



Lingoleaf Language Services was founded in 2008 by half-Brazilian, half-English Anne Heining and Finn-Swedish Josefin Skullbacka, both multi-lingual and passionate about languages and writing, and with years of translation and proofreading experience. Today, the union of Scandinavian and South American cultures brings complementary strengths and outlooks to the business.

The service is aimed at companies and individuals looking for immaculate, tailor-made copy for website content, press releases, brochures, contracts, transcripts and online games, either written from scratch or translated by bilingual experts. Clients have been as diverse as the BBC, Trivial Pursuit, Purple Films, Lexus for Languages and Ella's Kitchen, with assignments ranging from official translations of bi-lingual dictionaries and legal documents to film sub-titling and writing of website content.

Lingoleaf works with a wide range of translators who pride themselves on their ability to produce copy that is clean, clear and localised, and Anne and Josefin have always been able to source translators at short notice for even the most complicated assignments. This is significant for the diplomatic community, with whom Lingoleaf is forging strong links to support an ever growing database of worldwide contacts, and to be in a position to assist embassies and consulates in sourcing professional translators and interpreters at a moment's notice.

Below, the brains behind Lingoleaf interview each other to discover more about each other's respective cultures, outlooks and views on language learning.

Anne interviews Josefin:

Anne: Scandinavians generally seem to be very linguistically adept – was foreign language learning a part of your education from very early on?

Josefin: Learning languages is very much part of life in Finland. Growing up in the Swedish-speaking area of Finland, I learned Finnish from an early age because it's compulsory at school – no easy feat as the two languages are as different as night and day. The same goes for English. Contrary to many other European countries, Nordic countries do not dub foreign films and TV programmes, so watching subtitled American and British TV meant I learned to listen to English early on. Learning a fourth or fifth language at school is quite normal too – I took up German at the age of 13 and French at 16, and ended up doing five languages for my final exams a few years later.

Anne: What did you feel were the most striking cultural differences between Finland and the U.K. when you first moved to London?

Josefin: The first thing that I noticed was how much more open everyone was, even in a big city like London. Finns are notorious introverts and it's perfectly normal for a Finnish family to eat a whole meal in silence, whereas the Brits would find that insulting. It's something I have had to explain to a number of friends who have come in contact with Finnish culture. But once you get to know a Finn or Finn-Swede, you've got a friend for life.

Anne: In what ways do you feel that speaking several languages has enhanced your life?

Josefin: It has helped me understand different cultures and backgrounds and it has definitely opened doors to many interesting experiences. It also makes life easier when I travel – at least in Europe!

Josefin interviews Anne:

Josefin: Why does the world need translators – technology is advancing and surely we will soon be replaced by computers and programmes that can do our job just as effectively?

Anne: Computers or translation programmes may reach the point where they can produce efficient word-for-word translations, but the personal and creative flair that can be attained by a human translator could never be replicated by a machine. One of the main challenges of translating is to carefully and creatively infuse the translated document with the subtleties and nuances of the original piece of writing – a fine art which a computer simply could not master.

Josefin: What part of your job do you enjoy the most/least

Anne: The thing I love most about being a translator and co-running Lingoleaf is that I always feel connected to numerous countries worldwide because of what we do, and because of the network of translators working with us from London and from abroad. It helps me to keep an open mind and keeps my interest in languages and different cultures alive. The thing I like least is that I cannot speak every language in the world and am limited, at the moment, to the five that I have learnt over time! I'd like to learn more!

Josefin: If you weren't a multi-linguist running a hugely successful business, what would you do?

Anne: If money was no object, I think I'd like to work in the orphanage in Brazil that I spent six months doing voluntary work at about four years ago. It was extremely rewarding and I have seriously considered one day trying to adopt from there to give a Brazilian child a home that would keep a connection to his/her roots, but also allow him/her to learn about the British culture.

Perfect Translation

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