



# Translation Talk

Interviews conducted by students in the M.A.  
in Global Communication & Applied Translation Program.  
Fall 2020



# DAVID BEDUSSA

David Bedussa is a Senior Localization Project Manager at A2Z Global Language Solutions based out of Collingswood, New Jersey. In his role as a Senior Localization Project Manager, David manages multilingual teams transnationally and plays a pivotal role in developing comprehensive project plans for his global teams. Under the management of David, his teams assist in the localization and foreign language translation of high-volume technical translations in information technology, medical, aerospace, and defense domains.

## **How instrumental was your MA in Cultural Communication and Linguistics in procuring any of your previous jobs or current career?**

Very instrumental. The 6 languages that I speak and my degree gave me an advantage over other candidates in project management. It should be specified though that the “linguistic” aspect is relevant only in more junior roles, senior managers rarely use their linguistic skills in more senior positions.

## **Can you describe any of the project(s) that you currently manage?**

This really depends on the company that you end up with and your passions. It’s hard for me to speak on just one project that I manage, so I’ll give you a run-down of the industry. The industry is very fragmented, there are translation giants (the big guys) like Transperfect and Lionbridge and then there are the smaller language service providers, which are usually started by a translator or linguist and mostly consist of smaller businesses. Usually these companies have the standard TEP approach and in-house linguists. The projects you end up working with ultimately depend on your passions in specific domains, so choose wisely.

## **Because you currently lead multilingual teams transnationally, how essential is your own extensive language knowledge and technical knowledge in your day-to-day operations as a localization project manager?**

It is somewhat important. I sometimes proofread and I review documents in addition to all of the management. It is one of the main final steps before a project is submitted to client and completed. If I am reviewing something and am not entirely sure, the other reviewers compensate for my gaps in language or technical knowledge. I am the client’s main contact and keep everything on schedule and flowing systematically.



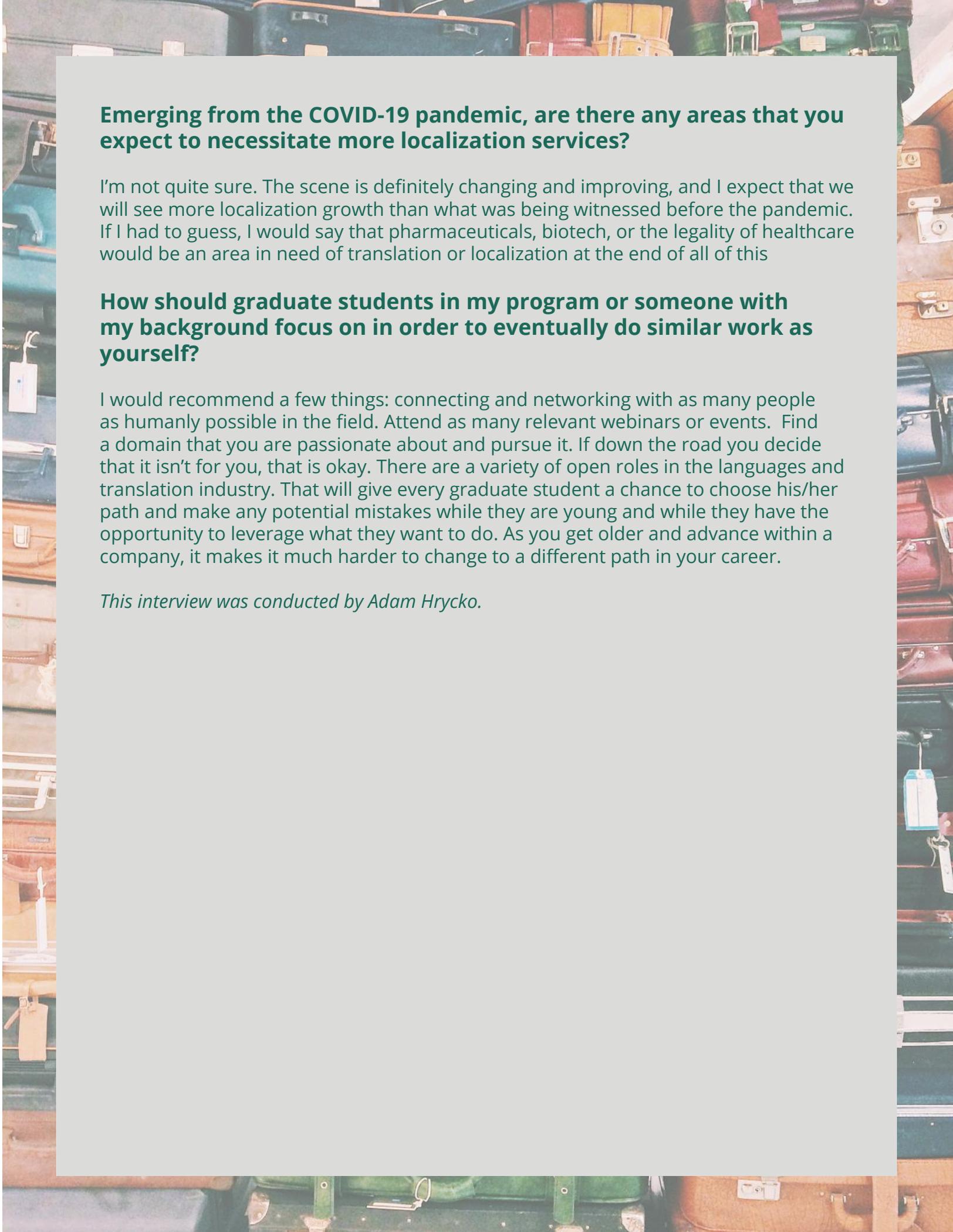
Few colleagues in the past got burnt out from the extensive work and in my own experience, a lot of project managers are often conflicted between their passion for languages and their ability to effectively bring projects to a conclusion. Some of my past colleagues chose to go back to being translators or doing some cultural communications work.

**In your function as a localization project manager, what role does translation play in the localization process, and because of the ever-increasing reliability of machine translation, how do you value machine translation vs human translators?**

It is complicated on many levels. It often depends on the company focus, their approach and business strategy. Several industries like the military or defense translation simply won't allow MT since it would mostly be inefficient. If you're doing legal translation with thousands of pages of documents, it's a different story, especially for the trivial components or word or phrasing duplicates within the document. Every company has their preference, and it really comes down to the company's approach. What I'm seeing now is that experienced translators who have been working in their fields for decades have a hard time adapting to the new industry technology innovation standards and fall into their niches and aren't open to working with other CAT tools or language technologies required by some companies. Personally, I believe machine translation is not all good and not all bad, it always depends on the sophistication of the tool and what you decide to put into it. On the opposite side of that, human error is inevitable at times and maybe the future will look like a mix of neural MT and human effort. We are also seeing a surge in interest from clients in Global SEO and Global Social Media Management, these are rather new fields that have enormous potential in the future.

**Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has swept across the globe and has forced governments to close borders and prioritize domestic industries, how has/will the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted globalization/translation/localization providers?**

It hasn't. I didn't see any change at least from my field. As I like to say "We were working remotely before it was cool". Meaning that our industry has always been a pioneer in the WFH setting. A lot of my colleagues were remote before the pandemic and as a whole we generally saw an increase in our work. We have actually seen a rise in demand for localization services, at least within my domain and expect that to continue emerging from the pandemic. This is probably due to the fact that a lot of companies are actually working more when working from home and there is a lot of research proving that industries overall are more productive when working from home. So there is some hope if you are entering the job market.



## **Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, are there any areas that you expect to necessitate more localization services?**

I'm not quite sure. The scene is definitely changing and improving, and I expect that we will see more localization growth than what was being witnessed before the pandemic. If I had to guess, I would say that pharmaceuticals, biotech, or the legality of healthcare would be an area in need of translation or localization at the end of all of this

## **How should graduate students in my program or someone with my background focus on in order to eventually do similar work as yourself?**

I would recommend a few things: connecting and networking with as many people as humanly possible in the field. Attend as many relevant webinars or events. Find a domain that you are passionate about and pursue it. If down the road you decide that it isn't for you, that is okay. There are a variety of open roles in the languages and translation industry. That will give every graduate student a chance to choose his/her path and make any potential mistakes while they are young and while they have the opportunity to leverage what they want to do. As you get older and advance within a company, it makes it much harder to change to a different path in your career.

*This interview was conducted by Adam Hrycko.*