In a perfect world, I might encourage colleagues to respect this job by saying no to less-than-satisfactory working conditions such as low hourly rates. In reality, we do the job “to the best of our ability and skills.” But, we can respect our job and treat it as a profession instead of just some work that brings in the next paycheck. I’ve met colleagues with a strong work ethic and who are highly attentive to detail, who prepare and produce almost impeccable documents in terms of both content and format, and who set high standards for themselves even when no one is requiring them to do so. They have earned my highest respect.

I would wish to see a world where

professional standards are established for translation and interpretation, because that is the ultimate way for this job to be recognized as a profession. Translators and interpreters have an uphill battle to fight to achieve that recognition. We need to educate the general public about the value of this job. We need to change the overly simplified and misleading definition that “language is a tool,” which it is not—far from it! Instead, language is the collection of all the information in the world that is known to human beings, without exception. More often than not, translators and interpreters are expected to know everything even though clients don’t realize they hold that expectation. By making the general public understand the essentials of





this job, we are doing ourselves a favor. We translators and interpreters are the stakeholders in this profession. We are in the best position to voice our concerns and make our voices heard, as we are, after all, probably the only ones that are fully aware of what is happening, linguistically and professionally, when we translate or interpret.

June: Very powerful conclusion! I think our readers will agree that you are a treasure they will want to be sure to hear from! Thank you to our readers for reading, and I will see you next time.

June, our interviewer, is a professionally trained Chinese/English interpreter and translator with a master's degree from the University of Maryland. While located in the greater D.C. area for the past five years, she has assisted with mutually beneficial exchanges between Chinese and U.S. government officials and between educational institutions and private companies, helping them to establish enduring relations and achieve concrete goals.





For Love or for Money?

A Literary Translator's Reflections on Stepping Out of Her Comfort Zone into the World of Commercial Translation

Kate Costello


This fall I saw a friend who I hadn't seen for the last few years, and we exchanged notes on our experiences breaking into the literary translation world. I congratulated her on the publication of her first full-length novel and her being featured in some great literary journals. She told me that even with this level of recognition, she still struggled to earn a livable wage from her translation work. While it is almost a truism in the literary translation world that translation is a passion rather than a vocation, I was still surprised that someone so talented and so busy could still be struggling to make ends meet.

I commiserated with her stories about not being paid until a translation is published (which can be months after it is submitted) and told her how I had started to venture into commercial projects in search of a more stable income. She expressed astonishment at my ability to switch back and forth between literary and commercial projects and confessed that, "Literary translation has spoiled me. I am afraid that if I do anything other than literary translation, I won't stay close enough to the text."

That seems to be a feeling shared by many literary translators, that in some way one's

training as a literary translator would compromise the end result in a 'non-literary' project. While it does indeed take a great degree of self-awareness to switch back and forth among different types of translation, in my experience, commercial translation has been an extremely enriching and valuable complement to my literary projects. Commercial translation provides not only a degree of financial stability that allows me to pursue creative projects without the anxiety of whether I will make rent but also unique opportunities for continual language learning that would be hard or even impossible to replicate under other conditions.

Taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded by translation requires a mental reset. As a PhD student and a literary translator, I constantly fear that my language is not good enough, that I am not sensitive enough to nuance, that I might miss something. If I can leverage this anxiety to view translation projects as a language learning opportunity, then non-literary translation becomes a paid language class. I can't think of a more efficient form of language learning than a translation project just slightly outside my comfort zone.



As second language learners, we all get to a point where it becomes very difficult to sit down and force ourselves to learn new vocabulary. We get comfortable, and we get a bit lazy. Standard techniques like listening to the news or watching TV series can be great if you have the motivation to look up and write down new words, but without proactive participation these are mostly feel-good activities rather than real opportunities for growth. With translation, on the other hand, once you accept a project you are obliged to complete it by the deadline—and, with the way things usually go, it's probably a tight one. When facing externally imposed requirements of both speed and accuracy, you will learn new words and usages—and you will probably even remember them.

Commercial translation is an especially valuable resource for literary translators who live in an area where they have limited opportunities to use their source language in day-to-day life. While Chinese-to-English literary translators based in China or Taiwan hear Chinese being spoken every day, the rest of us have to rely on our previous experience, or things like TV and movies that mimic real conversations but don't necessarily mirror them perfectly. This is especially the case for those of us who translate contemporary fiction and need to produce up-to-date and natural sounding dialog.

I would even take this a step further and

argue that commercial translation offers an edge to literary translators based in the Chinese-speaking world. I recently signed on to a multiple-year poetry translation project. I knew that the poet had several good options in selecting his translator, and I was curious to know why he picked me. When I asked him, he replied “你的语感最好” (“You have the best feel for the language”), which both shocked and flattered me.

As someone who hasn't lived in a Chinese speaking environment in nearly six years, it seemed counterintuitive to me that I should be most in touch with the language. Yet, on reflection, it does seem that the elusive and fleeting 语感 perhaps is best approached from a distance. Being visibly not-Chinese, there are certain situations to which I will never be privy, even if I live in a Chinese environment for a long time. Commercial translation offers a window into worlds in which non-Chinese will never be able to participate.

A recent project sticks out in my memory—I was working on a market research survey and encountered some amazing cases of colorful language penned by frustrated consumers. They vented their anger in streams of expletives too crass for TV and too lowbrow to appear in popular literature. Such an authentic expression of anger can almost only be captured in this context—when the consumer is so angry that they forget there will be a reader on

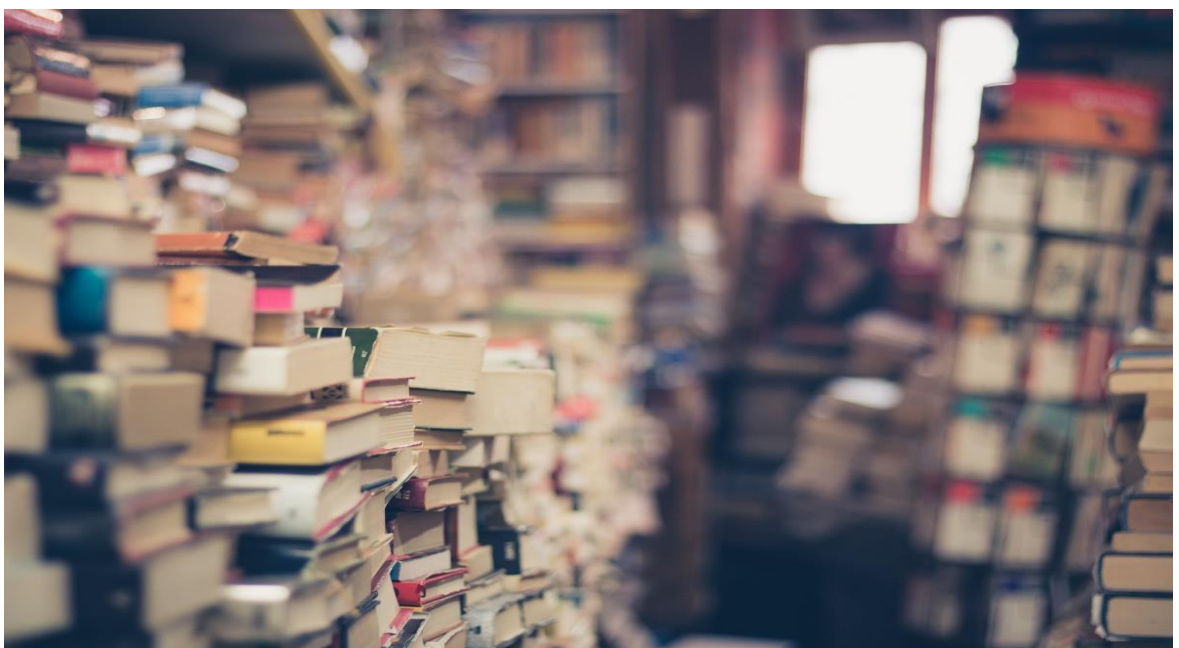


the other end of the line. Authors strive to capture just this sort of fit of passion in their dialog, and an intuitive feeling for this type of outburst allows me as a translator to channel a similar energy in English.

I specialize in avant-garde poetry, which on paper is about as different from market research surveys as you could hope to get. And yet, the raw, unpolished responses that consumers churn out are some of the freshest and most inspiring pieces of language that I encounter. There is something endearing about seeing language produced without the slightest air of pretention, getting a glimpse of a truly living language, in all of its dynamism and authenticity. To understand the nuances of rhythm and syntax as they appear in everyday life, it's sometimes necessary to turn to language produced when nothing is at stake, when the speaker's guard is at its lowest and he is just an ordinary guy with a

cellphone.

In an industry like translation, where we spend most of the day in our own heads, there is a danger of focusing in on our specialization to the extent that we limit our opportunities for growth. Sometimes the skills that we need to cultivate can be found in unusual places. Translation can be a solitary enterprise, and literary translation even more so. Given this reality, some of my proudest accomplishments have come from serendipitous moments that no amount of planning could have prepared me for. I never imagined that I would enjoy translating market research surveys as much as I do, and even less that doing so could be such a satisfying and enriching complement to my literary translation practice. So, the next time that someone asks you to take on a project that is outside of your normal range, say yes—you never know what could be waiting for you.





Kate Costello, 作者、译者, 牛津大学在读博士, 研究课题为先锋派、实验派文学。Kate 的翻译作品包括金仁顺、素弦、瓦兰的短篇小说、诗歌等等。她的译作发表在《华盛顿广场书评》(Washington Square Review)、《中华人文》、《洛杉矶书评中华频道》, 以及《亚洲季刊》。她的作品还曾被收录在 2018 年的首尔国际作家节作品选集。

Kate Costello is a writer, translator, and PhD candidate at the University of Oxford, specializing in avant-garde and experimental Chinese literature. She has translated short stories and poems by Renshun Jin (金仁顺), Su Xian (素弦), and Wa Lan (瓦兰). Kate is a member of the American Translators Association, the American Literary Translators Association, the Authors Guild and PEN America. Her translations have appeared in *Washington Square Review*, *Chinese Arts and Letters*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books China Channel*, and *Quarterly Asia*, as well as the 2018 Seoul International Writer's Festival anthology.



Resources Roundup

A Column for CLD members to review materials helpful to translators and interpreters

Rony Gao | 高嵘

italki (www.italki.com), a language learning website.

Italki is a marketplace for language learners and tutors to find each other and get matched up. In a world overwhelmed by AI-powered language learning apps, human-to-human connection is becoming ever more valuable. Sometimes we just need the right platform to find the right (human) tutor, and italki is exactly that. It is worth mentioning that italki only serves as a marketplace. Actual lessons usually take place on Skype.

In the past few years, I have used italki to

- 1) Recruit new students as a Mandarin tutor;
- 2) Try to learn French with native French speakers (though my efforts at French finally resulted in endless struggle and setbacks); and
- 3) Find native English speakers who can help me perfect my pronunciation in English, a goal that is more relevant to my career as a professional Chinese/English interpreter with English as my “B” language.


My experience with italki has been positive in all three endeavors. In this review, I will mainly focus on my experience with 3) and recommend italki as a way to enlist private

language tutors who are affordable, flexible, and usually quite good.

Let us start with the misconception that an interpreter can only benefit from working with highly qualified trainers who are also interpreters of the student’s language pair. In my experience, this is far from the truth. Yes, receiving training tailored to one’s language pair is essential in developing interpreting techniques. Nonetheless, there is still a great deal that an interpreter (like any advanced speaker of a second language) can learn by having lessons with a native speaker.

On italki, you can find either “Professional Teachers” (more qualified but more expensive) or “Community Tutors” (cheaper and more abundant) who are native speakers with your preferred accent and cultural background. Of course, you must perform due diligence to screen and select tutors based on their experience, specialty, teaching style and availability. All the italki tutors I have ever learned from have been very impressive.

Upon starting a lesson, let your tutor know that you are training as an interpreter, and ask them to hold you against the highest bar possible for non-native speakers; your overall English proficiency is likely much



better than their typical second-language client.

As you shop around for a tutor, I recommend that you take advantage of two delightful features that make italki so much fun.

First, most teachers and tutors include a short video as part of their profile, in which they talk about their life and teaching method. These videos can give you a good sense of whether this person is a good fit for you. Personally, I felt so impressed and inspired by some of the multilingual teachers that I think italki is worth checking

out just for the sake of watching these profile videos.

Second, italki has a feature called instant-tutoring. You can search for tutors who are instantly ready to give a lesson. If you ever look to squeeze a short lesson into a busy schedule, this feature will come in handy.

Italki will connect you with a global community of language lovers. For those looking to learn or improve any language at any level, I highly recommend that you give it a try!

Rony is a self-proclaimed nerd and language lover based in Toronto. He takes pleasure in bridging the cultural gap between Chinese speakers and English speakers. Rony holds a Master of Conference Interpreting degree from Glendon College, Canada, and became an ATA-certified Chinese-to-English translator in 2018.



Bulletin Board



Tingting Qin, an English/Chinese translator and interpreter based in Kansas City, passed the court interpreter certification exam in Missouri and became the only certified Mandarin court interpreter in the state. She is also a CCHI certified medical interpreter and a conference interpreter. Her next goal is to pass the ATA exam.

Congratulations to those who have received ATA certification since our last issue!

English into Chinese: Yunteng Zhang, Chaofeng (Joseph) Li, Wanshu Zhu, Yixiong Zhu, and Weishun Jiang.

Chinese into English: Aaron Hebenstreit, Renee Wang, Xiaoqing Chen, Shaoli Gu, Laura Brown, Jingyi Wang, Bingxia Yu, Robert Hopkins, Yongmei Liu, Liming Pals, and Trevor Cook (*Yifeng* 《译风》 content editor).



A large group of local translators and interpreters gathered on 28 September for the 15th annual conference of the Arizona Translators & Interpreters (ATI), including the *Yifeng* 《译风》 content editor, Trevor Cook, who also serves as ATI's interim vice president. This photo was provided by ATA member and former Spanish Language Division administrator Francesca Samuel.

Submission Guidelines

Suggested Lengths:

Bulletin Board announcements: Up to 40

English words | Up to 100 Chinese characters

Letters: 300 English words | 500 Chinese characters

Articles: 500 to 1,500 English words | 500 to 3,000 Chinese characters

Resources Roundup: 600 English words | 1200 Chinese characters

Bulletin Board: Up to 50 English words | 100 Chinese characters

Submission Format: Size 12

Font: Garamond

Paragraphing: no indent, single space

The Editor will work with you to prepare your submission for publication. Opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors. Send submissions and inquiries to trevor@cookintercultural.com

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