

Making Connections: An Interview with an Afghani Interpreter

by Haidar Al-Sara and Laura Rojo MacLeod



Flag of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
adopted August 19, 2013

Message from NETA President Diana Rhudick

Dear NETAns,

The moment NETA member Haidar Al-Sara read in the *Boston Globe* about the former Afghani military interpreter moving to Massachusetts, he notified the board of the interpreter's arrival. Haidar himself had been an interpreter for the US military in Iraq, and was truly disappointed in the level of support he received from this country's government after arrival. Determined not to have another colleague struggle as he did, he has been tirelessly supporting Sibghatullah Nooristani (Sabib) and his family ever since.

If you would like to help Sabib and his family adjust to their new life, please write to [Haidar](#) as an intermediary, or [Sabib](#) directly, and ask what you can contribute. Thank you!

As engaged language professionals, we value rich communication. In this crisis-ridden world, we try to find the best words, oral or written, to not only highlight the rendered material, but to foster peace, understanding, and community. Now more than ever, the urgent task and art of the skilled interpreter and translator is to build cultural bridges worldwide. In the following interview that NETAns Laura MacLeod and Haidar Al-Sara conducted with former Afghani interpreter Sabib, NETA aims to be the bridge between two worlds, two countries far apart but close enough in the person of Sabib and his life experience.

— Laura MacLeod, NETA News Editor and NETA Board Member

We sincerely welcome Sabib to NETA! (*Salam alaikum!*)

Haidar: What are the challenges you are facing here in the US and in Massachusetts?

Sabib: Life just started from zero. I will definitely have challenges during the first adjustment to a new life here and I hope problems will gradually be overcome.

Laura: What's your American Dream as an interpreter? Or what are your expectations in this country?

S: To have a good education for myself and for my kids; for a better future to serve both nations.

L: What's your favorite area and task as an interpreter?

S: Verbal and nonverbal translation either with the military or other organizations; I always prefer to work in any area or organization with honesty to achieve organizational goals.

L: Is there a special author, place, character, time, event, nature that inspires you?

S: Definitely working in great places and nature will impact my inspiration.

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Pecha Kucha, NETA Style

NETA's Summer Social Event, July 25, 2020

Reviewed by Marian Comenetz

These being exceptional times, NETA's annual summer picnic, a long-standing tradition, yielded to a brand-new virtual gathering inspired by an activity that originated in Japan. Its name, Pecha Kucha, is a transliteration of a Japanese term meaning "chit-chat." Per strictly prescribed Pecha Kucha rules, a presenter shows 20 slides about a given topic for 20 seconds of commentary each, thus each presentation lasts under seven minutes. The slides move automatically, necessitating that the speaker be concise while covering all of their content. The session passes from one speaker to the next, providing attendees with exposure to a wide variety of topics and a specific sense of each.

In considering this type of activity for NETA's purposes, we decided on distinct modifications even as we attempted to maintain Pecha Kucha's flavor. We set a five-minute limit for presentations and introduced a 10-minute discussion period to follow so as to foster interaction among participants. We also stipulated that topics should reflect an interest or hobby other than T & I. As it happened, six NETAns stepped forward to present, the perfect number for a two-hour activity! Some presenters chose to show slides, some did not. The variety of topics was stunning as was the solidity of each presentation. Lesley, our vice president and tech guru, provided training in advance, with the result that everything flowed smoothly.

There's no way to do full justice to what emerged, but here's a brief overview of each presentation.

• Zentangling – Antje Ruppert

Antje referred to zentangling as yoga for the brain. It is an art activity that begins with card stock and some basic supplies, but it can be done by anyone, including those who see themselves as non-artists. It is based on patterns arranged at random and decorated as only whimsy dictates. As Antje said, "There are no rules. Anything goes!" The results are greatly varied and "amazing." They can be used for decorations, signs, gifts, and more. Above all, though, zentangling is intriguing and fulfilling. It is just the thing after a long day's work at the computer. Antje's enthusiasm about this activity was palpable.

• The Second Line Social Aid and Pleasure Society Brass Band – Stephanie Newton

Steph has been playing the clarinet and the saxophone for about 15 years. Some time ago she joined a brass band that largely plays New Orleans-style music but is based right here in Somerville. She especially likes three things about her band: 1) It has no one leader; rather, it functions with peer leadership. 2) It is activist, performing for social justice organizations to bring joy and energy to their causes. 3) It is intergenerational, with 30 members ranging in age from their 20s to their 70s. The band has a repertoire of about 35 songs, all of which they perform without music—a remarkable feat! And this band has created the Honk Festival, which brings a number of other socially active bands to Somerville each October. Stephanie's word for all of the above: "liberating!"

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Photo Credit: Philip Seger

Pecha Kucha, NETA Style

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• Rock painting – Marineti Matos

Marineti, who refers to herself as an artisan (“a skilled worker who makes things with her hands”), is based on Cape Cod. Whenever possible, she heads to the beach, where she gathers rocks of all shapes and sizes as well as some driftwood. Then in her workshop, she paints the rocks in a large range of colors and mounts them together, using special glue. Her output is extremely varied. She’ll produce diverse flowers or she’ll make a candle holder out of rocks. Some of her pieces are functional, others simply decorative. She displays them at crafts fairs.



Screen shot: NETA Pecha Kucha

During her spirited presentation, Marineti said she can create almost anything in rock. She is inspired by pictures. The beach is the source of her material, with rocks and water giving out energy. A friend once said that Marineti “makes rocks smile.”

• Bavarian and Greek history – Ilse Andrews

Ilse was born in Munich and as a young woman, always admired the neoclassical style of buildings there. In her 30s she spent two years in Greece with her husband. During the pandemic, while confined to her apartment in her assisted living facility, she has gone back to her bookshelf, and for her education and entertainment, has delved into accounts of Bavarian presence in Greece in the 19th century. King Ludwig I of Bavaria had spent considerable funds in support of Greece, and Bavarians helped Greece rise up against the Ottoman Empire. After the Ottoman defeat by allied forces from Britain, France and Russia in the Battle of Navarino in 1827, Greece still had not much of a government. A complex set of circumstances led to Otto, King Ludwig’s second son, becoming the first king of Greece in 1832. Due to his ability to maintain the support of Britain, France and Russia, he managed to stay in power until 1862. Ilse has been engrossed in this subject matter and with more time, would have a lot to tell us about Bavarian and Greek architecture.

• Family genealogy – Sybil Gilchrist

For many years, Sybil has engaged in research about her Moorman-Flippin family ancestry, but over the past year and with changes in her routine due to the pandemic, the amount of time and

energy she devotes to it has increased. It’s “good for the brain.”

Sybil’s family roots are in Virginia, where she was brought up by her grandparents, whose picture she showed us, circa 1950. She then shared the extensive family tree she has compiled to date. Other photos and documents followed. Certain items stood out, for example, notations on a set of documents referenced one of her ancestors, Henry Moorman, as “mulatto” at birth (his father may well have been a slave owner), “black” on the 1900 census, and “coloured” on his death certificate. A striking photo of her great-grandfather, Henry Moorman, hangs in the Calvary Baptist church he helped to found in 1892. He worked as a roller in a tobacco factory. And compellingly, Sybil shared a picture that is representative of a large troop of black soldiers boarding a ship to go to France during World War I. Henry Moorman’s son, Sybil’s Uncle Bob, also served in France from 1918 to 1919. He is listed on the ship’s manifesto as a member of the Medical Detachment-319th Service Battalion-Colored.

Sybil has consulted about 20 sources so far, including ancestry.com, but also courthouses, newspapers, and archives. She intends to compile the results of her efforts into a resource for her children.

• Las Meninas – Julia Kurtz

Julia provided a great deal of background information regarding a masterpiece of Spanish art that she has long admired and studied, *Las Meninas*, by Velasquez, painted in 1656. After hanging in King Philip IV’s private study for many years, *Las Meninas* was among the first paintings to be exhibited in the Museo del Prado when it opened in 1819. It bore two earlier names, only



Photo Credit: Wikipedia

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Pecha Kucha NETA Style

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taking on its now-famous designation *Las Meninas* in an 1843 museum catalogue – a word of Portuguese origin that means “the handmaidens.”

This painting has always posed a conundrum in that it is subject to so many different interpretations.

After showing us a slide of the entire work, Julia zeroed in on a number of details within it. Twelve figures appear there, each of whose role and importance has been examined by scholars. Most intriguing is the fact that Velasquez painted himself into the work—in fact, it is the only time the artist did so. He is standing behind a large easel, apparently looking at the observer. We cannot see what he is painting on that large canvas. Might there be a mirror effect: could he be painting the king and queen whose reflections are in a mirror on the far wall, or the scene that we are seeing?

Julia brought up other quandaries, such as the significance of the number of frames that appear in *Las Meninas*, and where they begin and end. Two light sources were noted. There are issues with perspective. Where should we stand as viewers?

For Julia, such deliberations evoke broader questions, such as “What is the function of art?” and “Why is it important to accord it a special place in society?”



The enthusiasm of the presenters was in evidence throughout the afternoon. The content and quality of the six presentations prompted meaningful questions and discussion, resulting in a highly successful event—one that NETA may consider repeating next summer, even if, as we all hope, an in-person picnic is by then a safe and relaxing option as well.

We thank the presenters and the attendees and again recognize Lesley’s invaluable contribution to all of our events.

Also thanks to Lesley, our [Pecha Kucha event](#) is available for viewing. (*password: neta*) Should you wish to take in other presentations, log in to netaweb.org; hover over the three horizontal lines to the right of the green menu bar and select *Members Only*; click on the last item, *NETA Videos*; then click on the link at the top of the page you reach. The password is the same (*neta*).

Making Connections

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L: *Are there translators’ associations or similar groups in your country?*

S: No.

L: *Could you comment on your latest work?*

S: My latest or last employment was with US civilian and military advisors to train and equip the Afghanistan National Army with modern and updated different training tactics.

H: *Why did you choose to work with US forces as an interpreter?*

S: I worked for change that includes development projects that created opportunities for local nationals in the areas where I worked with the US military, and served my country as well as the US military providing translation and interpretation services.

H: *What do you think Americans need to understand about Afghanistan?*

S: From my perspective, and from what I have experienced throughout my service with the US military, I can say that US help in Afghanistan shaped the country with rapid change, particularly the new generation. Education, media, economic opportunities and fast development infrastructures quickly progressed in the last 19 years, but more still needs to be done progressively about the mentioned areas so the generation can build up this war-torn country. Americans need to understand Afghanistan’s culture and particularly focus on advising and training the Afghan National Army with the latest and updated technology and modern equipment. Also build a strong Air Force so then they are able to carry out missions themselves to defeat the enemy.

H: *Can you tell us one happy mission you did with the US military?*

S: For 25 days we were on a mountain mission where we had very limited access to water and food but had very beautiful views to monitor the enemies’ ongoing movements and target them.

L: *How do you connect your role as interpreter with the situation about communication and education in your country?*

S: It will have a major positive role by having quality education; the profession significantly impacts fair and transparent development in multiple areas for both countries.

H: *Any final comments?*

S: I appreciate NETA connecting and gathering linguists and giving attention to them regarding their previous experiences and future cooperation with them.

L: *Thank you very much, Sabib, for your time and kindness. I’m sure our members will appreciate your insights and life lessons. Your service to both Afghanistan and the US is significant. We wish you and your family well with your new beginning in this country.*

NETA's 2020 Translation Bash

NETA's Monthly Meeting, September 26, 2020

Reviewed by Marian Comenetz

St. Jerome, the bible translator and patron saint of translators and interpreters, was born on September 30. Beginning in 1953, when the International Federation of Translators (FIT) was established, St. Jerome's Day—as September 30 was then called, was marked in ad hoc fashion. In 1991, FIT's public relations committee launched the idea of an International Translation Day to promote the translation field. In May 2017 the United Nations passed a draft resolution declaring September 30 International Translation Day.

For the past 15 years, NETA has been celebrating International Translation Day with a workshop that we call a “translation bash.” Preparations began in mid-summer, with sign-ups beginning four weeks before the big day. As usual, the introduction included a welcome, some announcements, and an explanation of procedures. We always provide an opportunity for attendees to identify their country of origin, too, since the diversity as well as the overlap among participants add a fun personal touch. Still, this year's bash came with a significant new twist. Due to the pandemic, the in-person bash had to become a virtual event.

For several years Lesley Andrews, NETA's vice president and tech guru extraordinaire, who for several years has made possible remote attendance at our “live” monthly meetings, put her skills to the test as we recognized that for the first time, we would need to utilize Zoom breakout rooms for the bash. Because of the electronic format, we would also benefit from having the translations gradually devised by each language-pair group appear on the screen during the last half hour of the bash, at which time the various groups show the results of their discussion to the reassembled attendees. Then too, we wanted to make it possible for anyone interested to download the final versions for possible further consideration.

In paving the way for the bash, Lesley rose to each of those challenges. She, our president, Diana Rhudick, and I met for practice sessions beforehand. Lesley devised instructions for screen-sharing, which were shared with bash participants in advance. And the end result was that the technological side of the bash proceeded without a hitch!

This year's bash featured four groups:

- English>Spanish, guided by Erika Schulz;
- English>French, guided by Anne Vincent;
- English>Portuguese, a small group that functioned without a leader; and
- Spanish>English, guided by Andy Klatt.

Erika, Anne, and Andy came fully prepared and led spirited discussions while the three participants working into Portuguese held their own exceedingly well. Lesley had made me co-host for the bash. As such I was able to move easily from one bash room to another. I found all four groups steeped in discussion, debating the many options that were brought to the table and eventually agreeing upon a final version of each sentence. The challenges were real: how to render phrases like “looking to hone skills,” “soft, moldable substrate,” “the sandcastle contest circuit,” “creative whimsy,” “a boom in demand,” “angling for a publicity blitz,” and more. Among many other issues, the Spanish>English reverse bash participants considered whether to convert meters into feet in this particular passage, given that it contained reference to 12 meters and 12 participants. A little research revealed that the sandcastle in question was more than 40 feet high, so they made sure to include that info as it sounded much more impressive.

At 4:00 Lesley brought the four groups back together. At that point the scribe for each group shared the document that emerged from two hours of energetic deliberation, highlighting particular dilemmas. The bash had begun at 1:30 and was to end at 4:30. It may well be a sign of success that everyone sat tight until 4:50, fully ensconced in the review!

A bash write-up would be incomplete if it didn't make mention of a very special NETA connection that goes back six years now. At the 2014 bash, board member Diego Mansilla, working into Spanish, encountered Adel Fauzetdinova, working into Russian. Then three years ago at bash time, their charming son Adrian was born—our first NETA baby! For the last two years, this fine family appeared at the bash in birthday mode, even bearing a birthday cake for all to enjoy. Regrettably, that couldn't happen this year, but Diego, Adel and Adrian certainly showed up virtually. By now they are clearly an integral part of NETA's annual bash.



Photo Credit: Diego Mansilla

My Memorable Experience as a Translator / Interpreter

NETA News Editor Laura MacLeod put out a call in August for members to send in their favorite Translator/Interpreter story. We are happy to report that we received four delightful responses which appear below. We hope they inspire you to delve into your memory banks and honor us with your favorite T & I story for a future issue of NETA News. Being a translator or interpreter definitely has its memorable moments! Thanks to our first contributors for being so kind as to share their stories with us.

Stephen Volante, CT

ATA-Certified Translator, Spanish > English

I spent a week in Lima, Peru as an interpreter in July 2010. I'd been working as an in-house translator and interpreter at Partners in Health in Boston for over a year. I supported a team of 200 colleagues conducting a study of tuberculosis drug resistance and transmission in Lima.

I interpreted weekly calls between our lab consultant in Boston and PIH's Lab Director in Lima. In July 2010, the consultant went to Lima to meet the study lab staff, see a potential new lab site, and see the Ministry of Health lab that was conducting the study's diagnostic and drug-resistance testing. I went as his interpreter and met many of the colleagues I'd read so much about: doctors, nurses, lab technicians, IT staff, and drivers.

I got to see Ministry of Health clinics that served poor neighborhoods in Lima, observe the study nurses with patients, and meet patients in their homes. I also spent a day at the the Peruvian Ministry of Health Biosafety Level 3 Lab, interpreting a meeting in the morning and a tour of the lab in the afternoon. We were nearly shouting over machinery and through masks, but discussions were productive and the afternoon flew by.



Photo Credit: Stephen Volante

Ilse Andrews, MA CT

ATA-Certified Translator, German <> English; Greek > English

An Adventurous Translation

It is rare to receive an assignment for translation into two languages. In my many years as a professional translator, it has happened to me only once. In the spring of 2008, a Greek agent asked me if I could translate documents from an organic Greek winery into English and German, my usual language pair. I said "yes" and then spent a few challenging but interesting weeks with these Greek documents. Mainly, it was a Greek booklet distributed to the European customers of this winery. It explained the long process of removing chemical contaminants from the vineyards in Southern Greece and the very complicated process of applying for the right to call these wines "organic" under EU specifications; it also included labels for the wine bottles. The winery planned to expand its export business and wanted the labels to be in Greek, English and German.

Greek is not my native language, but I learned it sufficiently while living in Athens for several years with my husband and young daughter. (The latter was only two years old when we arrived, and she swiftly learned playground Greek. It was obviously the ideal way to acquire a foreign language, as she just eased into it very smoothly.)

In my case, as a native speaker of German I also had very little difficulty learning Greek, though not as fast as my daughter. Without a doubt, it is harder to learn Greek when your first language is English. Learning the structure and diction of modern Greek is surely aided by knowledge of German. Over time, I have kept up my Greek skills, and eventually became emboldened to translate from Greek into English or German.

While it was a pure joy to do this translation, I won't deny that it had its difficulties. Some of the text comprised standard international viticulture terminology – not hard to understand. But there were specific Greek terms for the type of grapes grown only in Greece, and there was no dictionary for such vocabulary. Luckily, I found kind helpers among the classics faculty at the University of New Hampshire, my alma mater, who had fun finding definitions for the Greek grapes. The labels included the usual descriptions of wine texture and flavor.

However, the story did not end too well: The printer in Athens was extremely careless. The English was bad enough, but the German – because of the Umlaut and "ß" (a kind of double s) characters – was a disaster. The agent asked me to make the corrections on paper. I did so, but how this all ended, I frankly do not know.

I see on the web that there are now many Greek wineries specializing in high-quality organic wines and offering tours of their vineyards, in beautiful agricultural regions all over Greece. It seems that the Greeks rose to the challenges of their economic depression and developed a new industry of healthy and tasty wines. I applaud them, but hope the vintners have a better printer than I did.

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My Memorable Experience as a Translator / Interpreter

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Stephanie Newton

CoreCHI™ Interpreter Certification, Spanish > English

The Patient Who Stood Up for Herself

Names/details are changed for privacy

For the first few meetings, everyone was polite to the utmost. Dr. Elise spent an extra long time with her patient, Sophia, to build rapport; Sophia answered myriad questions about her health and told us about her family; I requested clarification on unfamiliar terms. It was new for all of us. This was my first non-agency client, the doctor's first time using an interpreter, and the patient's first time with a serious illness.

Through dozens of visits and phone calls over time, Elise and Sophia got to know each other. I debated whether I should switch from the formal pronoun *usted* to the informal *tú* in my interpreting. Two-hour meetings weren't necessary anymore. They cracked jokes. I attended a "Humor in the Medical Session" webinar after botching the interpretation of a Venezuelan idiom.

Then the honeymoon period ended.

The medical battle was long and challenging, and appointment after appointment brought no good news. Dr. Elise's task-oriented side began to come out: she had other patients, she liked to get right to the point, plus she paid me by the minute. Sophia felt abandoned, she wanted to find a new doctor. Dr. Elise felt undervalued; Sophia asked for the same updates every visit and claimed that Dr. Elise wasn't paying attention to her. They started arguing during every appointment—through me. They reverted to not talking directly to each other: "Tell her that..." or "Interpreter, make sure she understands..." I kept my voice calm but I collapsed into a chair with sweaty palms after every encounter. I didn't know how to fix it, or whether that was even my role. Would that be advocating? What would be gained by my stepping in? What would I say?

Sophia came to the rescue.

When just persistently asking questions didn't work, she started explaining her reasoning for asking. It caused a lot of tension because answers didn't always exist. But in every single appointment, she stood up for herself. She pro-actively reached out to Elise. She asked for what she felt she deserved, and clearly stated her needs: "Dr. Elise, I need you to check in on me biweekly even if there are no updates, so I know you haven't forgotten about me." And Elise listened. She called for quick check-ins and asked about Sophia's family. Meetings began to feel friendly again, and the arguments stopped. My palms dried.

After over a year of working together, Elise and Sophia have been through bureaucratic barriers, family sicknesses, and now a pandemic. Elise checks in. Sophia asks for what she needs. They can be deeply honest with each other. Sophia was living through a medical nightmare with a doctor who didn't speak her language yet she was able to build an authentic patient-doctor relationship. The tension they worked through formed a rock solid bridge between them due to Sophia's brave self-advocacy.

Now I just need to figure out how to interpret her punch lines.

Rudy Heller

ATA-Certified Translator, English > Spanish;
Certified Federal Court Interpreter, Spanish/English

I had a conversation with my granddaughter, Samantha, about 11 years ago when she was 3 or 4. At the time I only spoke to her in Spanish. Much to my regret that's long gone.

We had stopped at a restaurant on the Cape, and when ordering I had asked her if she wanted a *perro caliente*. I clearly remember the look of shock and surprise in her eyes. To her, a hotdog was a cylindrical piece of meat. She had never thought about the literal meaning until she heard it in another language.

Samantha and I talked about it recently. Of course she did not remember the incident at all. But she thought it was pretty funny as kids do when you tell them about their adventures and misadventures when they were "children."

Another humorous word memory I have is from a translation we did way back in the early 1990s. It was about a light-emitting diode (*Diodo emisor de luz*, in Spanish). At that time I was recording my initial translation on tape and a transcriptionist would type the draft for my review. Imagine my surprise when I began reviewing my translation and found that a leading character in the transcription was *Dios*, *emisor de luz*!

What would we NETAns do if we didn't have words to play with?

**If you need more wordplay
to brighten your day:**

[Debate on translation of wordplay](#)

[Wordplay Blog Post](#)

[Multilingual Puns](#)

[Bilingual Jokes](#)

[Puns from around the globe](#)

Developing Confident Communication in English: Accent Improvement for Non-Native English Speakers

NETA's Monthly Meeting, October 17, 2020

Reviewed by Marian Comenetz

Right from the start, our speaker, Kara Lund, the founder and CEO of Speech Revolution, reassured attendees of NETA's October monthly meeting that there's nothing wrong with having an accent. Everyone has one, and they make the world colorful. Issues only arise in three areas:

- if one cannot be understood,
- if an accent stands in one's way professionally, and
- if an accent keeps one away from social situations.

In order to assess where attendees stood as the session began, Kara used a [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) poll, first to ask for a self-assessment:

- Are you situationally comfortable?
- Are you very comfortable such that your accent is not in your way?
- Do you speak like a native speaker or is your accent a real issue for you ("a horror show")?

Participants clicked on the menti.com link, entered a code, and chose one of those categories. As they did so, the group's responses appeared on a bar graph. Using menti.com in a different way, Kara asked participants to describe in one word how they feel when speaking English. The responses, as they were entered, gradually formed a word cloud.

Having taken stock of the responses, Kara then turned, one by one, to each of five handouts she had prepared and which participants had received within the hour before this meeting began. The first contained anatomical illustrations showing the position of lips, teeth, and tongue for the proper expression of two sets of vowel sounds—ten sounds in all, with the tongue going from a forward to a back position. Kara explained that the mouth should be in a very narrow and forward position, like a narrow and deep house. There's no need to widen the mouth to achieve the desired vowel sound. Kara amplified her explanation by singing each of the five sets of sounds, first quite slowly, then

just a little faster (extended speech), and finally as spoken speech. Elaborating on specifics for each vowel sound, Kara explained that the position of the tongue is crucial. Also, it's important to "keep the air flowing" throughout.

The second handout provided practice with two particular vowel sounds, [ae] as in "apple" and [a] as in "box." In practicing individual words, Kara emphasized that it's important to keep the vowels the same and not let consonants get in the way. The goal, with enough repetition, is to develop a new muscle system. As Kara demonstrated sounds through singing, she encouraged participants to join in. She worked first with single words and then expanded the practice into short sentences that contained the sounds being worked on. Kara commented further on the slight difference between the [I] sound and the [i] sound, rocking back and forth between "which" and "week," "drink" and "tea." At all times the mouth should be relaxed, with no tension in the jaw. As is the case

with Olympic skiers or swimmers, muscles should be active but not tense. How does it feel in your mouth and body to form these sounds?

The next handout focused on the voiced and unvoiced "th" sound. As before, Kara specified the correct position of the tongue for that sound. She also contrasted *fricatives* (the air streams through, as in "th") and *plosives* (the sound stops, as in "t" or "d"). And she explained, with examples, the difference between the voiced "th" (as in "their" or "then") and the unvoiced "th" (as in "thank" or "thin"). Practice followed with

all of the above, with single words in initial position ("thank"), medial position ("pathway"), and final position ("oath"), followed by sentences containing the sounds being highlighted.

To pull everything together, Kara then presented a handout of excerpts from Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, with each sound she had previously discussed color-coded. Participants were encouraged to try reading a segment with Kara's hints in mind, focusing on phonetics. As volunteers did so, Kara commented on the need to articulate final consonants and to work on elisions ("some_of," "trials_and"). Keep the sounds moving along. Words should not be "chopped up."

Lastly, Kara presented a handout on expression and meaning. What is the goal or intention of your speech (ex., to clarify,

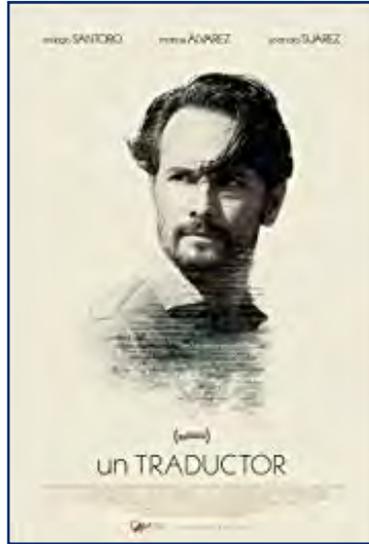
In practicing individual words, Kara emphasized that it's important to keep the vowels the same and not let consonants get in the way. The goal, with enough repetition, is to develop a new muscle system.

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un TRADUCTOR

by Laura Rojo MacLeod

It was a very special International Translation day on September 30 at UMass Amherst watching the film [un TRADUCTOR](#) (dir. Rodrigo and Sebastián Barriuso González-Mora, 2018). The winner of five awards and 9 nominations, *un TRADUCTOR* is based on the true story of a Russian professor at the University of Havana who is ordered to work as a translator for child victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.



Wikipedia: un TRADUCTOR poster

My viewing of the film was in anticipation of a conversation about the film between professors Esther Allen, Enrique García, and José Manuel Prieto. The Translation Center at UMass Amherst presented the conversation on [Zoom](#) and kindly has provided a [link to the recording](#). Below are questions that were contributed by the audience. The professors responded to the questions at the end of the event.

Margara Rusotto

1) ¿Qué opina usted del modo cómo se plantea -o es representada- la oposición frontal entre ciencia y arte (o entre medicina y bellas artes) en el film? *What do you think about the way in which the film poses -or represents- the opposition between science and art (or medicine and fine arts)?*

2) Considerando los estereotipos habituales de buena parte del cine latinoamericano, ¿diría usted que *un TRADUCTOR* desarma algunos estereotipos? Si está de acuerdo con esta premisa, ¿podría mencionar algunos de ellos y cómo quedan neutralizados? *Bearing in mind the common stereotypes of Latin American cinema, would you argue that un TRADUCTOR dismantles some stereotypes? If you agree with this premise, could you mention some of them and how they are counterbalanced?*

Laura Rojo MacLeod

1) ¿Cuales son los principales factores de cambio que afectan al traductor? *What are the main factors of change affecting the translator?*

2) ¿Qué instituciones deberían reforzar la actividad del traductor? *What institutions should strengthen the translator's activity?*

Alejandro López

The movie utilizes translation as a metaphor for the issue of isolation at all levels of human experience (individual, social, and cultural). At the individual level, it suggests that translation is not only necessary interpersonally but also at the intra-personal level. Malin seems unable to translate his emotions into words. In your opinion, is this a valid way of thinking about the translation phenomenon? And if so, should we view dreams as an act of translation?

Developing Confident Communication in English

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motivate, persuade, demand)? Who is your audience? What approach or attitude is helpful in any given context (ex., rationality, friendliness, animation)? It's entirely different to convey a message to the family member of a patient who is seriously ill and to present oneself at a job interview. Slow, soft speech with extended vowel sounds stands in stark contrast to a "building on fire" message. What is your goal, and how do you achieve it? Pacing and melody vary. The main thing is to provide appropriate emphasis and to own your words in order to convey your message. Attendees were encouraged to try reading an MLK segment again with expression and meaning in mind.

Kara afforded participants the opportunity to ask questions (there were plenty!), after which she concluded with a book-end two-part menti.com survey. First, responses were elicited for the statements:

- "I learned a lot of things and I will definitely use them,"
- "I learned a few things I will use,"
- "I didn't learn anything," and
- "I was already a rock star, but now I know more."

Then participants were asked to describe the workshop in one or two words, resulting in another word cloud. Responses varied greatly but were uniformly positive. This meeting was clearly a huge success.

Kara is writing an online book to be entitled *The Speech Revolution Accent Improvement Field Guide, Adventures in Articulation* and provided her email address so people can sign up for it when it's ready. She can be reached at kara@speechrevolution.com.

Lesley Andrews, our ultra-able tech person ran and [recorded the meeting on Zoom](#), in case you missed this excellent session. The password is *netá*. [Lesley](#) also can provide the handouts.

NETA Board Meeting Minutes, September 12, 2020

10:00 a.m., virtual meeting on Zoom due to COVID-19 confinement orders in MA

Submitted by Rokhaya Smith, Secretary

Board Members

Present: Lesley Andrews, Maiyim Baron, Laura Rojo MacLeod, Diego Mansilla, Diana Rhudick, Antje Ruppert, Erika Schulz, Rokhaya Smith.

Absent: Crystal Zhong, Treasurer

Others present: Marian Comenetz, Program Committee.

Quorum present? Yes

AGENDA

Treasurer's fourth quarter report

The report shows that numbers are lower, and this is due to the conference cancellation since some fees were already paid. There was no income coming in. Members appreciated the membership discount that the Board voted on in June to help mitigate loss of revenue due to COVID-19.

Diana also indicated that the cost of producing the newsletter has gone up, and this may be due to its size. Current balance shows NETA has about \$56,000. This figure will go down after payment to Kristin, and Wild Apricot. Kristin has already received a payment of \$4,625 for the new contract to organize our annual conference in May 2021. She will still need to be paid in full if the 2021 conference is to be held remotely. Payment to FIT (International Federation of Translators) has not been submitted yet

Roles for 2020-21

Since Alice Wolfe has stepped down from posting job opportunities, Diana is going to invite Marinetti Matos, who for now has agreed to take on the role, to groups.io. She will also thank her on behalf of the Board.

Membership

Both membership renewal and new member registration emails were updated by Antje and Lesley, but Antje realized she was not receiving payment notifications. Lesley found out there was a glitch from switching from PayPal to WA's payment system and fixed it. Antje is receiving payment notifications again. Lesley also helped set up a way to automate membership

processing and Antje indicated it is extremely helpful and saves her a lot of time.

Seventy-seven members let their membership lapse, which is a new high. They were sent personal reminders, and only five renewed after receiving reminders from Antje. Lesley is to remove the names of expirees from groups.io as participation in neta@groups.io is a membership benefit.

Website

Crystal and Diana received WA reminder of payment due for the next two years: \$1,836.00. Diana approved it, and Lesley updated the credit card info for our WA account. Subscription will be automatically renewed on 9/18/20.

Monthly programming

The modified Pecha Kucha event held during the summer was very successful. It was suggested that it be added as an event offering. The Board agreed to offer it as a regular event, a monthly meeting perhaps in the middle of the winter. Diego will advertise it to UMB students at the Translation bash on 9/26. A write-up on Pecha Kucha will be sent for the newsletter's fall issue.

Upcoming monthly meetings, which will be held online through Zoom meetings, are as follows:

September 26th: 15th annual translation bash to celebrate International Translation Day

October 17th: Developing Confident Communication in English: Accent Improvement for Non-Native English Speakers

November 21st: Federal Court Interpreting

December: Holiday party (likely virtual). The Board is waiting to see how the pandemic evolves before setting a date for our December holiday party as we would ideally be meeting in-person. Another Pecha Kucha event was suggested if it is going to be virtual.

Monthly 2021 meetings are:

January 23: Accuracy of Online Search Results by Diana Rhudick

February 20: Educational Interpreting(TBD) by Loreto Ansaldo

March 20: TBD

April 17: TBD

Board meeting dates (which will be all virtual for now) are:

September 12, 2020

January 16, 2021 (back-up January 30th)

March 13, 2021 (back-up March 27th)

June 19, 2021 (back-up June 26th)

Dates and locations of Board meetings are no longer associated with monthly meetings.

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Conference

The 2021 conference may go virtual. If that is the case, fees would be cut as there would be no food and no venue rental. If this is driven by the pandemic, we probably will not incur cancellation fees. A Save the Date announcement will be sent out in January. Registration will be open on March 1st to allow for in-person/remote adjustments with regard to pricing. Early-bird registration will be in effect throughout March and regular registration will start in April.

Diego suggested we wait until after the ATA conference to see how they are handling breakout sessions and adjust our conference organization accordingly afterwards.

The Board decided to set a \$25,000 budget for the 2021 conference, similar to that of 2020.

If the conference goes virtual again, attendance fees would be reduced, and same-day registration would be eliminated.

Fees for an online 2021 conference would be:

Early-bird member registration: \$55.00

Early-bird non-member registration: \$75.00

Regular member registration: \$65.00

Regular non-member registration: \$80.00

Students and seniors: \$30.00

It is worth noting that over 120 people attended our remote conference in 2020.

At its January 2021 meeting, the Board will revisit reducing all exhibitor and sponsor rates and organizing a job fair with exhibitors during lunch break if the conference is held remotely in 2021.

The same keynote, endnote and other speakers for 2020 are being contacted for 2021. Lesley will contact the mini-committee so they can get started on the 2021 conference preparations. This group is largely intact for 2021.

Diego anticipates there will be "live" students if the conference can be held in-person even though the UMB academic semester will be virtual.

NETA News

Laura Rojo MacLeod is now serving as editor. Production of the fall issue is going well and is expected to be well-rounded with articles on the translation bash, privacy, stories from members, an interview with Haidar, minutes of the September NETA Board meeting and other items of interest.

Neta@groups.io, social media, publicity initiatives

Lesley has set up a groups.io equivalent (alt-neta@groups.io) for topics unrelated to translation and interpreting, and Diana has updated the NETA website accordingly.

Lesley will post information on groups.io about avoiding online scams. She is also to ask for reimbursement for the payment

of subscription to groups.io and for Zoom. Groups.io annual payment of \$110 was made in April. Zoom's annual payment has not been determined.

Erika posted on social media and is getting reports on who likes our webpage. Erika and Lesley are our Facebook administrators.

Lesley and Diana are responsible for our YouTube account now. Diana will delete Joseph's name as he is not a member anymore. She also deleted Elena's and Rochelle's and made Lesley an owner.

Other items

Request from Found in Translation

The request from Karen Walker, Career Advancement Manager at Found in Translation, for NETA members to volunteer at one of their Alumnae Association meetings is on hold since there are no in-person meetings.

NETA's membership in FIT

Diana was able to register NETA as a member organization of the International Federation of Translators (FIT). We are still awaiting a response and have not paid any fees yet.

Moderated discussion between NETA members and the Board

This notion actually arose via email from Elena in 10/18 and has now resurfaced.

Elena Langdon and other NETA members proposed holding a structured and moderated dialog between NETA members and the board. It could take place during the conference, at a monthly meeting, or at another time online. In the process of putting together a series of questions, the board could also ask members which topics they would like to discuss. These could include members' concerns and ideas on how to move forward in our profession, NETA's mission, the idea of a collaborative/cooperative group of translation/interpreting professionals and what NETA should do about this, ideas for using NETA's funds. One notion was to organize small group discussions at tables during the annual conference so that each person has an opportunity to discuss things with others, rather than all listening to

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one person at a time speak in the larger group. Each table should take notes in some sort of structured format, such as filling out cards, so that the ideas are retained. A report is often written afterward to summarize the points discussed and the action items identified as the next steps.

This item will be moved to the January meeting agenda.

Free membership (+) to new Afghani interpreter that NETA member Haidar brought to our attention

NETA member Haidar shared a *Globe* article about an Afghani interpreter arriving in Boston. Haidar wanted to meet this man and make him feel welcome. Lesley provided the reporter's contact information and Haidar said he would try to find out more.

The board agreed to offer this newcomer one year's free membership, which was communicated to Haidar who has been in touch with this interpreter.

Diana suggested an interview in *NETA News* and the Board indicated members might be informed of the need for help for this new arrival. Sarah suggested a GoFundMe page, which Diana and Lesley agreed with. Haidar has been working on a funding mechanism through his community.

Haidar shared the interpreter's name and contact information and Antje set up a membership for him.

Diana indicated that if Haidar starts a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for the Afghani interpreter, the Board would inform members about it.

Laura is to contact Haidar for a conversation with fellow Board member Erika Schulz. Laura is also going to interview Haidar, and this will be featured in the fall issue of *NETA News*.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10.

The next meeting is scheduled on January 16th, 2021 to follow up on agenda items and conference preparation issues.

Instructions on How to Increase Your NETA Online Privacy

by Diana Rhudick

If your name and contact information are included in NETA's online directory, be aware that these may be harvested by anyone using the web. The instructions below explain how to hide specific fields in your profile, which will of course also become hidden to potential clients.



Log in.

Click on your name to show the menu.

Click on "View profile."



Click on the gray box to left, "Edit profile."



Click on "Privacy," in the middle.

This page lists each field of your profile, and gives you the option to make each field visible to anybody, members only, or nobody, (No access).

You can also click or unclick "Show profile to others" near the top.

The e-mail field is about 9 down on the list. You can select "No access" for it.

To save changes and exit, click "Save" at the bottom.

