Translator profile: Veronika Wagner

 I had the opportunity to meet Veronika Wagner at the St. Jerome’s Day Meeting of 2016. As a moderator participant of the event and also as the president of the *Association of the Freelance Translators and Interpreters* (AFTI), she contributed to the wide spectrum of topics of the conference, adding many useful information. Her thoughtful comments inspired me to choose her as my interview subject.

During the interview, I had the chance to get to know an incredibly optimistic woman in her personality, who is a true pioneer in the translation industry. Our conversation was centered in the triangle of translation, freelancing and the representation of interests, and Veronika described the milestones of her career relating to these aspects.

* Freelance lawyer-translator, language trainer

EN – HU

HU – EN

DE – HU

* President of the Association of Freelance Translators and Interpreters
* LinkedIn profile: https://www.linkedin.com/in/veronikawagner/

In the following section I will introduce Veronika Wagner, the imaginative freelancer.

**Education:**

*2016–* Péter Pázmány Catholic University

*Literary Translation further training program*

*2004–2008* ELTE-BTK

*English Language and Literature (MA)*

*1996-2002* ELTE-ÁJK

*Legal Studies (juris doctor program, MA)*

**„*If I’m bored with something, I dare to switch. The most part of your day is filled with work, so you must enjoy what you do.*”**

She laid the foundation of her career with the help of this attitude and she can just encourage everyone to do so. Prior to her translator career, she was working as a legal expert, then teacher, and then she changed her mind and felt she had to switch. This was the moment when she became a translator and she has been active in the industry since 2004. In the first three years, she was working as a freelance translator in Brussels, taking translation requests from Hungary, and after the following 8 years of employment, in January of 2016, she returned to freelancing. During the long period she spent at a translation agency, she realized that being employed was not her cup of tea. Since then she has been active as a freelance lawyer-translator. Besides, she recently started studying literary translation, since she has always been interested in this segment of the industry. Her intention regarding this is to achieve something that will be permanent, since she thinks it has a unique value, because this additional knowledge is what differentiates her from other lawyer-translators.

As a translator, it is very inspiring for her that she can examine many areas, which benefits her to be more informed in that way. She translates mostly legal texts and she does that with the highest efficiency. She thinks it’s important to do something that you are good at, or better than other ones.

***„When you do the same thing for the twentieth time, but you still find something new in it”***

I had asked Veronika about the positive traits of a good translator and she said that a good translator is fueled by curiosity. It’s important to realize how to keep out the routine from our work. An excellent way to do so is to consciously develope ourselves in different fields, which aren’t directly in connection with translation. She believes, if we want to make a living as a translator in the long run, we have to look into ourselves and see in what direction we are headed. We receive only a few feedback on ourselves from the world, therefore it’s important gain knowledge on ourselves in various areas in life.

Meanwhile at the AFTI events, when their LIMO (*Language Industry Monopoly*) board game gets introduced, she notices that there are only a few students out of 10-12 who have a twinkle in their eyes and they are there really because they are interested in the profession. The point is, as she explains, that we must keep going forward with faith and do whatever that we set our mind to. Sooner or later it turns out anyway whether translation is really for you.

**Along the values of representing interests**

Some conflicts can be still experienced among professionals in the industry, therefore AFTI intends to resolve and harmonize the adversary atmosphere and points of view that vitiated the industry in the past years. In her opinion, it’s important to change this rigid atmosphere, which has to be centered on cooperation and not competence.

One thing she would change in the industry is how people approach work-at-home jobs. It is natural throughout world that the labor market is moving towards that, although in Hungary it is still in the middle way. There is a small number of people with entrepreneurial spirit, since the majority seeks their opportunity within the sphere of employment. Of course, she adds, freelancing isn’t suitable for everyone and being employed has an equally significant role in our society.

It really depends on the individual, how they experience freelancing and its uncertainty. However, she says that freelancers have greater liberty: they manage their own time and they decide how they lead their lives.

„*It’s a fact that there are many of us in the translation industry and only a few will end up as a freelancer*” concludes Veronika. She encourages everyone who has a little affinity towards freelancing, but also recommends to learn an additional profession beside translation.