

Translator profile: László Árendás

If you want to translate, do it right, with might and main and with all your heart and soul – how else, says László Árendás, translator who told me about translation, his feelings about the profession, his way of becoming a translator and his personal experiences.

Currently, László Árendás is a freelance translator but he has several years of experience in teaching in primary school and high school. His love of foreign languages showed early, he was attracted mainly to English and Russian. This inspiration guided him to receive a university degree in English and Russian language teaching. Not only teaching but also translation was always close to his heart. While becoming a language teacher he attended translation classes, thus in his university years he got an insight in both teaching and translation.



After graduation he started teaching in a school where he introduced primary school and high school students to the secrets of English language. While he was a teacher, he has never lost his interest in translation; moreover, translation tasks constituted an integral part of his teaching method. In his classes he put a strong emphasis on translations since he believes translation is a great way of studying a language because students approach language from a different perspective, thereby they gain a deeper insight into it. Besides teaching, his interest in translation was growing increasingly and he felt he would have gladly challenged himself in another field. The idea of changing profession had already emerged in him when one of his translator acquaintances offered him a job. László Árendás took the opportunity and started his translation career as a freelance translator.

The shift from teaching profession to translation opened a new dimension which made him feel the world has expanded. After one year of freelancing in 2010 he was invited to be an in-house translator at a well-known translation agency where he primarily worked as a translator, language editor and project manager. From 2014 he switched back to freelancing; therefore, through his personal experiences he is aware of the advantages and disadvantages of being an in-house translator and a freelance translator.

Being an in-house translator means secure livelihoods, predictability and routine; however, strong constraints and regulations can be observed. In contrast, a freelance translator is fully responsible for himself, his work is influenced by the demand of the market; although, he can make decisions about when and how much to work; he achieves secure livelihoods through strict self-discipline and carefully set time management. Not everyone is able to conform to the rules of in-house translation, as not everyone is

adequate to be a freelance translator either. How one can be efficient and work in an appropriate rhythm depends on his lifestyle and personality.

László Árendás primarily deals with technical translation. He participated in localizations of user interfaces of software produced by successful global companies like IBM, Apple and Microsoft. He also has experience in translation of computer games and the user interface of well-known booking sites. According to him, previously he did not have any preferences regarding the area of translation; although, he really came to like the field which he encounters in the course of his work.

Though difficulties of translation are rarely mentioned, it does not mean that translators do not encounter obstacles during their everyday work. One of the main defining features of translation is monotony. A translator has to live with it, since it is the lot of every kinds of activity, after all. To make the work interesting depends on the approach of the translator, though. Moreover, in the course of a translator's work several obstacles can arise when a translator experiences extreme exhaustion which is comparable to a state close to burnout. László Árendás says, in such cases it would be ideal for a translator to take three weeks off in order to get some rest. By being an in-house translator it is impossible to do so. As a freelance translator you can do it, though the market decides when you can go on holiday. During the year there are certain periods with an enormous amount of work which are followed by several weeks of forced hiatus when there are no translation assignments.

Besides difficulties, László Árendás mentions several positive points about his work. He cannot highlight only one developmental milestone; rather, he considers his headway to be a continuous and energetic process in course of which he acquires new skills perpetually. It played an important role in his professional development that the translation agency, by expressing their appreciation, invited him to be a project manager. To take care of a project from the very beginning to the end is a great sense of responsibility. Furthermore, he is always pleased and honored to come across his own translation; as an example, he mentioned the translation of a computer game on which the users and a computer magazine gave very good feedback.

Along with the positive points, László Árendás reported on important values he got from translation. Although he really liked to be an English teacher, as a translator his sense of achievement has increased considerably; what is more, financial security is also a positive factor of his current job. In addition, the school where he used to teach was really close to his home. This kind of confinement was over when he travelled every day to the translation agency which was located in the city center. Using the public transport to get from the outskirts from Budapest to the downtown can be compared to a sociological study; while traveling he got to know better both the city and the people. Translation brought quality change in the life of László Árendás. He learnt a lot about the world since translation projects guided him to different parts of it. In the course of his current work he is subjected to more impulse than he was earlier; moreover, due to the altered environment his horizon expanded and he gained in-depth awareness and experiences both about the world and the translation profession.

Based on his own experiences László Árendás shared useful pieces of advice for future translators. First of all, it is advised to start our career as an in-house translator, thereby we can acquire the most important fundamentals and get an inside look into the profession. Such experiences will help those who would like to become freelance translators make their way in the world of freelancing. Secondly, he emphasized that if it is translation profession we would like to pursue in the future, then there is no other way of translating but to do it right and with all our endeavor.

During their career many translators encounter obstacles which make them question their knowledge and ability. But hardships do not mean that a certain task is not for us; rather, we should learn to find a solution to difficulties and overcome them. In order to find out what is right for us, we have to try ourselves and do our best. If we have given enough time for ourselves, even 1-2 years, and we still cannot move on we should not be ashamed to think about changing. Referring to changes in his life – starting with the switch from teaching to translating, then the minor changes of becoming in-house then freelance translator – László Árendás thinks he made the right decisions and he did not regret any of it; in addition, he believes that the fact that he was able to induce changes in his life contributed to the tranquility of his soul. He explained if you try something but in the meantime you realize it is not what you want to do is not a failure, it is rather a life experience. Failure is when you do realize what you do is far from what you desire and you still do not dare to change.

Finally, László Árendás highlights that although connections are essential, it is very important to see that ultimately it is our work that qualifies us and that we do it truthfully and wholeheartedly.