

Southeast Asian Language Division Proposal

Incentive to Create the Southeast Asian Language Division

The proposed Southeast Asian Language Division will represent the languages spoken in the ASEAN (Association of SE Asian Nations) region. The 11 countries that are part of ASEAN are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam.

Within these 11 countries, there are well over 1,000 languages in daily use, a reflection of the geography of the region, which has historically limited linguistic diffusion among the thousands of islands and rugged terrain of Indochina which comprise SE Asia. Because of the vast representation of languages that exist in these SE Asian countries, we define our division as one that emphasizes culture, norms, and history rather than pure linguistic homogeneity. For example, a large percentage of the linguists working in these languages share a common experience of coming to the US either as a refugee or child of a refugee.

The major languages in these SE Asian countries are Burmese, Hmong/Lao, Indonesian, Khmer, Malay, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese.

The case for the creation of the Southeast Asian Language Division is not unlike the other divisions that already exist in ATA. The incentive for any division and its constituents are to find fellow members with similar professional interests as well as garner greater and more effective representation for their working languages. ATA is the largest national professional organization that is recognized both in the US and throughout the globe. However, there is a surprisingly small number of ATA members who work in the languages of SE Asia.

We would like the support of ATA in creating visibility and support for SE Asian Language translators, interpreters, writers, linguists, and the communities that they serve. Some of these "languages of lesser diffusion" would otherwise never be represented in ATA because they are so rare and do not have the numbers and the means to establish their own language-specific division. Despite the linguistic heterogeneity of the region, there is tremendous cultural similarity, and corresponding unfamiliarity with professional associations and the benefits they provide. It is our hope that ATA can visualize with us a synergistic and inclusive community where all members share similar communication strategies and can share insights and jointly learn how best to practice their craft and represent our profession.

Objectives for the proposed Division

- Encourage linguists working in SE Asian Languages to join ATA and the Southeast Asian Division
- Foster professional interaction and networking of SE Asian Languages Translators and Interpreters and their communities
- Advocate for professionalization for the provision of services in SE Asian Languages
- Provide current information of industry trends as well as conferences happening within the US and globally
- Promote Professional Development via educational sessions
- Work toward ATA Certified Translation (language specific)

- Promote Best Practices (Code of Ethics, Code of Professional Conduct, Canons, HIPAA)
- Welcome, inform, and mentor newcomers to the Southeast Asian Language Division
- Help provide continuing education opportunities, like webinars, specific for the SE Asian Languages
- Encourage participation of events organized by ATA chapters' continuing education programs
- Serve as a means of communication among the SE Asian Community
- Raise awareness among the general public and potential clients about the relevance of quality translation and interpretation and its importance
- Involve and inform division members of new technologies and innovations relevant to translation and interpretation
- Increase the visibility of SE Asian translators and interpreters inside and outside of the US

Administration

- Serve as representatives of the Division members to ATA's Board of Directors, the Divisions Committee, and Headquarters
- Promote and support ATA's policies and objectives

Core services

- Create a newsletter to keep members informed of news and events in the SE Asian Language community
- Create networking through a discussion forum, social media platforms, and a website
- Assist ATA's Conference Organizer in recruiting speakers relevant to the SE Asian Language community
- Organize division networking events during the ATA Annual Conference

We agree to do this in accordance with the *ATA Division Handbook* and the *ATA Governing Policy for Divisions*.

Sincerely,

Tram Bui and Quynh Nhu Gibney, ATA Voting Members