

# 译风

THE ATA CHINESE LANGUAGE DIVISION NEWSLETTER

美国翻译协会中文翻译分会简报

Winter 2017



After the Gold Rush: CLD members at the 2016 ATA Annual Conference in San Francisco, CA

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## FROM THE EDITORS

Happy New Year! We hope that everyone has had a happy and stress-free holiday season.

In this issue, Dr. Chaowei Zhu continues his discussion about the translation and interpretation program at Wake Forest University in North Carolina.

Tianlu Redmon offers some tips about how to stay focused in our profession and active in our community.

Jim Jones explains further the Chinese measure words. As a member of the team that creates the Chinese to English certification test, Jim says that his team has done much in 2016 to make the test go live.

Pency Tsai writes about the importance of human touch in her column “Bird’s Corner”.

Finally, we encourage more CLD members to contribute articles for future newsletters. The deadline for the next issue is July 1, 2016 (see the submission guidelines on page 4.)

### ABOUT THE EDITORS



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Special thanks to Jamie Padula for his help in producing this newsletter.

Newsletter published by  
ATA Chinese Language Division  
American Translators Association  
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590  
Alexandria, VA 22314

## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Suggested lengths:

Articles: 800 to 1,500 words

Reviews: 600 words

Letters: 300 words

Include a brief bio and a photograph.

Illustrations and links, etc., are  
encouraged.

Submissions may be edited.

Opinions expressed in this publication  
are solely those of the authors.

Send submissions for future issues to  
**[echiang@atecworld.com](mailto:echiang@atecworld.com)**

Submissions deadline for the next  
issue: July 1, 2017

## Letter from the CLD Administrator



Pency Tsai has been a community interpreter for the past 5 years, specializing in Canadian immigration and refugee tribunal hearings. She currently serves as the CLD Administrator.

Hello everyone,

Let me start by thanking Alex for setting a great example as Administrator over the past two years. His leadership in nurturing new members and his guidance of our group have been instrumental in moving the Chinese Language Division forward. I'll be following his footsteps in meeting our members' needs, encouraging more participation, and fostering an environment of co-operation.

I'd like to thank all those who made it to San Francisco for the 2016 conference. It was encouraging to see so many people participating in the betterment of our profession. The enthusiasm and camaraderie of our group was heart-warming and exciting to see. It will only get better as we continue to work together, sharing ideas and helping one another.

Special thanks to Mr. Feng Chen for sharing his experiences and providing many with his invaluable insights on interpreting. Evelyn, thank you for making the experience possible. Your dedication and contributions to CLD are greatly appreciated - 谢谢你!

Going forward, we're looking to bring more topics of interest to the table at the annual conference and through discussions online. Hopefully we can also make headway on a topic that most of us see as a top priority - that of bringing more information on the certification tests.

A “thank you” is also in order for our newsletter editors, Eric Chiang and Tianlu Redmond. They will be calling on our members to continue to contribute to our newsletter so let's work together to have our voices heard and share our experiences.

It is true that our predecessors laid down the foundation to help us get our feet in the door and build our future. Without their hard work we wouldn't be where we are today. A sincere “thank you” is in order to all of you; we owe you a debt of gratitude. That being said, it is up to us to help pave the road for those following in our footsteps. We need to be proactive and push forward together if we want to get things done. It takes the action of many working in unison to bring about change.

October 2017 is just around the corner and Washington D.C. is beckoning us all to make an appearance. We've got at least a couple of locals there so we won't be stranded without hosts. The 58th ATA Annual Conference - see you there.

Pency the Bird

## Come and Enjoy the Community: A Call for Action

By Tianlu Redmon

My dear reader, I hope you went to the most recent ATA Conference in San Francisco and enjoyed yourself there, because I certainly did! I loved the sessions I attended and the job opportunities I came across. But you might have also seen me connecting with newbies at the Buddies Welcome Newbies event, delivering a report on social media performance at the Interpreters Division Annual Meeting, or brainstorming ideas to bring more Chinese Language Division (CLD) speakers to the next conference. I had tremendous fun celebrating the annual translation and interpretation community get-together and felt a real sense of belonging. I can't wait to go back next year!

And that's why I wanted to write this article: I wanted to share with you why I enjoy being part of the translation and interpretation community, and why I think you should, too. It doesn't matter whether you've just joined the ATA or CLD or been a long-term member of either group. If you haven't been active in the community, please read on. How do you know if you are active? Complete the quiz below and see. If you can correctly answer four out of five questions—Congratulations! You are an active member!

1. Name three cities where the ATA Conference was held in the last 5 years (including 2016).<sup>1</sup>
2. Which ATA Chapter is closest to you?<sup>2</sup>
3. Name three ATA divisions.<sup>3</sup>
4. What are some major changes to the ATA Certification Exam in 2017?<sup>4</sup>
5. What's new with the interpreter credentials in the ATA member directory?<sup>5</sup>

I'll explain why I think you should get involved in the translation and interpretation community, but I'd like to first share with you my path to it. I began my journey as a professional translator and interpreter with Carolina Association of Translators and

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<sup>1</sup> The last five ATA Annual Conferences were held in San Francisco (2016), Miami (2015), Chicago (2014), San Antonio (2013), and San Diego (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Here's a list of ATA Chapters based on geographical locations:

<https://www.atanet.org/chaptersandgroups/chapters.php>

<sup>3</sup> Here's a list of ATA Divisions based on languages and working areas:

[https://www.atanet.org/divisions/about\\_divisions.php](https://www.atanet.org/divisions/about_divisions.php)

<sup>4</sup> Here's what the Chronicle-Online says about the changes to future certification exams:

<http://www.atanet.org/chronicle-online/bonus/certification-exam-changes/>

<sup>5</sup> You can now add interpreting credentials in the online directory: <http://www.atanet.org/chronicle-online/bonus/ata-adds-interpreter-credentials-to-its-online-directory/>

Interpreters (CATI), an ATA chapter, in late 2013. I had taught Chinese at that point but was always interested in translation. CATI hosted a social event at a local coffee shop one evening, and I went. It was a cold winter night, but I remember how warm and welcoming everyone was. They gave me advice on how to get started, whom to contact for work, how to prepare for the ATA Certification Exam, etc. By the end of the evening, I left with a small bundle of business cards and a heart leaping with joy, thrilled by the possibilities that lay before me. After that, I kept returning to the quarterly get-togethers in my area. Every time I went, I would see old faces and make new friends. Since each time I was in a different place in my career or had different questions on my mind, I learned more about the profession and about what I needed to do to grow my business. I also went to CATI's annual conferences where I learned from seasoned linguists and met people outside of my area. As time went by, I gradually realized that there were others who were just like me on that cold winter night when I first walked in the coffee shop: nervous, uncertain, but excited. And there were always people who would sit next to them and befriend them. At the same time, there were people who seemed to know each other well and would spend time catching up with each other or exchange ideas on a situation they came across at work. That was new to me, since I was a freelancer and was used to translating or interpreting alone. I also started to notice how the CATI Board of Directors—a group of volunteers—worked as a team to organize social events and conferences, to support translators and interpreters, to promote the profession, to network with language and translation schools, to reach out to organizations who use our services, and, in a word, to serve fellow CATI members. I really appreciated the work the board did and wanted to give back to my profession, so I ran for office and became a board director in 2014. For the past two years, I've run CATI's Learning the Ropes Program (a mentoring program), co-organized a client outreach workshop with local attorneys, and helped organize CATI's conferences.

I had a similar experience with ATA's Chinese Language Division and the Interpreters Division. I started as a newbie, met some generous colleagues, and decided to give back in ways I could. Essentially, this is what being in a community is about: You get back what you give out. I wouldn't be where I am today but for CATI and other translation and interpretation communities. A community, first of all, offers companionship to like-minded people who share common interests. I have a support group who understand what I do. Although I work as a solitary freelancer, I have colleagues to whom I can reach out for help when I come across a linguistic question or an ethical dilemma. There are different translation and interpretation communities in different geographic areas, languages, and specializations, but once you find the right groups for you, you will benefit from a collegial relationship with them. And it doesn't matter whether you are a beginner or have many

years of experience, as we all have different needs and can offer assistance to one another.

Secondly, by being a member of the community, I have grown my business. I've made friends who brought me business and helped me in my work. But more importantly, I learned from them how to work with agencies, direct clients, and colleagues; I came to understand the trends in the profession and how to stay attuned to changes and technologies, and I learned how to develop my professional skills. This has made me better at what I do, and I have parlayed my knowledge into revenue for my business.

Thirdly, by working as translators or interpreters, we are de facto members of a larger community whether we are actively involved in it or not. It doesn't matter how many hours we work each day. As long as we work for hire and not just as a hobby, we are professionals and should regard ourselves as such. I want to work at a reasonable rate and get enough of work that I enjoy doing for many more years to come. You probably agree. But this won't happen without a healthy, thriving industry. This is what professional associations like the ATA are for. As a group, we set standards, promote our profession, and educate our clients. Together, our voice is louder, and our action more effective. And we need every one in the community to be active to achieve our goals.

How do we become involved? You can begin with your language division in the ATA. The Chinese Language Division should be the first stop for every new ATA member who works with Chinese. Perhaps you are already a CLD member, but do you know that we have a Wechat group, a Listserv, a Facebook group, and a LinkedIn Group (links and a QR Code are available at the end of the article)? Of course, there are other [divisions](#) based on areas of practice, such as the Medical Division and the Government Division. And if you're an interpreter, don't forget to join the [Interpreters Division](#), too! Next, find out if there is an [ATA Chapter](#) in your area. One good thing about joining a local chapter is that you'll meet colleagues in the same geographic area. You may be able to refer local clients to each other and help each other understand the market. Reach out to the board and find out what activities they might have coming up that are close to you. Or perhaps they have virtual socials or online webinars? Just find something that interests you and join one of them. In addition to ATA Chapters and Divisions, there are other [ATA Affiliates](#) and [associations](#) similar to the ATA. You can find them on the ATA website and get involved. Do you work in-house or with a team of linguists? Are you a staff translator at a company or a court interpreter? Why not organize a social event among yourselves? Once a community is established, the same benefits still apply!

What if you've done all those? Is there anything else you can do? Sure! You can talk to the

board or the leadership council of your association, chapter, or division and find out what you can do to help them. It's a way to give back to the community, but you'll also develop a relationship with incredible people who are generous enough to volunteer, and this relationship will benefit you in many ways. Or reach out to clients and students who might become clients or members of our community. You can find the [Client Outreach Kit](#) and guidance on [school outreach](#) on the ATA website, too. Also, don't forget that you might be qualified to become a Voting Member with the ATA and cast your vote next year to decide who shall be on the ATA Board. Find out how to become a Voting Member [here](#). Whether you're a newcomer to the CLD or an old friend who's been inactive, I'd like to extend the warmest welcome to you to become an active member in the CLD and the ATA. I hope you enjoy working as a translator or interpreter, and I hope to see you next year in Washington D.C.!

#### Chinese Language Division online groups:

Wechat:

(This QR Code is only valid until January 30, 2017. If you would like to join the group after the date, please contact Tianlu [Wechat: 48202984])



Listserve: [https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/ATA-CLD\\_Listserve/info?yguid=289211414](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/ATA-CLD_Listserve/info?yguid=289211414)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ataclld/?fref=ts>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6931955>

## Curriculum Innovation in Training the Next Generation of Language Professionals



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In July, I was kindly offered the opportunity to write a short article for CLD Newsletter, in which I introduced briefly the Interpreting and Translation Studies (ITS) graduate program at Wake Forest University and our vision of creating a leading translation and interpreting graduate program in the U.S.A.

Currently, ITS offers three MA degrees in two different language combinations (i.e., English-Spanish and English-Chinese), including MA in Interpreting and Translation Studies, MA in Teaching of Interpreting, and MA in Intercultural Services in Healthcare (ISH). Among them, the ISH track was established when a new career path arose “from the rising need for culturally competent administrators and comprehensive diversity strategies in healthcare.”<sup>6</sup>

In this article, I will focus on the ISH track and talk about Organizational Behavior and Interpreting (OBI for short), a new and cross-disciplinary graduate-level course designed for the ISH students.

To begin with, the logic underlying curriculum innovation for the ISH track is as follows: as the interpreting industry continues to grow in the U.S., there will be greater demands for professional interpreters as well as interpreter managers. Since ISH students will graduate with an advanced degree in language services, we need to not only train them as language

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<sup>6</sup> <http://interpretingandtranslation.wfu.edu/>

professionals, but also better prepare them as future language industry researchers and leaders.

Taken together, the goals for the ISH track are to prepare our graduates to (1) identify and address ethnic, linguistic and socio-cultural healthcare issues; (2) ensure hiring of qualified and competent interpreters, translators, and bilingual staff; (3) educate personnel about current federal regulations; (4) improve patient care quality by integrating evidence-based practices of intercultural healthcare delivery into the work process; and (5) help reduce tragic and costly sentinel events.<sup>7</sup>

The ISH is “the first such specialization in the U.S.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, curriculum innovation becomes a must. In 2015, under the guidance of Dr. Olgierda Furmanek, the ITS co-director, I designed OBI with an aim to integrate organizational behavior (OB) theories into teaching of interpreting to help our graduates gain a deeper understanding of interpreting practice and interpreter management for institutions and organizations in the language service industry.

In a nutshell, OB “is a field of study that investigates the impact that individuals, groups and structure have on behavior within organizations, for the purpose of applying such knowledge toward improving and organization's effectiveness”<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, the goal of the OBI course is to help our graduate students improve the organization effectiveness and interpreter performance in any organization, institution or company that uses interpreting services. OBI differs from conventional business or interpreting courses in that it attempts to bring the perspective of OB to the field of interpreting. In other words, it attempts to help our graduate students look at the interpreting and interpreting industry from a manager or even an industry leader’s perspective.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> This definition is given by Stephen P. Robbins

To achieve the above goals, the OBI course takes a cross-disciplinary approach and is composed of two main parts, namely the learning of basic OB concepts, theories, models, and practices as well as the application of these concepts in interpreting studies and management. Pedagogical methods employed in the course include extensive class discussion of case studies. This approach makes students familiar with real-life scenarios and allows them to make use of the OB knowledge learned to solve existing/future issues in the language services industry. Students are also encouraged to take the initiative to explore the interpreting market landscape and build connections with real-world professionals and companies in both China and the U.S.A.

This cross-disciplinary approach may prove to be not only an innovation in curriculum design in teaching business, but also a more effective way to train the next generation of interpreters. So far, I have received positive feedback from both Chinese and American students taking my OBI course. Students completing this cross-disciplinary course seem to be in a unique position to contribute to the professionalization of interpreting in various settings (e.g., legal, medical, social care, and financial) and to the development of the interpreting industry from a socio-institutional perspective.

## Measure Words, Part 2



Jim Jones, ATA and CLD member, first learned Mandarin 31 years ago. He is a former member of STC (Society for Technical Communication [stc.org](http://stc.org)) and does translation (from ZH, DE, and ES to EN), editing, writing, cartooning, and other things. Find him at [LinkedIn.com/in/jimxlat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jimxlat), and at Twitter @han4yu3.

In my short article from the previous issue of this newsletter (that June 2016 issue is the one with the cartoon ad advertising the ATA San Francisco conference; I assembled that ad and some of the cartoons of recent issues), the measure words of English and those of Chinese were compared.

Some sample English measure words were presented: Patch, Piece, End, Swallow, and Pang.

This measure word phenomenon is not as prevalent in English as it is in Mandarin.

Because I have been trying to develop skills in interpreting (hoping to add them to my skill set), I've been trying to learn more precisely the system of Chinese measure words. Last week I found on [chinesenotes.com](http://chinesenotes.com) what seems to be a good and comprehensive list of some 200 measure words.

The list also presents some 1800 examples of words that are typically used with the individual measure word. As most people reading this article might already know, the measure word 个, the general purpose measure word, has the largest share of those 1800; several hundred of the example words are for 个.

Here are 16 of the measure words:

串 幢 次 打 袋 档 道 滴 点 堵 度 端 段 对 队 顿

The measure word 堆 duī (a pile / a mass / a heap / a stack) is a really useful one for my interpreting work. Although I knew it before encountering it on chinesenotes.com, it is good for me to review things and to make what things I know more precise.

Having just completed an online court interpreter training course in my jurisdiction, I'd say that knowing 堆 pile / mass / heap / stack was great because those ideas are really common in colloquial speech and the materials we used reflected as much.

The course or mentoring was led, very ably, by three court certified and highly practiced Spanish/English professionals: Joshua Elliott, Yvette Citizen, and Kelly Varguez.

The class had about 5 Mandarin/English people. Most of the 40 some students were Spanish/English interpreters. Other languages represented included Russian, German, Korean, and Polish. There were two sections to the class: Spanish and Language Neutral.

## Bird's Corner: the Human Touch

By Pency Tsai

*"Your job will become obsolete."*

As you can imagine, that statement really riled me up and, as I jumped to defend our profession, ready to sink my teeth into my antagonist, chew him up and spit him out, he reached out to douse the fire within me.

*"Sorry. Your job won't become obsolete."*

That's better.

*"Pency, you will become obsolete."*

I sat back into my seat as everyone laughed and listened as he explained himself. Where was he going with this?

*"As technology improves, it's only a matter of time before translation and interpretation become automated tasks that software can perform seamlessly. Imagine a world where you can tap on your glasses and subtitles appear before you when you're engaged in a conversation with someone in another language. For those of us who didn't grow up with fan-subbed anime, how cool would it be if the software spoke the words to you through bone conduction technology? You'd hear the speaker and the translation at the same time. Seamless. Poor obsolete Pency."*

Wow.

Snap back to reality. The last time I checked, Google Translate did a very good job finding the right words and I'm sure it's improving all the time. But there's a reason why we all scoff when someone even suggests that technology has caught up to the wonders of the human mind.

There are nuances when dealing with languages and today's Artificial Intelligence just doesn't quite grasp the subtle difference in meaning when dealing with statement and context. Heck, sometimes I don't catch on when I hear things. How can current

software capture this and replicate context while maintaining grammar? That's a tall order and right now there's nothing out there that's up to the task.

But that doesn't mean there won't be something that can do this in the future. Let's stop and look at this in another way. What all the software is missing and what has so far eluded the programmers is something that we, as interpreters and translators, provide to all of our clients. That is, the human element of our interactions.

People interact with technology in many ways; we use the cell phone as a means of communication, the Internet as an extension of our minds, and the car as a medium to get around. The key to all of this is that people always use technology to assist in completing tasks, but ultimately there is a person in control. Your phone doesn't speak; you do. You search the Internet. You drive the car, although that might soon become a thing of the past. A person cannot rely on bits and bytes to accurately convey their message. Common sense is a rarity in many humans; it's nonexistent in software programs. Just as people approach automated driving with disbelief and cannot leave the controls entirely to the pre-set routines of a computer, the same can be said about interpretation and translation.

"It's just not accurate enough to convey what I want to say."

“它只是不够准确地传达我想说的话”

"In a life and death situation, it's just not accurate enough to convey what I want to say."

“在生活 and 死亡的情况下，它只是不够准确地传达我想说的话”

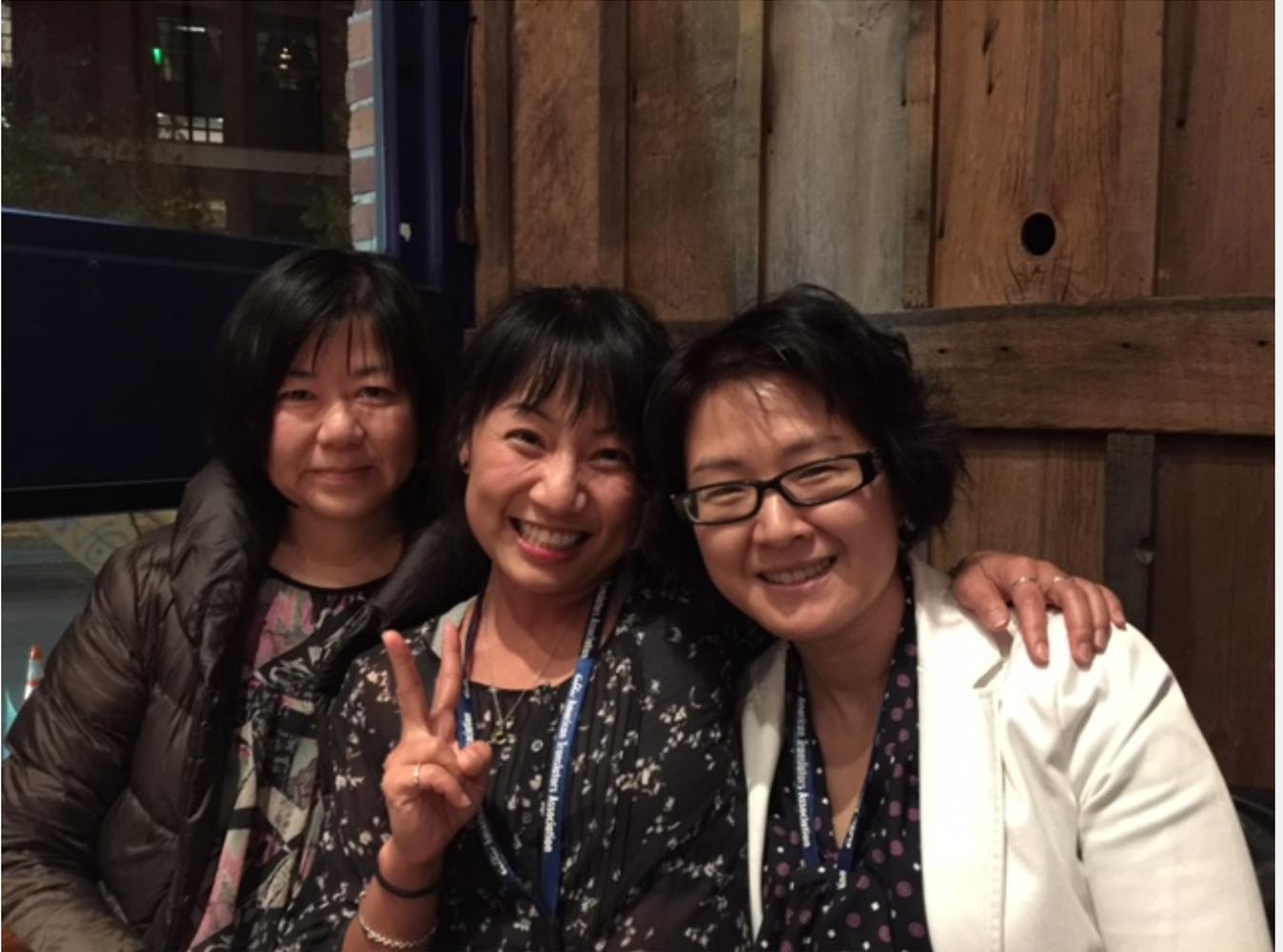
"It would be a shadow of what I am at the peak of my powers."

“这将是我在我的权力的高峰时的阴影。”

People will always be more at ease with the knowledge that a person is sifting through their words and understands what they are trying to get across. Given a choice, that elderly gentleman with the chronic bad knee will always believe that the shiny new machine with its synthesized voice and all the latest bells and whistles is not preferable to that little woman with a notepad and pen in her hands and a goofy grin on her face.

It's reassuring to look into the eyes of your surrogate voice.

Being able to pull from our experiences and our understanding of human nature is what enables us to look beyond word combinations and delve deeper into the world of meaning. With a bit of logic and quick wit, we are able to artfully determine what a speaker is trying to say. Can a computer do that? Sorry HAL, you're not as smart as you think at the moment.



Modern-day forty-niners.