

Nóra Zilahy

Business partner manager

Espell translation and localization ltd.

Freelance translator

Subtitling, translating, proofreading



Main areas

- translation and subtitling of European Parliament videos
- translation of EU (Parliament, Commission) documents
- translation of social sciences studies
- translation of technical documents
- translation of pharmaceutical documents
- translation of touristic documents
- translation of educational documents

Education

2007 – 2008	Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Department of Translation and Interpreting Translator and interpreter specialized in social sciences and economy "A" Hungarian, "B" English (postgraduate training)
1999 – 2002	Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Faculty of Humanities Master of Arts in English Language and Literature with TESOL Qualification (MA)
1998 – 2003	Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Faculty of Humanities Aesthetics (MA)
1995 – 1999	Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Faculty of Humanities, Centre for English Teacher Training Bachelor of Education in English Language Teaching (BA)

“What is the best thing about translating? Translators are independent. We are our own masters and we can choose what to translate or where to work.”

There are only a few people who have experienced so many areas of translating. Nóra Zilahy is among them. She has been translating for 17 years, she owned a translation agency some years ago and she is currently a business partner manager at Espell translation and localization ltd. She has a lively, versatile personality. Nóra spends most of her free time with her daughter, but she often goes to the theatre, enjoys reading and travelling, moreover, she loves horse riding – she used to do this sport competitively. Today, however, I will focus on her translator career.

She graduated as an English language teacher at Eötvös Loránd University. She was working as a freelance translator, English teacher and critique writer at the time. Teaching helped her to get close to translating. She had to translate a lot when she worked at universities because she was responsible for international relations and for foreign students. She also worked in the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology and she edited and translated the faculty’s first, 200 pages long publication.

As soon as her daughter was born, she wanted to choose a more independent profession. Translating was a perfect solution, because she enjoyed working with different types of texts and she also loved all of the translation works she had got before. When her daughter was only one year old, she decided to continue with her studies in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at ELTE and she became a translator and interpreter specialized in social sciences and economics. She was already involved in translating during her studies thanks to one of her teachers. She admits that she misses teaching sometimes, although she preferred private lessons instead of teaching in front of many students.

However, Nóra’s real passion is the whole translation industry and it is really difficult for her to choose only one favourite area. Every single part of translation has its bright sides, of course, but a self-employed person spends most of the time at home and despite the fact that it has many advantages, this is quite a lonely profession. She established a translation agency together with her sibling some years ago. They worked with their classmates from the university and they also participated in translation events, but the most part of their work was translating at home all day and all night. She missed the whole profession.

That is precisely what Nóra likes most about her current job. Now she is surrounded by many translators and translation agencies. She added that going to work every day was a completely different lifestyle, but after eight years of translating, she had felt that this was time to change. As a business partner manager, she represents the interests of translators. Since she has many years of experience, she knows exactly how translators work, how she can help their job or what feedbacks they expect. It would be ideal for her if she could switch different areas of translating at shorter time intervals.

The European Union documents are really close to her because she had to study and translate many of them during the university years. Moreover, one of her teachers involved

Nóra in an EU project. This teacher became her mentor and helped her a lot. Since then, this passion for EU documents hasn't faded. According to her, the terminology and language of EU texts can be acquired through sustained effort. Background information is available for everyone, therefore translators can prepare for these documents – and preparedness is very important for Nóra. Moreover, EU topics are really diverse from fishing and renewable energy to EU accession processes. She never gets bored of them.

She uses CAT tools frequently. She took part in trainings after graduation to learn how to use them. Despite the fact that she prefers MemoQ, she needs Trados for EU translating. For this reason, she learnt how to use that tool, as well.

Nóra is a pleased translator who has already experienced many areas of translating. When I asked her whether there were a topic or sphere in which she didn't have the chance to translate, but she would like to, she was thinking for a long time before she answered. She is interested in literature. She studied aesthetics and wrote many critiques, but somehow she never got close to literature. In spite of this, she admires literary translators.

Nóra is convinced that translation can be taught. There are some areas, of course, such as the above mentioned literary translating, where more talent and affinity are needed. According to her, translation is an exact science and students can learn what to pay attention to, what the most important parts of translating are, how the whole thing operates, how to construct sentences or how to preserve content.

At the end of our conversation she gave advice to us: start our freelance translator career if we have the chance! It might be difficult in the first one year, but we shouldn't abandon our ambitions. We have a huge advantage: we know languages!

Written by Vivien Szatmári