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EDITORIAL

Bigly collective effort

Ragini Werner

Pardon me for blowing my own Trump-ette* but this Special Issue of eSense is the BEST (yet). Besides offering our usual miscellany of articles, we explore a subject dear to many a solitary word worker's heart. The Conference Collection has taken over the cover story with not just one, not two, not five, but nine items, each dealing with another professional facet of conferences. The only views missing from this fabulous (if I may say so) compilation — reflecting nearly the full range of professions represented in the SENSE membership — are those from our indexers, subtitlers and language educators. Rest assured we’ll try to make up for this omission in future issues.

But what really sets eSense 43 apart is its bigly — no yuge — host of contributors. This truly collective effort is filled with countless contributions, large and small. Most of the contributors are SENSE members, of course, but they include four international guest contributors, Sara Peacock (editor and former Chair of SfEP, UK), Daniel Heuman (author of PerfectIt, USA, and semi-guest, really, considering he’s a member of SENSE), Katharine O’Moore-Klopf (KOK Edit and columnist at Copiediting, USA) and Margaret Cargill (SciWriting, Australia).

Besides featuring our eSense stalwarts Sally Hill, Anne Hodgkinson and Helene Reid, this issue also introduces three exciting new voices: Vanessa Goad, Cathy Scott and Anne Paris. Hopefully (hint-hint) these strong writers will become regular contributors too, much like Marianne Orchard will be. Marianne has joined the eSense team as a copyeditor-cum-columnist, replacing Cecilia M. Willems, my predecessor, who understandably enough felt that now is a good time to move on. My yuge thanks to Cecilia for her inspiring support throughout our long and leisurely, veritably ‘peaceful transition of power’ and for staying but an email away if I ever need her advice again. And talking of moving on… let me move out of your way now so that you can get on with this issue.

Reader, my dear, you have been warned. This Special Issue, especially the Conference Collection, is a bigly read indeed. Take your time, don’t try to gulp it down all at once but dip in here and there until your appetite is replete. And when you’ve finished all the tasty morsels on offer in the rest of the issue too, I hope you feel the same sense of satisfaction that I feel, knowing that so many members of SENSE have contributed to our collective success. Thank you all.

Happy reading!

* Famous Trumpism ‘bigly’ may be a real word but does The Big D really say it? Or is it just his sloppy pronunciation of ‘big league’? Linguists discuss bigly.  ◄

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eSense is published by SENSE four times a year. It aims to provide useful and entertaining content of interest to all language professionals in the SENSE community at large while promoting the work and activities of the Society and its members.

Contributors: Claire Bacon, Carla Bakkum, Curtis Barrett, Ann Bless, Joy Burrough-Boenisch, Margaret Cargill (guest contributor), Linda Comyns, Robert Coupe, Martine Croll, Liz van Gerrevink, Vanessa Goad, Erin Goedhart-Stallings, Kirsten van Hasselt, Daniel Heuman, John Hynd, Sally Hill, Anne Hodgkinson, Marcel Lemmens, John Linnegar, Wil van Maarschalkerweerd, Kamlesh Madan, Kate McIntyre, Katharine O’Moore-Klopf (guest contributor), Marianne Orchard, Paul Osborn, Anne Paris, Tony Parr, Sara Peacock (guest contributor), Helene Reid, Cathy Scott, Jackie Senior and Jenny Zonneveld

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FROM THE EC

Breaking news

Jenny Zonneveld

I’m writing this on the plane on my way back from METM16 (Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting of 2016) in Tarragona, after tagging on an extra day in Barcelona to make my trip truly unforgettable.

Many SENSE members were at this important conference, including several EC members and others who had also attended our inspiring Professional Development Day (PDD) in September. At the last EC meeting, while we were discussing strategy (more about that in the next issue of eSense) we unanimously decided that we – SENSE – should hold a full-day professional training and networking event every year.

Jenny Zonneveld, SENSE Chair (left), networking at the METM16 dinner in Tarragona with Jeanette Hodgman, a French-English translator who lives in Whitstable (UK).

Photo: Joy Burrough-Boenisch

In the Netherlands the (economic) climate doesn’t lend itself to our emulating MET and Off-MET activities in full. But despite the relatively small size of our Society, our ambitious plan is to offer from now on:

- a PDD once every two years, the next to be held in September 2017
- a full conference (SENSE Jubilee style) with keynote speakers once every two years, next to be held in May 2018

Ideally, the PDD and conference committees that organize the content and logistics of such events should contain a mixture of SENSE members and EC representatives. We are therefore looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join the committees or, if you prefer, to help with the smaller, one-off jobs. Here are some of the things you could do:

- select the venue
- define the theme
- invite the keynote speakers
- be the event treasurer
- help find sponsors
- put out the call for papers and select relevant content (presentations and workshops)
- do promotion for the event (social media)
- do any odd jobs that make a conference run smoothly

If you can help in any way, however small, please contact the EC as soon as possible and let us know how you would like to help. We (the royal EC we here) look forward to hearing from you!

Oh yes, nearly forgot! While at METM16, I made a point of talking to Anne Murray and Sarah Griffin-Mason – the chairs of MET and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (UK), respectively – with a view to exploring how our three associations can work together to further professional development and collaboration.

We plan to meet next in January 2017.
As freelancers used to working in isolation, it’s easy for us to forget the importance of live encounters with others in our professional community. Here we present a collection of nine personal views of the *sine qua non* of professional contact with peers: the conference.

**Good reasons for going to conferences**

*Sara Peacock* and *Daniel Heuman*

For language professionals, climbing to the top of the field and staying there is challenging. You need to be consistently good at your job so that your clients will come back to you again and again, and will refer others to you. But many of us are working in isolation, so we have no one to share problems with and to learn from. The skills required are diverse, including marketing, networking and administration as well as the technical disciplines. And our fields are always changing. So how can language professionals find time to learn and keep up with developments without losing focus on the job itself? There is no better solution than to attend your local conference.

Conferences take place all around the world. The advantage of attending one is that it gives you the chance to:

- Meet potential colleagues and clients
- Develop your skills
- Master the business side
- Catch up with the latest technological developments
- Invest in your business
- Have some fun too!

Here’s a full explanation of what conferences offer.
1. Meet potential colleagues and clients

Networking is the most obvious purpose of conferences. It’s a chance to meet people who might want to use your services (or to discover firsthand who might be a useful addition to your outsourcing team).

Conferences are also a chance to meet others who work in the same field as you. Other editors are more like your colleagues than your rivals. They’re the people who will understand better than anyone else what it is that you do, and who will be able to share experiences, ideas and advice. It’s a chance to develop personal connections and build a network that you can call on for assistance and support or maybe a chance to subcontract work.

2. Develop your skills

Conferences include workshops, seminars and talks to enhance your skills. If you are new to the industry, you can start to develop advanced skills; if you are looking to diversify, this is your chance to find out whether academic editing, fiction editing (or working on websites, cookery books, television scripts, or other different areas) is going to be for you. It’s a concentrated burst of new, interesting and exciting information to enhance your professional development.

Do you have a wordsmith hero? Perhaps Carol Fisher Saller, David Crystal, John McIntyre, Geoff Pullum or Katherine Barber? These are the kinds of people who are brought in as guest speakers. Conferences are your chance to see and learn from them in person.

Freelance editor Sara Peacock is a former Chair of the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (UK).

3. Master the business side

Many editors are new to running their own business and have no formal training in financial management or marketing (among other things). But these are vital skills that any small business needs to be effective. Training in these areas often does not come cheap, but at a conference, sessions in these specialist areas are usually included in the price. Even small improvements in business efficiency can make the entire conference worthwhile.

Conferences also address other aspects of running a business such as ergonomic work practices and maintaining a good work-life balance. All editors are in business of some sort or another – whether working for themselves or someone else – and conference planners try to make sure that all aspects of the business, including the well-being of the worker, are catered for.

4. Latest industry and technological developments

The publishing industry is changing. More and more publishers are adopting electronic workflows to make their production systems more efficient, and conferences are a chance to find out more about the latest developments. If you’re representing a company, you can find out how to improve your systems; if you’re a freelancer, you can learn about systems that will help you meet your clients’ needs.

SENSE member Daniel Heuman is founder/CEO of Intelligent Editing, and the author of PerfectIt. Photo: ©Carol Harrison, Editors/Réviseurs Canada

Every year new technology is developed for the publishing industry. Keeping on top of developments will make you more attractive to potential clients, and more efficient too. Conferences give you the opportunity to improve your knowledge of industry-standard software, such as Word or InDesign. Moreover, you might also hear about some of the great secret weapons in the editor’s arsenal, such as PerfectIt.

5. Sound business investment

The outlay for a two- or three-day conference is not inconsiderable. However, you can’t talk about the cost of a conference without considering the benefit. Attendance is an investment in your business. It’s a tax-deductible expense, which helps you increase revenue and cut costs. Conferences help you attract more, better-paying clients, and bring increased visibility and efficiency to your business. Every year hundreds of editors attend conferences because it is a sound business investment with a financial benefit that outweighs the cost.

6. A pun crowd

In the midst of all of this work and serious business talk there is fun to be had. There’s nothing like spending a few days with people who share your passion for words. Sometimes there are sessions on different topics such as book-binding or paper-folding. And there will be at least one social event, such as a gala dinner, if you enjoy that sort of thing. But even if you don’t, conferences are
often held in cities that have much to offer visitors. There will always be an opportunity, either formal or informal, to be a tourist and see some local attractions.

Coming soon to a conference venue near you

Editorial conferences are everywhere. A few of the best-known ones include:

- Society for Editors and Proofreaders (UK)
- Mediterranean Editors and Translators (Spain)
- European Association of Science Editors (Europe)
- Editors’ Association of Canada (Canada)
- American Copy Editors Society (USA)
- Communication Central (USA)
- Editorial Freelance Association (USA)
- Northwest Independent Editors’ Guild (USA)
- Council of Science Editors (USA)
- Institute of Professional Editors (Australia)
- International Society of Managing and Technical Editors (Singapore)

And if you’ve already visited your local conference, here’s one final thought: publishing is now a global marketplace. If you think you have seen all there is to see at your local conference, why not consider looking further afield? You might find just the thing you need to give your business a boost. ◄

Adapted from the original article on IntelligentEditing.com with the kind permission of the authors.

The value of presenting to peers

Joy Burrough-Boenisch

This year I have given workshops or presentations at two conferences for language professionals: the SfEP’s (Society for Editors and Proofreaders) in Birmingham, UK and MET’s (Mediterranean Editors and Translators) in Tarragona, Spain. Much of the confidence and know-how for doing this I have acquired through SENSE. You, too, could do the same, if you have some tricks of the trade or some salutary work-related tales to tell that are worth passing on to your colleagues.


You could start small, as I did years ago, by preparing a short, informal talk – maybe with one or two handouts. Then, my guinea-pigs were SENSE members living in and around Wageningen. Nowadays, the ideal launching pad would be the friendly setting of a SENSE UniSIG meeting, where you could encourage feedback to use to improve your presentation style and content.

You should watch and learn from presenters within and beyond SENSE. Attend meetings and conferences for language professionals in the Netherlands and abroad, not just for your continuing professional development or to notch up PE points but also for the enjoyment and professional benefit of networking and sharing experiences with colleagues – gauging your professionalism, skills and experiences in relation to those of other people doing the same or similar work. Giving a presentation or workshop is not a one-way transfer of information and knowledge. You’ll also learn from your audience, and you can have a lot of fun. So what’s stopping you? ◄

Previewing a presentation

Kamlesh Madan

At the September meeting of UniSIG, Kate McIntyre and Jackie Senior gave 15 SENSE members a preview of ‘The diverse skills and many roles of in-house academic editors’, the presentation the pair would give at the Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting in October (METM16).

Jackie and Kate work together as in-house editors in the Department of Genetics at the University of Groningen. Professor Cisca Wijmenga, who heads the department, was awarded the Spinoza Prize in 2015 for her scientific achievements. Her department is one of the top research institutes in the Netherlands. Although Kate and Jackie were modest about it, surely some of the credit for the high quality and quantity of the publications goes to these two in-house editors. Besides significant experience in editing, both have scientific qualifications.
involved in the development of the projects from the start. Kate gave two examples of the degree of their involvement in publications. In one case they edited various stages of a scientific paper that finally ended up in a top journal. In another a doctor came with a story of an interesting clinical case that he felt needed to be told. Together they worked out how best to present it.

Kate deliberately showed us more data than they intended to present at METM16 and was open to suggestions for what to use. We made a number of suggestions on how to reduce the number of slides, including using animations, shortening the text in some slides, using colour and images, and focusing on the unique aspects of in-house editing.

Science editors on the front line

Claire Bacon

I hopped over the German-French border – oblivious that this luxury was soon going to be snatched away for Brits living in Europe by the Brexiteers – to attend the 13th EASE conference in the charming historical town of Strasbourg. The conference was held at the Faculty of Medicine on the hospital campus, which is one of the oldest medical institutions in France.

The topic under discussion was scientific integrity. Research misconduct is a big problem for journal editors, not to mention some of our clients. In his plenary lecture, Lex Bauter explained that the tremendous pressure on scientists to publish is promoting sloppy science and, more seriously, data falsification. Inevitably, this leads to the publication of misleading data that wastes billions of euros and may represent a significant risk to human life. For example, a recent study failed to replicate 90% of the findings from 53 elite toxicology studies that had led to the initiation of phase I clinical trials. Worrying stuff.

So what should journal editors do? Bauter discussed a revolutionary approach to publication, where a study is reviewed based on its hypothesis and methodological approach and is pre-accepted for publication before the results are collected. This will eliminate the incentive to fabricate and falsify data. Bauter and Pia Rotshtein explained that this approach has now been implemented by The Lancet, which introduced its Reduce Research Waste and Reward Diligence (REWARD) campaign in 2014, and by Cortex, which has now accepted 12 papers for publication based on a similar peer review system.

Author’s editor Karen Shashok talked about the ways in which language editors can help research scientists make the most of their research. Removing unnecessary and misleading information and restructuring an illogical flow of ideas all contribute to reducing research waste. She also stressed the importance of educating our clients by explaining why we make the changes we do. Frequently, she advises authors to consult the STROBE guidelines, which provide a checklist of items for observational research and can help scientists to avoid unintended misconduct.

All in all, the EASE conference was an enjoyable weekend. I tried some tasty French cuisine (I was not curious enough to try snails!) and gained an insight into the challenges faced by journal editors. As an ex-academic, I understand the plight of research scientists and why the pressure to publish has led to research misconduct. It was interesting to hear how editors are trying to address this ever-increasing challenge.
‘Sociolizing’ with poetry translators

Helene Reid

‘The Sociology of Poetry Translation’. What a title! I simply had to go to this one-day conference organized by the University of Leeds and the Leverhulme Trust.

If poetry is, as I was taught, the most individual expression of the most individual emotion (de allerindividueelste expressie van de allerindividueelste emotie in the words of Willem Kloos), then where does sociology come in? I know all about the sociology of teabags, the sociology of what make of car people buy and the sociology of what kind of plants people grow in their front gardens. But the sociology of poetry translation? That was a new one on me. So with Britain reeling from the results of the referendum, Brexiteers and Bremainers at each other’s throats and shadow cabinet members staging their own mass exit, I made my way to Leeds University. And purely by luck, or by mistake rather, I ended up in a small parking area for tradesmen protected by a security barrier.

The conference was extremely low-key. It was held in a pleasant amphitheatre classroom overlooking an inner garden and there were about 40 attendees. At one point there seemed to be more speakers and organizers than audience members, but I’m not complaining.

What I am complaining about is that if you have 17 people addressing an audience, they only have to exceed their allotted time by a few minutes for the whole thing to get out of hand. We were told in the Introduction that the building closed at six and we would be locked in if we hadn’t finished by then. The young man who opened the conference was extremely low-key: He translates from Serbian, Bosnian, Slovenian, occasionally Russian, and Dutch.

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Prof. Gisèle Sapiro: ‘Publishing poetry in translation: an inquiry into the margins of the world book market’

Prof. Sapiro’s talk held no surprises. She reminded us that publishing poetry was not a guaranteed money-maker, and that it often took a very dedicated translator and an unusually sympathetic publisher – such as Gallimard. The genre briefly flourished in the interbellum, as a result of the PEN Conference in 1921 and under the auspices of UNESCO, but that was a one-off phenomenon. Her talk was in fact not so much on the sociology of poetry translation as on the economics of it.

Dr Sameh Hanna: ‘(Re)translation of verse drama […] in the Arabic versions of Shakespeare’s tragedies’

Dr Hanna’s talk (I shortened the full title which was of One Thousand and One Night’s length) contained a fascinating nugget of information. Apparently it was absolutely impossible for an Arabic version of a play to have a sad ending: in the 1862 Arabic version of Hamlet, Ophelia and Hamlet marry and live happily ever after. I suppose there was thus a touch of sociology to his talk.

Dr Eva Spisiakova: ‘Shakespeare’s queer readings behind the Iron Curtain’

What intrigued me here was the word ‘queer’. How can you have a queer reading of Shakespeare in any sense of the word? My doubts were soon dispelled. Dr Spisiakova explained that in the period roughly between the end of World War I and 1990, homosexuality was not an acknowledged concept behind the Iron Curtain, and the first 126 Sonnets, addressed to the ‘Fair Youth’, had to be re-interpreted in that light. She highlighted Sonnet 108, in which the words ‘Sweet Boy’ were particularly problematic for the translator. After all, how explicit can you get?

‘Lekker’ lunch, or do I mean ‘leuke’ lunch?

Lunch was basic and brief. There were many different nationalities but only one topic of conversation: the outcome of the referendum. I discovered that four people had some link to the Netherlands. One was a young Tahitian who had recently married a Dutch woman and who had learnt three words so far: goed, mooi and lekker. He could even use the last word in a complete sentence: Was het lekker voor jou? I decided not to enlighten him as to its customary use but I did teach him leuk.

Dr Francis Jones: ‘Cultural catalysts, co-pilots, or careerists? Agents and “Eastern European” poetry in English’

Dr Francis Jones was by far the best speaker. He translates from Serbian, Bosnian, Slovenian, occasionally Russian, and Dutch. (Another case of a Dutch spouse.) He gave a fascinating overview of the networks of poets, translators, agents and publishers. Now that’s what I call sociology.

Dr Michèle Milan: ‘Women translators in 19th-century Ireland’

After six hours, my interest began to wane, but I must mention Dr Michèle Milan (Ireland), an independent scholar who discussed her lovingly compiled study. A diminutive figure dressed and coiffed in 19th-century style, she was a delight to watch – a reincarnation of Charlotte Brontë. But if I had dared ask her a question I would have said: ‘Why is it that so many speakers refuse the microphone when they would obviously benefit from one?’
Only two more speakers to go! However, this was when I realized that if the building were to close at six, the man who operated the car park barrier would also be signing off. The words of the last two speakers were drowned by my worries. Could I crash through the barrier? Probably not. Would I have to spend the night curled up on the back seat of the car? Or should I lock myself in the building to be warm at least, not to mention the availability of sanitary provisions? I was first to rush impolitely out of the auditorium as soon as the applause had died down. And miracles do happen: the barrier raised itself without my bidding as soon as it spotted my car. I was free!

Wonderful place, Leeds University.

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**Practising conference interpreting**

*Wil van Maarschalkerweerd*

As a self-employed translator/interpreter you have to sharpen your expertise and stay on top of developments in the professional field. I recently participated in a training event for conference interpreters at the International Coffee Organization in London. The attendees were ten Dutch-speaking interpreters (all women) and ten German-speaking interpreters (including one man). All of us work in English.

Wil van Maarschalkerweerd (right) and her colleague Emmalyne Mathon hard at work in the English booth of the conference room at the International Coffee Organization in London. Photo: Carola Garth

We’d been asked to prepare material for both interpretation and sight translation as we were going to address our colleagues as speakers and interpreters of the material the others had prepared. The topics we needed to prepare included European foreign affairs, Brexit, climate change, human rights, trafficking and migration.

The ICO has a nice conference room with five interpreting booths, so we could practise our interpreting, speaking and listening skills. But it was not just interpreting: we also had classes on English enhancement and voice coaching. We were all non-native speakers, so there was a variety of accents.

As a conference interpreter you use different skills from the ones you would use as a legal or medical interpreter. I found the course very inspiring. The training group was nice, the teachers skilled and the atmosphere great. And, last but not least, London is of course a great place to be!

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**Promoting your business at a conference**

*Curtis Barrett*

Networking is the cornerstone of success. As freelancers we must always be on the lookout for new networking opportunities and we shouldn’t be afraid to think outside the box. To most freelance editors, a conference means a place to meet other editors, share ideas and learn about what’s new in the field of editing. But when I left scientific research, I saw conferences as an opportunity to stay in touch with former colleagues while promoting my new editing business.

The English Editing Solutions booth before the 10th FENS Forum of Neuroscience opens for business

As a neuroscientist, I belonged to several professional societies and regularly attended meetings to present my research. As an editor, I’ve kept my society memberships active and now attend meetings primarily as an exhibitor. In 2014, I had an exhibitor’s booth at the 9th FENS Forum of Neuroscience, a five-day conference in Milan attended by some 8,000 neuroscientists from around the globe. My booth drew a steady flow of traffic.
Although it’s difficult to calculate exactly how much new revenue came from this meeting, it’s safe to say that it more than paid for the investment. If you would like more information on the financials, please do not hesitate to get in touch. This past year, I again had a booth at the 10th FENS Forum of Neuroscience, this time in Copenhagen.

Writing up a razzle-dazzle congress

Cathy Scott

Whizzing over Niagara’s churning torrents in a seven-seater helicopter, I reflected on the stroke of luck that had got me invited to my best client’s latest congress in Toronto. A paid-for test project five years ago had led to my being chosen as the preferred writer (apparently in no small measure due to my tenacity in phoning around the office in search of someone who could explain the mysterious brief), and a similar lack of bashfulness had helped me worm my way onto the trip to the Falls that a thoughtful salesman had put together for his guests en route to the airport.

My client runs supermarket promotions, aka loyalty programmes: the kind that encourage you to save up points for massively discounted glassware (eg, the AH Crystal Glass promo) or reward you with collectable stickers or free toy animals for each €10 you spend.

It’s an amazingly lucrative business: 20 years after starting the company, the founder sold it in 2014 to a North American firm for hundreds of millions of dollars. Hilariously huge sums to a freelancer such as myself, who will be sending an invoice with slightly fewer noughts after reporting on the congress for the glossy corporate magazine, which is distributed to supermarket CEOs worldwide.

Lavish operations

After experiencing equally lavish affairs in Amsterdam and Barcelona, I’ve become familiar with the operation. It goes like this: within 36 hours of colonizing the vacant bowels of a carefully selected five-star hotel, the crew has built up half-a-dozen gleaming showcases of recent promotions, constructed the kind of glitzy bar you’d expect to find in a top-class hotel, installed a sweeping double staircase, kitted out a conference hall with a massive screen and hundreds of chairs, decked the entire place out in the chosen style and dotted around a few coffee bars to keep everyone awake after the previous evening’s festivities.

Once the doors open, I mingle with the guests, sit in on master classes, am whisked away on retail tours and listen in on speeches given by futurologists, data experts, media darlings and captains of industry. The idea is to convince delegates of my client’s thought leadership, and that the impeccable show of logistical excellence that characterizes each congress will be repeated on the supermarket floor.

So I listen, observe, smile politely at the networking scrums and rely heavily on my digital voice recorder to memorize the outpourings of wisdom. Sometimes I interview the big cheeses, who have included the worldwide CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi (who was hilarious) and the CTO of Amazon.com (a great big cuddly bear). Sadly, Jamie Oliver (this year’s star attraction) has ‘people’ to handle that sort of stuff for him.

Anyway, after several days of such conferencing razzle-dazzle, there we were, soaring towards the iconic Horseshoe Falls for a once-in-a-lifetime photo opportunity, when my phone camera suddenly announced its storage facility was full. WHAAAAAT?! Kind of an Icarus moment. And as if that wasn’t enough to bring me back down to earth with a thump, I still had an eight-hour night flight in Economy Class on the Indian carrier Jet Airways to look forward to, much of which I would spend diligently examining the linguistic idiosyncrasies of its Bollywood film descriptions. You can’t win ‘em all.
Impressions of METM16

This year, an exceptionally large contingent of SENSE members went to the Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting in Tarragona. And, by all accounts, the workshops and presentations by Joy Burrough, John Linnegar, Jackie Senior and Kate McIntyre went down very well. Rounding off this special Conference Collection, here are ten members’ impressions of their rewarding encounters with others in our professional community

John Edmund Hynd: Arrived at Tarragona to have lunch with Mary Ellen Kerans and three others. This Off-MET activity prepared us for the main event. Mary Norris was our keynote speaker this year, talking about The New Yorker style. Rob Lunn set out his ideas on how to perfect ‘A Systematic Approach to Translating Contracts into English’. METM16 was indeed another milestone in our joint efforts to improve professionals’ standards.

Kate McIntyre: I wish I could experience METM16 all over again. Being a first timer (with a green sticker!) meant that every presentation I attended was enriching and inspiring. I have so many notes and thoughts saved up that they’re going to take months to process. For me, the best thing was meeting sparky like-minded people excited about their work at, as Joy Burrough says, the linguistic ‘coalface’ (as quoted by Margaret Cargill).

Jenny Zonneveld: I’d heard from other SENSE colleagues that MET meetings were always of high quality and that the Off-MET activities were just as important as the conference itself. METM16 fully met my expectations in all respects. For me it was an unforgettable first international, multi-day conference experience... To be repeated (in Brescia, 27–29 Oct 2017).

Tony Parr: The joke about the perfect Italian murder will stay in my mind most about MET16. It was told by Jeremy Gardner at the end of his talk on ‘Misused English in EU publications’: while you’re out driving in your car, spot your victim and wait for him or her to attempt to cross the road at a zebra crossing. Stop so that they can cross. The car behind will then automatically crash into you, with fatal consequences.

Ann Bless: I’m still recovering from an exhausting but very worthwhile conference because of the wide choice of excellent talks and the professional and friendly participants. It was great to meet SENSE members whom I had not seen since I left the Netherlands in 2003. I’ll be there next year!

Jackie Senior: Attending MET meetings gives me a better perspective on my daily editing and translating work and what more I could do to improve things. This was my fifth METM. It’s a meeting I really enjoy because I get three whole days to interact with other English-language professionals in a great setting in (mostly) beautiful Mediterranean weather, and each year it’s in a different fascinating town. What more could one ask?

Paul Osborn: MET is a village, METM16, my sixth, our harvest festival. (Re)-new friendships, photos +++ Rejoice that some speakers still can (Norris) +++ Reap bushels on behaviour, hardware, reading, recipes, software, syntax +++ Plant strategic seeds: balance sheet, wider alliances +++ Did Van Morrison mean METM?: ‘Autumn sunshine, magnificent, streaming through window. On and on, over the hill, the craic is good [best].’

Erin Goedhart-Stallings: It was overwhelming! I both enjoyed it and found it exhausting – that was a lot of extroverting for a girl whose usual co-workers are cats. ;-) The workshops gave me a new way of describing my main role (an ‘author’s editor’), useful tips for working methodically and a venue for reintroducing my business. I was happy to expand my network of professional language geeks!

Marcel Lemmens: The thing that will stay in my mind most about MET16 is David Barick eating my bread roll during the closing dinner. But I forgive him. We had a very pleasant meal and a great conference in a wonderful town. The only further comment I can make is that the focus was on editing academic texts, which I don’t do. Perhaps the next one should be on editing educational materials. That’s what I do.

Kirsten van Hasselt: For me, the best thing about METM16 was meeting up with old friends and making new ones in an amazing city and at a fabulous venue. Not to mention how educational, informative, inspiring and motivating this superbly organized conference was. Can’t wait for next year’s conference in Brescia, Italy. I can highly recommend METM to all.

Post Scriptum

So there you have it, you’ve made it to the end of our Conference Collection. We hope you enjoyed the journey but if these nine stories haven’t completely slaked your appetite for conferences, finish off by reading this satisfying, lucid account of METM16 by the independent translator and editor Allison Wright: Melonqa, Tarragona style. Links shared with thanks to Jackie Senior. 

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REPORTAGE

Negotiating boundaries at the editorial-academic interface

Vanessa Goad

Dr Margaret Cargill recently presented an engaged audience of SENSE members with valuable insights into how to overcome today’s challenges to the successful completion and publication of post-graduate (scientific) research in English. Vanessa Goad reports

In Australia, research supervisors are staggering under a workload explosion. The compressed candidature of just three years for doctoral studies means that the time available to students to complete data collection and analysis competes with the time needed for staged development of doctoral-level writing skills. In the Netherlands, scientific editors and language trainers generally have very little contact with supervisors, who may overturn all their hard work in the final text.

Margaret Cargill runs a consultancy in Australia called ‘SciWriting: Communicating science effectively in English’. For her lectures, workshops and conference presentations she draws on over 25 years’ experience working intensively with international research students and their supervisors at the University of Adelaide.

In an ideal world...

...research supervisor development and student writing development are productively combined. Margaret was part of a team that implemented this approach, building on the University of Adelaide’s successful and internationally recognized Integrated Bridging Program (IBP, 1995-2008).

As part of this programme, the university ran an interactive evening activity to clarify supervision expectations: attendance was compulsory for all students and supervisors. The main purpose of the exercise was not the outcome, but the process, which facilitated the building of relationships and supervisor critique.

Back to reality

The IBP no longer incorporates this feature, and most academic institutions in Australia and the Netherlands do not implement such an approach. In Australia, provision of language training varies widely and is rarely embedded in specific discipline contexts. ‘Importing’ an external consultant to present lectures cannot ensure optimal timing in students’ writing trajectories. Supervisor feedback on drafts is often uninformed by pedagogical principles or best practice models.

Solutions and recommendations

In the absence of the ideal scenario, what other lessons can academic editors and language specialists apply to their reality? Margaret shared some of the tools that she has developed for workshops that she is increasingly being asked to give to institutional reviewers, as part of her consultancy business. These are elaborated on in the successful teaching text that she co-authored with Dr Patrick O’Connor, Writing Scientific Research Articles: Strategy and Steps (Wiley-Blackwell 2009, 2013).
‘This is science, it doesn’t have to be readable!’
A supervisor, speaking to a SENSE language trainer

**Understand the supervisor’s role**
An excellent bit of advice is to acknowledge not only how supervisors are involved in the writing process but also the pressures both students and supervisors are under to complete their studies within the allotted time. In Australia, financial stringency and new external evaluation requirements have combined to increase supervisors’ teaching and supervisory workloads. In the Netherlands, supervisor tenure is linked to grant funding and students have four years to complete their doctoral studies.

**Identify product or process focus for feedback**
In Margaret’s experience, it is extremely useful for research supervisors to know if they are looking at process or product at any supervisory meeting. A sliding scale represents the situation for different stages of candidature. Students and supervisors can use a *cover sheet* to accompany each research draft, clarifying the type of draft the supervisor (or editor) is looking at, together with expectations. Is it a planning draft, review draft (content) or near final (polishing rather than content)?

Another idea is to separate out different *focuses for editing and self-editing*. Giving feedback on content is a separate matter from argument, voice, language mechanics or formatting (1).

**Students to self-edit work first**
Students should self-edit their work before it goes to a supervisor or editor. They are advised to put aside a draft for 48 hours and to schedule this time into their planning.

The *self-edit procedure* involves printing the text and then reading it from beginning to end, marking the places that need attention without stopping to fix them. The student should then go back to address the issues they marked. This process should be repeated from beginning to end until the student is satisfied with the science. Students should also check referencing, especially their reasons for choosing the papers cited. In addition to editing for ‘discourse features’ (informative subheadings, topic headings etc.) they should also take separate passes through the document, editing for grammar, spelling and punctuation (consistency, ensure journal guidelines followed etc.).

**Recent developments and concerns for professional editors**
Recently, codes of ethics or best practice guidelines have been developed for editing research theses and other assessable work. Examples include the Australian Standards for Editing Practice (ASEP) developed by the Institute of Professional Editors (2). SENSE has developed the SENSE Guidelines, available on the website.

Margaret Cargill: ‘I love the difference between fixing and flagging in the SENSE guidelines.’
Mutual comprehensibility of the terminology editors use can help others to understand what editors do. ASEP differentiates between editing for:

- Substance and structure (not allowed for theses)
- Language and illustrations (allowed)
- Completeness and consistency (allowed)

Interestingly, at the University of Adelaide, material for professional editing or proofreading should be submitted in hard copy only – submission of electronic copy and use of ‘tracked changes’ by an editor is unacceptable! There was some discussion about whether this is useful way to work today, or whether editing of hard copy text is simply a skill that editors have lost.

**Substantive editing a form of plagiarism?**

In a recent paper by Lines (3), substantive editing of postgraduate theses and dissertations in Australia is defined as collusion, or ‘paying another person to perform an academic task and passing it off as your own’, and thus plagiarism (4). The author recommends either banning all external editing of theses, or implementing prior supervisor approval of editors. (In Australia, students are only examined on their completed thesis or dissertation. They do not have to defend it in a viva.) This led to an animated discussion around the definition of substantive editing.

For instance, Curtis Barrett said that he saw the substantive editor as an advisor, who can provide suggestions. ‘And if the student agrees, great! Is it any different from the role of a makeover artist?’ Curtis went on to note that in the US, some supervisors are willing to outsource aspects of their own supervisory roles. Margaret noted that the issue then is who takes responsibility for the outcome.

**To be resolved…**

The definition of what constitutes substantive editing in the eyes of different stakeholders, and the relationship between editor and supervisor, are in Margaret’s view important and unresolved issues facing professional academic editors today. On returning to Australia, Margaret will give a master class to tenured staff with the responsibility for doctoral papers – another method in her toolbox to improve the efficiency of post-graduate completion and publication.

**References**


The only way to bring in enough money when you’re self-employed is to constantly market your services. Guest blogger Katharine O’Moore-Klopf aka 'Editor Mom' offers some wise advice on how to put yourself out there, especially when you’re an introvert.

You may not believe me when I say that I’m an introvert, especially because you can find me all over the internet – on my blog Editor Mom, on Twitter, on LinkedIn, on Facebook and on profession-related email lists.

But I am indeed introverted, and I’ve found ways to work with my introversion rather than against it to keep it from hampering my success as a self-employed editor. These are some of them:

- Rather than using the phone, I correspond with colleagues and clients by email (or Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn) whenever possible. This allows me time to think through what I want to communicate and usually decreases the likelihood that I’ll communicate in a foolish manner. When I’m on the phone with someone, I worry about whether I sound goofy, whether I’m remembering to say all of the things that I wanted to communicate, and whether I’m boring the other person. Baseless fears, maybe, but there they are.

- I do work that doesn’t require lots of face time. Rather than being someone who covers science meetings (like many of my medical-writer colleagues) and who therefore has to go around interviewing people in person, I’m someone who edits documents that come out of science meetings. Believe it or not, I started my career as a newspaper journalist. Despite being an excellent writer who garnered many front-page stories, I lasted only two years: it was emotionally exhausting!

- I team up with extroverts when I need to appear in public, such as at meetings of professional associations (or at parties at the homes of friends). I let them be the conversation-starters and thus take the pressure off myself to perform.

- I don’t schedule public appearances on the fly. I schedule them well in advance so that I have time to get ready mentally. It’s not that we introverts hate being around people; it’s just that spending extended time with others tends to tire us mentally and emotionally, so we need time to prepare ahead of time and then time to recuperate afterwards.

- I’ve stopped bashing myself mentally for being an introvert. I used to think that society devalued introversion in favour of extroversion. Extroverts may get a lot of attention from others, but that’s because they command it, not because their way of being is better than that of introverts. Both extroverts and introverts are valuable parts of the human mix.
Social media platforms

I use Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, in addition to my own website, as part of my business presence. If you’re a freelance editorial professional, I think that you should do so too. My Facebook page is in my personal name, not my business’s name. That’s because when I signed up for Facebook, I wasn’t aware that businesses could have Facebook profiles. And at this stage I don’t want to have to do the work of setting up a business profile and then to have to remember to post only non-work stuff on my namesake profile and work stuff on my business profile. I do post the occasional personal note on Facebook, such as yesterday’s announcement that I believe I have the sweetest husband in the world, but I don’t believe that that reflects negatively on my professionalism. After all, editorial professionals do sometimes have life partners. ;-) But, generally, I post information and links about the publishing industry, science publishing, freelancing and health-care news. That’s because I’m a full-time freelance copyeditor and work mostly with medical manuscripts. Some of my clients have ‘friended’ me there; lots of my colleagues have. I like Facebook because it’s much more up-to-the-moment than my fairly static business website is. As I do with Twitter, I believe so strongly in the usefulness of Facebook that I am one of the people who manage the Facebook pages of the Council of Science Editors and the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences. LinkedIn, for me, serves as a more traditional-feeling venue for showcasing my résumé, work background and related information. I think it’s an excellent tool, especially for freelancers who don’t yet have their own business websites. The free version of LinkedIn will let you display all that you need to without the headaches of setting up and maintaining a website. Your profile will, though, have pretty much the same look as everyone else’s on LinkedIn, which isn’t the case on your own business website. You can establish your authority and reputation on LinkedIn by participating in group discussions and sharing your expertise when less-experienced peers ask questions. And you can use LinkedIn to find out information about potential corporate clients by studying their profiles.

I figure that, through my website, potential clients get a good idea of my professional qualifications. Through Facebook and Twitter, they get a fairly real-time sense of what it’s like to work and deal with me. Let’s face it: many of us have fired clients because even though they offered plenty of work, they treated us shoddily. It would be great to be able to determine ahead of time whether a potential client is going to be hell to work with or out of touch with industry best practices. Shouldn’t I give potential clients the chance to see whether, in addition to being well qualified, I’m also pleasant to deal with and knowledgeable about current events and trends in the fields I work in?

20 sensible marketing tips

- Network. Join and participate in professional associations and email lists.
- Maintain a professional-looking website. It’s your calling card on the internet.
- Use Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to showcase your skills and what you’re like to work with.
- Never complain about your clients on Twitter, Facebook, blogs or email lists.
- Treat all clients with the utmost respect and expect the same in return.
- Seek work from an attitude of abundance: desperation rarely attracts project offers.
- During both feast and famine, schedule time each week to contact potential clients.
- Don’t limit the hunt for clients to your geographical area — here the internet is your friend.
- Ask what you can do for clients. Never: ‘Got work for me?’ – focus on clients’ needs.
- Keep in contact with clients. The one whom clients remember is the one who gets the gigs.
- Keep up with individual clients as they move from job to job, and they’ll take you with them.
- Notify clients about your upcoming vacation. Some will offer projects for afterwards.
- Make sure authors know you’re on their side. Query respectfully and give compliments.
- Remember: the author is the subject-matter expert; you’re the editorial expert.
- Booked up and have to turn down a gig? Thank the client for the offer and check back soon.
- Referring a client to a trusted colleague when you’re booked up helps client and you.
- Be helpful to colleagues. It’s fun and it can also get you referrals from grateful associates.
- Doing pro bono editing for a charity? Request a credit in the published work.
- When clients praise your work, get written permission to quote them on your website.
- If you make a mistake, be professional: own up, apologize, fix it and move on.
How to quote for jobs: Part 3

Sally Hill discussed how to quote for translating and editing jobs in the two previous issues of eSense. In this concluding part of this series, she turns to copywriting.

In a recent thread on the SENSE forum, members provided useful advice on how to avoid exceeding an estimate for an editing job. Many of us have been in similar situations and it serves as a reminder that taking the time to prepare a quote that anticipates any interim changes or unexpected situations can save you headaches when it comes to invoicing – whatever the job concerned.

What do we mean by copywriting?
For starters, it’s probably handy to define what we mean by ‘copywriting’. In Dutch, a tekstschrijver is not necessarily the same thing as a copywriter since copywriting is often considered to apply only to advertising texts. Indeed, Wikipedia confirms that copy is ‘a content primarily used for the purpose of advertising or marketing’. So while in Dutch the distinction is easily made, in English there is apparently no term other than ‘writer’ for someone employed or contracted to write texts other than those intended for advertising. In fact, when completing one’s profile for SENSE, the only kind of writing service we can select is ‘copywriting’. I myself have recently started doing some medical writing, which sees me working with biomedical scientists at a biotech company to write internal scientific reports – a far cry from advertising or marketing. So it would appear that, within SENSE at least, the term ‘copywriting’ includes a broad range of writing assignments.

And what kinds of texts are we talking about?
A brief survey of a handful of the many copywriters in SENSE reveals that clients employ freelancers to write a wide variety of texts. These include brochures, internal corporate texts, conference reports, policy documents, interviews and other articles for company magazines, as well as website texts and expert blogs. SENSE also has a copywriting special interest group (SIG) and a glance at the topics discussed at their meetings tells me that writing for the web is a much-discussed item.

Can you write a brochure for us, Sally?
But let me tell you about my own experience quoting for a copywriting job. Four years ago the European Platform (now EP-Nuffic) asked me to write a 5000-word brochure on TTO (tweetalig onderwijs or bilingual education) in Dutch schools. Since I’d been teaching at TTO schools for several years and had presented at a TTO conference, I was the ideal person for the job they said. They were not put off by the fact that I did not actually have any experience with copywriting; they needed a native speaker who understood the system from the inside and could help explain TTO to teachers in other countries. Welcoming the challenge, and not averse to a spot of writing, I accepted the job. But of course they needed an idea of what I would charge – which is where I hit a brick wall and turned to SENSE for help.
SENSE to the rescue
I posted my forum question on how to estimate the time it would likely take me to write this brochure and SENSE members were most helpful. Although I’d heard somewhere that 4.5 hours per page was a good starting point, I was advised that copywriters never quote in terms of length of finished product (per word or per page) but rather per hour or per day, since the job rarely involves just sitting at your desk thinking up text. Indeed, I would also be meeting up with the client to go through the content, and be setting up and conducting several phone interviews. So the thing to do was to come up with a unit price for each quantifiable part of the job (per meeting or interview) and another for the unquantifiable parts, ie, X hours of research, Y hours of writing and Z hours per revision round; also bearing in mind that I was likely to underestimate each part and take this into account by giving a range for the total number of hours. This worked out well in the end: thanks to SENSE-ible advice, I raised my original naïve estimate of 28 hours up to 40 hours, which the client was happy with. Although I’ve not been asked to do anything similar since then, the experience did give me more confidence when quoting for courses and workshops, for which I also need to break down the costs involved.

Break the costs down
So a quote needs to include a list of things that you expect to be doing (such as meetings, phone calls, research, interviews, writing, revision rounds) and an estimate of the hours needed for each item, plus expenses such as travel costs and travel time if applicable. Then you need to state what is not included in the quote, what will affect the numbers of hours needed and when you can deliver by (download my example quote made with a template from the internet). If applicable, I often also state anything the client has agreed to provide me with, and by when, so that it’s down on paper that they must also meet their side of the bargain! For some of his clients, my graphic designer husband even requests a signed copy of the quote be sent to him by post before he’ll even start a job.

These kinds of breakdowns are not always needed though. If you do repeat jobs for the same client it may be more useful to have a fixed price for a press release, or a certain type of article, or a rewrite, with some jobs taking longer than others but averaging out about the same.

It’s in the details
In terms of how long the actual writing part takes, various people have given me their rule of thumb, which ranges from 75 to 200 words per hour. But of course this can depend on so many different factors, including the complexity of the topic, how familiar you are with it, and how much research you’ve done before starting the actual writing. In terms of hourly rates, SENSE’s 2012 rates survey indicates that these vary from €30 to €110 for copywriting. Finally, a factor that should also be considered when putting together a quote is how badly you want the job! After all, topics or clients that are appealing to you may reduce the amount you quote, whereas those that are unappealing may raise it. High-quality clients who pay on time, no questions asked, may well save you time and money in the end. More information on rates, pricing and other resources for copywriters can be found on the website of the Professional Copywriters’ Network in the UK.

And this concludes my three-part series on quoting for jobs. I hope I’ve managed to cover the majority of aspects we freelancers should consider when tackling this tricky task. If not feel free to get in touch and let me know. [1]

Thanks to SENSE copywriters for their input, including Martine Croll and Carla Bakkum.

The Dying Art Of Writing Head Lines

- Man Kills Self Before Shooting Wife and Daughter
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says
- Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
- Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
- Miners Refuse to Work after Death
- Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
- War Dims Hope for Peace
- If Strike Isn’t Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile
- Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures
- Enfield (London) Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges
- New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
- Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft
- Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
- Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half
- Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors
- Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead
- British Left Waffles on Falklands
PROFESSIONAL OPINION

Busting the myths of financial translation

Carla Bakkum

When Carla Bakkum tells people she specializes in financial translation, reactions vary all the way from awe to downright horror. But take it from somebody who has spent over 30 years Swimming with Sharks, the financial world is exciting. Here Carla busts seven common myths about the profession.

You need a financial background to be a word worker in this sector
False. I myself am a case in point. As a Dutch gymnasium student, I was never bothered with something as mundane as economics, and five years studying English at the University of Amsterdam made me none the wiser financially. But when private bank Pierson, Heldring & Pierson came to our professors looking for fresh translation talent, they recommended me, three-times winner of their department’s poetry translation contest. I blithely applied, having virtually no idea what I was letting myself in for, but knowing translation was where my heart lay.

A familiar face to many members, Carla Bakkum has a long history of volunteering, including being Chair of the Executive Committee of SENSE several times.

Though I didn’t get the in-house job, the head translator Silvia Zaugg called me not much later to ask if I’d like to work freelance for them. She coached me intensively through my first on-site assignments and unfailingly sent me back the revisions not long after. With the experience I gained, I applied for and won work from ABN AMRO: I was launched as a financial translator. And what got me there? An enquiring mind, a sharp pen and a knack for quickly learning new languages – such as financialese.

It’s all about numbers
False. Financial texts are about the real world, about economic activity in all its varieties. Translating stock market updates, annual reports and press releases means treating yourself to a crash course in anything from beer brewing to baby nutrition, from aviation to nanotechnology, from power plants to solar cells. Some inking of chemistry and physics is a real help, I find, and can actually give you an edge on the investment writer whose text you’re working on (who has typically studied economics or law). If you enjoy developing a broad knowledge base and learning something new every day, you have the makings of a financial translator.

It’s mind-bogglingly difficult
Sorry, not entirely a myth. Besides developing more than a nodding acquaintance with a myriad businesses, translating investment texts and annual reports means getting to grips with exotic beasts like hedge funds, interest-rate swaps, CoCos, floating rate notes, bear straddles, impairment, EBIDTA, tier 1 ratios…. And just when you think you’re on top of things, financial innovations like …

*Swimming with Sharks: My Journey Into the World of the Bankers* by Joris Luyendijk
bitcoin and blockchain technology come along. Enough to make your head swim! Looking on the bright side, though, Google is your friend, and finance is one of the best-documented fields on the internet. If you do this kind of work long enough, you may actually one day catch your investment writers talking through their hats.

**It’s ho-hum boring**
False. If the variety and complexity of the subject matter isn’t enough to keep you on an adrenaline high, the tight deadlines will surely do the trick. Nowhere is timely information more a make-or-break factor than in the investment business, and nowhere does news turn stale more quickly. So if you can’t deliver that update the same day or overnight, you may as well not bother. Even then, in the time you need to translate your update, new events may reduce it to toilet-paper status. I was rarely more frustrated than the day I worked flat out to deliver a 2,500-word article, only to be told the next day they wouldn’t be using it and asked to translate a completely new one. On a positive note, I did, of course, get paid for both.

**It’s a boom-and-bust business**
It depends. There is a sizeable core of financial translation, editing and writing that needs doing whether business is booming or in the depths of recession. Annual reports, for example. But the times when I was translating one IPO prospectus a week are long gone. The 2008 recession had a definite impact on my top line. Over the years, however, my brushes with a range of industries while working for banks enabled me to win business clients outside the financial industry as well. I worked to expand in those areas and on broadening my own offering by venturing into copywriting.

**There is no fun in financial translation**
False, definitely false! The language of the stock market in particular oozes imagery. What is essentially just a matter of price variations over time is described in the financial pages with a poetic zest that is second only to that seen in sports journalism – perhaps because securities trading, like competitive sports, is an activity where modern humans (overwhelmingly men) sublimate their primordial lust for battle. Stocks can soar and nosedive, markets and profit-and-loss accounts can colour red, and Mario Draghi of the ECB has a Big Bazooka he can fire to defend the euro. Even if you’re not writing for the dailies, your texts are often meant for your client’s clients, and therefore need to be engaging and pleasant reading, a worthy calling card for the organization. The authors are rarely talented writers. Taking their pumpkin and mice and turning that into a golden carriage with six white horses is a significant added value that we, the fairy godparents of communication, bestow on our financial clients.

**The financial industry is an evil empire that nice word workers like us should shun**
False. Yes, false. Let me start by saying that among the people I have dealt with personally, the #@’hole count was extremely low. Many of my contacts are in-house translators, who are up against the same problems I face, but have to bear the brunt of all the office politics, too. The financial specialists I’ve worked with, barring a few exceptions, are dedicated and decent people. It was a horrifying experience watching the 2008 sub-prime crisis unfold from my particular vantage point as a freelancer and a word worker. As I see it, the downfall of the mighty banks was perhaps not so much a matter of toxic assets as of toxic jargon. The quants who created the overly complex securities, and the traders who traded them, spoke a language that even their own bosses didn’t understand, let alone the investors who bought the securities. As in the fairy tale of the emperor’s new clothes, nobody dared admit they were clueless – or they preferred to ask no questions as long as the returns were so phenomenal.

As a word worker in this sector, you have the option to either go with the flow or spread a little clarity. I was once asked by a pension fund client to summarize and then translate into Dutch a lengthy ‘explanation’ of hedge funds. It had been given to them by a New York asset manager they had hired to invest in hedge funds on their behalf. One of my most challenging jobs ever! When I’d finished, the text was down to manageable size, readability greatly improved, jargon overload pruned – and the vital bad-news info that had been tucked away in the footnotes was now restored to the body text. A real eye-opener for my client.

These days, with the harsh spotlight of public opinion shining more intensely on them than ever, financial institutions need to communicate more clearly, both internally and externally, and many are taking steps in the right direction. They are on the threshold of a much-needed culture shift, and as communication specialists we play a key role. ◀
What a perfectly wonderful book to unwrap, if it comes in the post or as a present. Let’s stay with the dust jacket for a moment. When did you last see a font used so wittily to convey a message? I looked in vain for information in what we should not call the colophon, but I’m almost sure the second English is Verdana. What do you make of it?

Simon Horobin
Oxford University Press, 2016

Fluent pen
A long time ago, as a student of English lang. and lit., I ploughed my way through Simeon Potter’s Our Language, which had come out in 1950. Regrettably it had to go the way of all books when I last moved house, downsizing yet again, so I can’t do an accurate comparison; but I don’t think I found it fascinating reading at the time. This Simon, though, has such a fluent pen, and such lovely examples to support his points, that you read his book for fun and hardly ever feel you are reading a seriously scholarly work. Which it is!

Horobin begins by illustrating the changes in and the varieties of the English language by taking a short Bible text – Luke 15:11–16 – and giving different versions in Old English (from the fifth century AD to the Norman Conquest in 1066); in Early Modern English (the King James version of the Bible published in 1611); in modern Scots (a version from 1983 by William Laughton Lorimer); in Tok Pisin, a Creole language spoken in Papua New Guinea; and in Modern English (a translation for which he doesn’t give the source). He mentions, but does not include, a 2005 Australian version in text speech, specially commissioned to make the Bible ‘more accessible to young people’, which opens with: ‘In da Bginnin God cre8d da heavens & da earth’. How accessible is that? Looks more like hard work to me.

The book goes into great detail showing the origins of English and the influences of Latin and Greek, Old Norse and French (the last of these particularly during the eighteenth century), and illustrating how the different borrowings turn up in various registers. I quote:

‘The Old English word bird gives us a term of abuse, birdbrain, Latin avis is the source of more technical words such as aviation and aviary, while Greek ornith is the root of exclusively scientific formations, such as ornithology.’

An interesting chapter is the one on Authorities. The first famous attempt was of course Dr Johnson’s Dictionary of the English Language of 1755, but it had a predecessor in Robert Cawdrey’s Table Alphabetical of 1604, in which he addresses ‘Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other vnskilfull persons’. You wouldn’t dare say that today! We all know about the American Heritage Dictionary, the Oxford English Dictionary (which in 2013 included the erroneous use of the word literally), Webster’s dictionary, which first came out in 1828, and Merriam-Webster’s Third of 1961. And not forgetting H.W. Fowler’s Modern English Usage of 1926. Fowler set out to be prescriptive rather than descriptive, and his book saw a fourth edition in 2015 entitled A Dictionary of Modern English Usage.

Then came Eric Partridge with Usage and Abusage in 1942. Amusing detail: Fowler allows, in fact prefers, firstly whereas Partridge abhors it and says it should be first. American English, of course, has the inimitable Strunk & White’s The Elements of Style, first published in 1920, also as prescriptive as can be. That is no criticism: we wordsmiths love being told what to do, hence the success of Lynne Truss’s Eats, Shoots and Leaves.
Basket of adorkables

Although all these supposed authorities claim to be descriptive and not prescriptive, the very fact that some words are included and others are not makes them ipso facto prescriptive. There have been attempts to allow users to have a say rather than just the lexicographers. When the Collins’ dictionary came out in 2014, users were allowed a Twitter vote and that is how the word adorkable became an entry:

‘The best kind of guys! A guy that is a nerd, but in a very cute/adorable way that is very attractive. They are not afraid to be themselves and are usually very sweet, smart, and have the best sense of humour once you get to know them. Best of all, they know how to treat a girl well and appreciate her. Plus, they’re really good to have around when the computer breaks.’

Not exactly OED stuff! As soon as you have established that there are authorities, there must also be standards, so what is Standard English? In 1589 George Puttenham was one of the first people to give a definition:

‘Ye shall therefore take the vsual speech of the Court, and that of London and the shires lying about London within sixty myles, and not much aboue.’

We don’t seem to have progressed much since, because what used to be called Received Pronunciation is now called Estuary English: English as it is spoken around the Thames Estuary. All other versions of UK English have some kind of stigma attached to them. As George Bernard Shaw put it once: ‘It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishmen hate or despise him.’

‘Why Do We Care?’

There is an interesting chapter on accents and dialects in which we are reminded that accents are usually considered endearing and comforting, whereas dialect, which includes a different vocabulary and non-standard grammar, is frowned upon. We have all sometimes wondered whether something is a dialect or a language. Why is Frisian a language and Gronings not? One jocular answer is: A language is a dialect with a flag! In the last chapter, Why Do We Care?, Horobin says:

‘As users of English it is impossible for us to take an external stance from which to observe current usage. As we have all had to acquire the English language, negotiating its grammatical niceties, its fiendishly tricky spellings, and its unusual pronunciations, it is impossible for us to adopt a neutral position from which to observe debates concerning correct usage. […] Conventions of correct usage are drummed into us early in our lives, by parents and school teachers, and it is very difficult to shake these off in adulthood.’

Reading books on English language has a paralysing effect on one’s own writing skills. When is something right and when is it not? Or is there no such thing? Up to her dying day, my English aunt, who lived to be 99, would correct me if I asked ‘Can I come?’ and would say sternly: ‘It should be may I come?’ I thought but never dared reply: ‘Oh, don’t be ridiculous.’ Ridiculous or not, Tesco changed the sign at the checkout points that said 10 items or less to 10 items or fewer. Waitrose has: Up to 10 items. Thank you, Simon Horobin, for reminding us that SENSE members are not the only ones who worry about such niceties.

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**Savage Chickens** do punctuation

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*Savage Chickens* by Doug Savage

'THE LATEST IN PUNCTUATION'

- UM......
- HEY......
- HEY......
- HELLO!
- HELLO!
- HELLO!
- BELCH!
- BELCH!
- BELCH!
- GORILLA!
- GORILLA!
- GORILLA!

*by Doug Savage*
First of all, what brought you here?
After 30 years in Chicago, my parents moved back to the Netherlands in 1981. I visited them in 1983, loved it, and decided to spend a year here, mainly to get to know my extended family. (I have more than a hundred first cousins.) I arrived in April 1986 with two suitcases and a terrible cold. Before long I discovered my true calling – translation – and I’ve never looked back.

Have you always been a keen runner?
No, not at all. I was a ‘brain’ in high school, not a jock. I started running in my late twenties and kept it up on and off for many years. I only got serious in my late forties, when a cousin challenged me to enter a race. Now that I’m in my late fifties, my focus has changed a little. I want to keep running for as long as I can, and that means being mindful of running form and building muscle to support my joints and ward off injury. I run three times a week and go to the gym twice a week for strength training, concentrating on core and leg muscles: planks, squats, lunges, glute bridges, Russian twists… ugh! A lot of runners think they can do without cross-training, but after struggling with a few injuries, I’ve come to realize how vital it is.

Do you run alone or with a group? And if both, which do you prefer?
When I moved back to Maastricht in 2012, I joined the local chapter of the Atletiekunie, Atletiek Maastricht. Before then I always ran alone and used training plans that a cousin put together for me. But joining the club has really taken my running to new levels. The trainers coach us in proper running form and help us build distance and speed without risking injury. The club organizes running workshops, for example on chi-running, as well as local races and group excursions to bigger events. We also use social media of all kinds for communication and networking. Above all, joining the club has given me a great group of friends. We started
out as running buddies but it’s grown well beyond the clubhouse. I love running with the group, but I still enjoy running on my own too. They’re very different experiences. Running with the group is very social – lots of chatter – but it can also be surprisingly personal. I’ve had some remarkably intimate conversations with other runners on the trail. Running alone is more like meditation. I get into the zone and my mind flicks between ‘How’s my body doing?’, ‘How can I solve that thorny translation problem?’ and ‘Is there a God and what does she eat for dinner?’.

Do you run in all weather?
Absolutely. I’ve run in snowstorms, heavy rain and on scorching hot days. (I don’t recommend the latter, however.) I recently got caught in a terrible electrical storm during a 10k race. That was scary and visibility was so poor that I actually managed to get lost! (Don’t ask…) But we all made it over the finish line, battered but unbowed.

I understand you compete?
I’ve run 5k, 10k, 15k and half marathons. Last year was exceptional: I ran two half marathons, three 15k, two 10k and a 5k race all in the course of one year. This year I’m taking it easier – only five races in all! What I love about running is that I don’t compete against others as much as against myself. I look at how I do in my age category (the ‘F55’), and I always finish in the top third, and usually top quarter. One of my best races so far was the annual 10k race in Liège, where I came in second out of 88 competitors in my category.

What makes it so special for you?
To be honest, it’s a kind of addiction. I feel unhappy when I can’t run, so motivation isn’t a problem. Although the scientific evidence isn’t conclusive, running may help produce neurotransmitters that relieve stress and tickle the pleasure centres of the brain. It certainly feels that way for me. My mood always improves and I feel better able to cope with the stresses and strains of everyday life. I also like being fit and strong at age 57. It gives me confidence to know that I can still bound up the stairs and run to catch a train without getting winded. I only wish more women my age would get involved in sports and physical exercise.

Do you combine it with work, consciously timing a run as a break in the workday, say, or do you do it to relax after – or prepare you for – a day at the coalface?
Sometimes I run in the early morning, sometimes in the evening or mid-afternoon, to break up the working day. I try to stick to a weekly schedule, but the time of day depends more on deadlines, workload and other factors.

Do you have long-term goals with running?
I would love to run a full marathon someday. It would be a great way to celebrate my 60th birthday.
Translation group is thriving in Utrecht

The Utrecht translation group is thriving, probably in part due to the regular meeting venue (the Park Plaza) being so convenient to Centraal Station. But we also are blessed with interested and interesting people doing a wide variety of work, and we are perhaps most of all lucky in that for three years now, our former hostess Helene Reid has offered her home for our now-annual fall dinner. This year’s season got off to a tasty and gezellig start with a catered dinner cooked on the premises. Our next meeting is on Wednesday 9 November at the Park Plaza Hotel. This time we’ll have a text to work on. Details follow - watch your sensenews mail! – Anne Hodgkinson

My SENSE 2.0

The new website is continuing to take shape with the focus now on the Members’ site, accessible through a special dropdown menu. We have a new look for the popular SENSE forum and a new Events Calendar which will give an at-a-glance view of all upcoming events. We have also been reorganizing content to create a new more user-friendly, easy-to-navigate online library. We will be announcing the launch date of SENSE 2.0 in the next issue of eSense. – Linda Comyns

Call for workshop subjects

Plans for workshops early in 2017, though not yet quite fully-fledged, include one on CAT tools and another on light, medium and heavy editing. It goes without saying that I always welcome suggestions or requests for workshop subjects from members. So fill up my mailbox! – Robert Coupe

Breaking down the teacher-student barrier

The theme of the SIG for Educators’ next meeting will be ‘Motivating and Inspiring Your Students’. Our guest speaker will be Laetis Kuipers (right). Laetis has a wealth of experience as a university trainer of both scientific and business English, and has many useful tips on how to break down the teacher-student barrier. I’m sure her observations will lead to a stimulating discussion of our own individual experiences in this area. Start collecting your stories now! Mark your diaries: SIG Ed, Saturday, 3 December. More details on the EVENTS page. – David Barick
Socializing in Mijdrecht

The SENSE social media team recently got together to discuss social media matters whilst enjoying a delicious lunch at Jenny Zonneveld’s home in Mijdrecht. There was plenty to talk about, including how to increase our social media presence and which articles attract different readerships. Between the four of us (Gini Werner, me, Jenny and Marianne Orchard), we post a wealth of interesting and useful information on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn every day, so don’t forget to check out the SENSE pages whenever you can. – Anne Paris

Onstage in Antigone

Former SENSE Treasurer Francis Cox (below, left) has a second career besides his work as a freelance copywriter. He regularly appears on stage, in corporate videos, short films and the occasional TV ad. On 4 and 25 November he is appearing in Antigone, the ancient Greek tragedy by Sophocles, at Het Compagnietheater in Amsterdam. Staged by the International Theatre in English, with a cast of 30 Dutch and international artists, the production pays homage to all women who once dared to be a girl. Francis says, ‘This is the second time we’ve done the show. We did two sold-out performances in March. The production was very well received so I’m looking forward to getting back on stage.’ Click here for more information and to book your seats.

Copywriting words that matter

Lost for words? In the sense that you’ve been asked to write something on a sensitive topic and have been instructed to avoid mentioning ‘that which cannot be said’? Or that you don’t want to be shallow but need to get a tough message across in the most understandable way possible? Or that you’re writing about something excruciatingly boring and need to keep your readers on board at least till they hit the relevant button. Or that the man from marketing is set on shoving his favourite keywords or company tagline down the readers’ throats, whatever the cost. At the November meeting of the Copywriting SIG (members only), we discussed the words that matter to your audience, and how to find which words do matter. – Martine Croll
Farewell Stephen Machon as 'finlegsig' convener

Seated at the piano, Stephen Machon is surrounded by members of the special interest group (SIG) he founded especially for financial and legal translators in SENSE. Stephen has handed over leadership to new co-conveners, Liz van Gerrevink and John Hynd. Stephen’s last official activity was to organize a day out in The Hague, featuring a group lunch (Dutch treat) top-and-tailed by guided tours of the Raad van State and the Peace Palace. The outing ended with a borrel at Schmullers where members showed their appreciation for what Stephen has done for the SIG. John Alexander and Christina Guy presented him with a bouquet of flowers and a magnificent gift of a pen engraved with ‘machon editing’ (yes, lower case) to which all attending had contributed. Since Stephen has also retired from his law firm, which hosted finlegsig’s meetings, the handover also means a change of venue to the Park Plaza Hotel (and, yes, to upper case for the group’s name). The next meeting of FINLEGSIG will be on Thursday 8 December. Interested members can track developments on the FINLEGSIG forum (members only).

METM16 exceeds expectations for inter-society liaison

Expectations for forging closer inter-society liaison were exceeded at METM16. Not only did our approaches regarding greater sharing and collaboration fit in perfectly with this year’s METM conference theme, but they were enthusiastically received by the chairs of MET and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), a UK association for practising translation and interpreting professionals. Plans are now in place to put words into action at a tripartite meeting to be held early in 2017. – John Linnegar

Professional Development Day

Generally regarded by participants as a fun and informative event (with some room for improvement), the Professional Development Day took place this year at Seats2Meet in Utrecht. Want to see more? Download the photo story by Cathy Scott, eSense 43 PDD Pictorial.
Teamwork on arts translation

Marcel Lemmens and I often revisit the theme of ‘cultural translation’ in our Teamwork workshops. But why? It all started at the Dutch Open Air Museum [1] in Arnhem, where we held our first ‘museum workshop for translators’ in the 1990s. There we encountered the problems of intercultural translation during a talk by the museum’s in-house translator. For example, as with ‘snow’ in Inuit, there are countless Dutch terms for the myriad types of windmill. Painstaking research may find you possible translations for a *paltromolen* or *tjasker*, but will the English terms actually mean anything to a foreign visitor? And what if that visitor happens to come from Italy or India?

Other questions came up during our workshop at the Rijksmuseum in 2001 – well before the Big Renovation. With talks by two curators and a translation workshop-cum-treasure hunt under the watchful eye of translator Sammy Herman, we felt truly privileged. It was there that we realized just how much is involved in translating for the arts. We even discovered that the very role of ‘text’ was a hot potato in the Dutch museum world: every museum had its own ideas and opinions.

On to the Scheepvaartmuseum in 2014. During a previous visit to the museum, I had been struck by the fact that it was fully bilingual in every possible respect. One of the curators explained how this worked, and a staff translator from Duo Vertaalburo in Maastricht was on hand to guide us through the difficulties involved in translating for the three different ‘visitor profiles’.

Latest workshop

Although we were off-site for our latest workshop, *Alles pracht en praal*, our case-study museum, Paleis Het Loo in Apeldoorn was most cooperative, providing both materials and a speaker, Karlien Dijkstra (left). A highly textually aware educator, Karlien is also required to work with visitor profiles and within the confines of political correctness as laid down by the Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst.

Also on hand was arts translator Laura Bennett (right) who came over from the UK to introduce the audience to the fineries of arts translation and the research skills required.

SENSE expert arts translator David McKay laid on some fascinating translation challenges during his into-English workshop in the afternoon, including the problem of writing for a global audience, the issue of ‘writing blind’ and the thorny issue of nomenclature. We learnt about hierarchy in the different types of gallery texts and sought to implement the tremendously useful guidelines published by the Victoria & Albert Museum.

In short, museums are now clearly far more aware than they used to be of the role played by text and of the different types of visitor for whom they need to cater. And with many Dutch museums becoming more and more international, there’s lots of work in the pipeline for culturally sensitive translators. – Tony Parr

[1] Referred to on its website alternately as the ‘Holland Open Air Museum’ and the ‘Netherlands Open Air Museum’. Ugh.
Honourable mention for Helene Reid

Our colleague Helene Reid recently had cause for a special celebration. The *Beroepsvereniging Zelfstandige Ondertitelaars* (BZO, Society of Independent Subtitlers) thanked her for having initiated its *Ondertitelprijs* (Subtitling Prize) and for funding the prize so far. The prize has been awarded three times now: once for a TV programme, once for a feature film and this time for a subtitler’s total oeuvre. Till now Helene’s identity had been kept a secret, but with the BZO taking over the organization of the award she was at last revealed to have been the generous donor.

– Kirsten van Hasselt

Rebranding a business (I)

Sally Hill has given her company a new name. When she set up in business as a freelancer back in 2008 it was mainly as a translator. ‘But now,’ she explains, ‘I’ve stopped translating and moved into teaching and writing (though still editing) which means that the old name no longer fits the bill. Rather than go the whole hog and rebrand with a new logo, I’ve just adapted the name from Scientific Translations to Scientific Texts.’

Website: [www.scientific-texts.nl](http://www.scientific-texts.nl) and email: s.hill@scientific-texts.nl

Rebranding a business (II)

Erin Goedhard-Stallings has also rebranded her business. ‘It’s official,’ she says, ‘I’m now Stallings English Language Services’.

Website: [www.stallings.nl](http://www.stallings.nl) and email: erin@stallings.nl.

Welcome to the world… of SENSE

Congratulations to SIG Far North’s Laura Damiano for giving birth to Camilla, a future member of SENSE (perhaps). Mother and child are doing really well. Laura says, ‘Camilla was born on 16 October and she’s been an easygoing baby, at least in her first couple of weeks.’ Photo by Camilla’s father, Marco Demaria.

A very warm welcome to our (real) new members:

Annemarie van den Heuvel (Culemborg), Lindsay Rubino (Ophoven, Limburg), Kessella Richardson Levy (The Hague), Megan Hershey (Heerhugowaard), Katie McCandless (Amsterdam), Melita Mulder (Zoetermeer), Marianne Bellingwout (Oosterhout, North-Brabant) Patricia Canning (Woerden) and Andrew J. Meyer (The Hague).