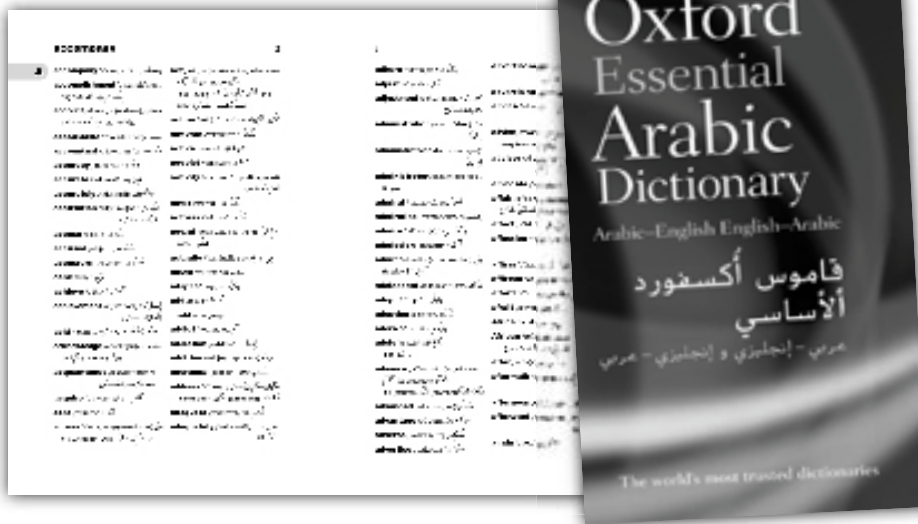


Off the bookshelf

Anneliese Garvie reviews a useful Arabic dictionary, while Isabel Hurtado de Mendoza is very impressed with Judy and Dagmar Jenner's first book



Anneliese Garvie is a professional Arabic-English/French-English translator and an associate of ITI. She worked for over ten years in international financial marketing and publishing prior to becoming a freelance translator. Email: anneliese@garviefamily.com.



Oxford Essential Arabic Dictionary: English-Arabic Arabic-English (Oxford Dictionaries, £9.99)

The clue to this dictionary is in the title: 'Essential Arabic'. It provides the 'essential' vocabulary needed for anyone needing to go between the two languages. In its preface it says that it 'is intended to help learners of Arabic and English', which is an apt description of its target market. This is not a dictionary for someone needing all the possible variants in meaning. Having said that, as a professional translator, I have still had recourse to it when I simply wanted to ascertain the most common English term for an Arabic word.

The dictionary contains 16,000 words and phrases, which have been selected according to frequency of

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use. This means that generally there is just one corresponding term for each word. This can be of use for the translator who is hesitating between two possible meanings and getting bogged down in all the possible interpretations in English of an Arabic term. For example, I had a text that used both **فترة** (*fatra*) and **مرحلة** (*marhala*) to describe a 'phase' in a project. This dictionary enabled me to differentiate in English between the two 'phases', using 'period' and 'stage' respectively, as there was only one option presented for each Arabic word – sometimes you just need this simplicity for translation. In a few cases the dictionary does provide some

examples of different uses of the word for clarification. The vocabulary included is certainly up to date and contains the most common technological terms such as mobile, text message, broadband, DVD, and so on, which are often missing in older dictionaries.

There is some useful additional content in the middle of the dictionary for any learner of the two languages. This covers the formation of the numbers in the two languages (although, in the Arabic numbers, it is a little odd that it uses **ألفاً** 'alf ālāf' for million rather than the

more common **مليون** 'milyōn'). It also contains the paradigms for the various verb forms in Arabic and English. This provides a useful quick reference for any user of either language.

The layout of the dictionary is easy on the eye, which is particularly important for the Arabic text. The typeface used for the Arabic text in the Arabic to English section is very clear, but the Arabic typeface in the English to Arabic would have benefited from being increased by a

couple of points. The dictionary is ordered alphabetically rather than by root forms in the Arabic, which is also useful for a learner of Arabic. There is also the very welcome inclusion of vowelling in the headwords for the Arabic, which helps greatly with both pronunciation and comprehension. An added bonus is that the typeface used for the vowelling is bold and clear unlike some other dictionaries, which put the vowelling in a lighter typeface.

I would consider this to be a straightforward, reliable dictionary from Arabic into English and vice-versa. It is compact and relatively lightweight, making it very suitable as a travel companion for business or tourist purposes. It provides an interesting 'added extra' for the translator's dictionary collection, but it is mainly oriented towards the tourist or business traveller who is not looking for something as detailed as a professional linguist might need.



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***The Entrepreneurial Linguist: The Business-School Approach to Freelance Translation* by Judy and Dagmar Jenner (lulu.com, £15.93)**

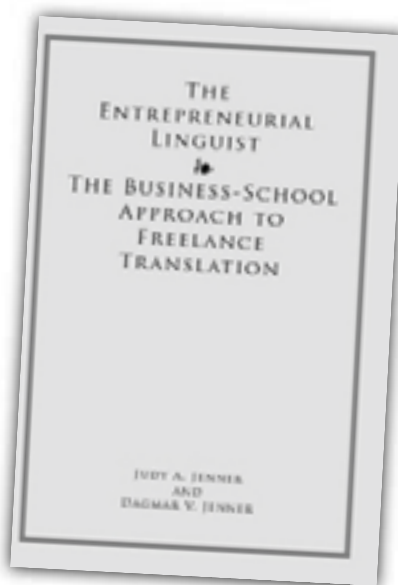
Have you ever had a book dedicated to you? Now you have! *The Entrepreneurial Linguist* is dedicated to all talented, hard-working linguists around the world. And this dedication seems to be genuine, because it is clear that the translator twins Judy and Dagmar Jenner had you and me in mind when they wrote this book. A book that is designed for linguists of all skill levels, as long as they are willing to acknowledge their inner entrepreneur, work for direct clients and run a small business.

Whether you are a newcomer to the profession, with the usual 'I'm just a translator' syndrome, a business-savvy experienced translator/interpreter, or anything in between, your business will certainly benefit from the entrepreneurial approach that the Jenner sisters advocate. But don't be discouraged by the abstract-sounding title, this book is extremely practical and its advice is easy to apply to your day-to-day work.

After explaining the mindset needed to become an entrepreneurial linguist and to think of yourself as a business, the Jenners proceed to explain in great detail everything you will need in order to achieve that purpose. They deal with anything from accounting, pricing, marketing, negotiating, professional development and work/life balance, to using Web 2.0 for business purposes.

The style of the book is very down to earth, the ideas are well developed and explained, and there are even practical case studies involving everyday situations. All of this makes for an easy read and, even though you will be tempted to read it in one go, I suggest you take your time, make notes and reread the parts that you find most useful. In fact, this is one of those books that I will probably reread in a couple of years, when I'm at a different stage in my career, and I will still learn from it.

The Entrepreneurial Linguist is a book that will give you a pain in the neck – you won't stop nodding in



agreement while you read it! Some parts are common sense (advantages of working with a small business); others discuss doubts that all of us have had at some point (should I hire a bookkeeper?); and others come packed with practical ideas that you will want to add to your repertoire straight away (buying cheaper office supplies at www.costco.com, or adding a five-minute workout to your working day). Nod, nod, nod.

Even though Judy and Dagmar Jenner address the oldest debates in our profession, such as whether you should specialise and whether you should stay up all night to work on your client's urgent project, they also discuss in detail some of the most avant-garde issues freelancers have to deal with nowadays. For example, the section on social media and Web 2.0 discusses everything about blogging: should I have a blog? What are the benefits? Where do I start? What should I write about? How much time should I spend on it? etc.

Yes, this book is detailed and thorough, but, as mentioned, it's far from being academic or theoretical. Don't be fooled by its serious cover. This book is full of not only website references – rather than boring old-school theories – and ingenious cartoons by translator-cum-cartoonist Alejandro Moreno Ramos, but also

'This book will give you a pain in the neck – you won't stop nodding while you read it!'

practical tips. For example, the authors show us one of the press releases their company wrote and their spreadsheet for logging business mileage, and they recommend a graphic designer who will give you a discount for creating your logo if you mention that you read the book!

Even though the book is quite US-centric, most of the practical advice is easily transferable. The twins are separated by the Atlantic Ocean, so they have the benefit of a multicultural approach to business.

In future editions – of which I'm sure there will be many – I would like to see a section for notes at the back. *The Entrepreneurial Linguist* is so full of inspiring ideas, sensible suggestions and insightful tips, that I would have liked some space to jot them all down together. Also, something that I found quite odd was the feminist approach to the readership and the profession ('Embrace your inner organisational goddess', 'Consider repeating to your customer what she has just said', etc) Even though this point of view doesn't bother me, I couldn't help but wonder whether it would alienate male readers.

All in all, this book is easy to read, very practical and up to date, encouraging and inspirational. In my opinion, *The Entrepreneurial Linguist* will achieve its goal: it will benefit not only individual readers but also the industry as a whole, when we all start to understand the importance of what we do, act as businesspeople and ultimately raise the ailing public image of our profession.

If you have just started out in the world of translation or interpreting, this book will make your learning curve a lot less steep, giving easy explanations for what looks daunting. If, on the other hand, you are an experienced linguist, this book will still make your job easier, even if it's just by bringing you up to date or by giving you reassurance that you are on the right path.

This is the book that was missing from all university libraries, and perhaps one that should be on the bookshelves of all linguists. It's finally here and you can get it for a very modest price today, either in hard copy or as a PDF file from www.lulu.com. Go on, just do it. You won't regret it!