

Working together

Lauren Shadi points out that colleagues working in the same language combination are allies, not enemies

Many years ago, as an interpreter in a court case, I became involved in a situation with repercussions. My client, a solicitor, had asked me to sit at the back of a courtroom to ensure that the court interpreter interpreted correctly. Of course, I agreed to do it; I was being paid to do a job and my loyalties lay with my client. It's a fairly common, even if slightly uncomfortable, scenario, and any confident, competent interpreter should have faith in their own ability and skill. There is no reason to feel threatened, and the interpreter should certainly not make an unprofessional scene in the courtroom or, even years later, post unhelpful comments on social media...but that was what happened. And yet it shouldn't have.

When I started out as a freelancer back in 2009, I noticed very early on how guarded fellow French-English translators were when discussing the sources of their work. And I completely understood why. We all want to make a living. We all want work, and at the moment work may seem in particularly short supply. In our industry, as in every other, there is competition. However, I do believe that there is enough work for all good translators and interpreters, and a cut-throat attitude towards our colleagues merely taints our profession with negativity.

Turning opposition round

I firmly believe that linguists working with the same language pairs can use this common ground to the advantage of all. Some years ago, I posted a term query on a translator forum and was met with a backlash from translators who told me loudly that I should not have taken on a job if I was not cut out for it. Even though many others messaged me privately in a much kinder and more supportive way, assuring me that the group was there for

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people to ask questions and assist one another, and advising me to take no notice of critical comments, it took me a very long time before I felt up to posting again on the same forum. And when I did, eventually I saw another translator receiving similar treatment. But this time, I sent a supportive private message.

In fact, over the years I have developed a wonderful working relationship with a fellow French to English translator, which, as I am sure she would agree, has turned out to be mutually beneficial: I have paid her to train me on the use of CAT tools; we consult each other with terminology-related queries; we

advise each other if we find ourselves in difficult situations in the course of our work; she is my first port of call if ever I am unable to accommodate a job; we have shared projects and proofread each other's work; and she recommended me to one of her clients, who subsequently sent me a steady supply of projects.


A little more conversation

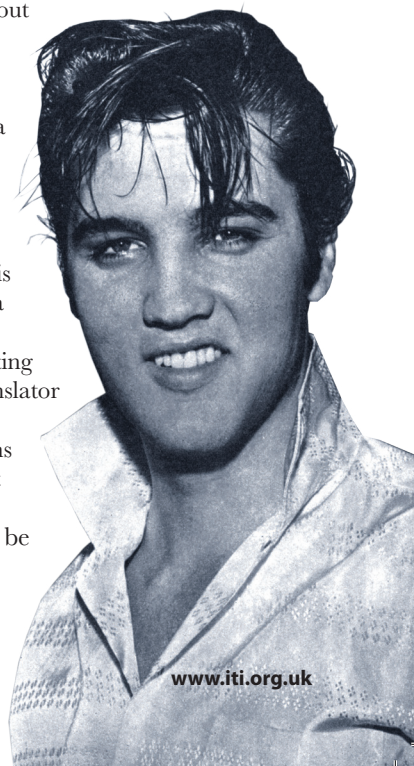
Other examples of how we can use our shared language combinations in a positive way are the language networks within ITI.

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how to translate a term.

The French Network has proved invaluable in this regard; I have frequently found myself faced with a looming deadline and been able to reach hundreds of translators immediately with one click on a keyboard, receiving just as many replies within minutes. Similarly, it is fantastic to be able to benefit from a place to check whether it is worth registering with that agency purporting to promise the world on certain translator sites. We are even able to help one another by issuing warnings of scams (see Kari Koonin's article in the last issue of the *Bulletin*).

So, to quote Elvis Presley, 'let's be friends', and view each other as colleagues, collaborators, and opportunities – not threats. 



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Lauren Shadi is a FR>EN translator and FR<>EN interpreter. After translating and interpreting in-house for a property developer, flying between France and the UK, she has worked freelance since 2008 and specialises in the legal and commercial fields. She owns Give Me Your Word Ltd, and lives in Manchester with her husband and three children. She thrives on interpreting in the criminal justice system.