



A NEWSLETTER FROM JENNY BHATT  
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## WE ARE ALL TRANSLATORS

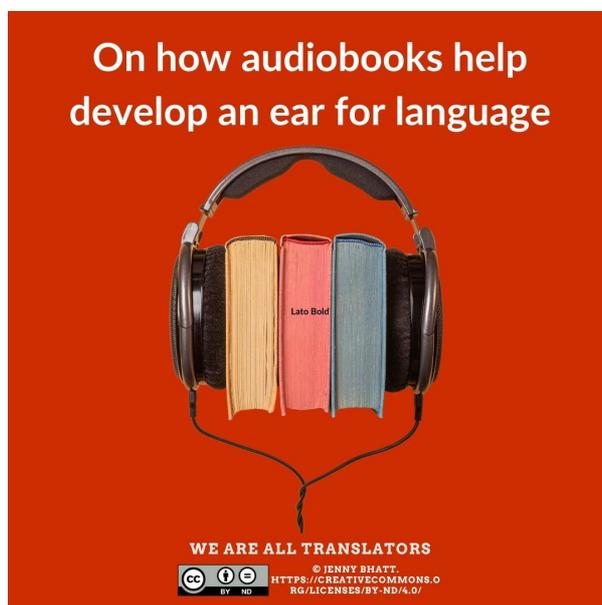
FOCUSING ON THE ART & CRAFT OF LITERARY  
TRANSLATION & THE TRANSLATING LIFE.

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Dear Reader,

During my corporate years, my schedule involved at least 70% travel. You'd think, with all that traveling time, I'd have managed to get a lot of reading done. But, oftentimes, my cognitive energy levels and my eyes weren't up to it. That's when I began listening to audiobooks. A game-changer for me.

Yes, there are pros and cons to this technology. Certainly, it's easy to get distracted and miss bits, especially if you're multi-tasking. There are other advantages and disadvantages too but we're not going to get into a debate about audiobooks here. My goal is to highlight how listening to an entire book primes our ears for picking up language nuances and complexities that we may not when reading with our eyes.



I do choose audiobooks carefully, of course, because the narrator's skill level matters. And then, I dial down the pace just a couple of notches so that the narration is slower than the original. This allows me to catch the stresses and emphases, lilt and cadences, and rhythms and changes in tonality.

How does this help me as a translator? Well, listening is the first and most basic language skill we all learn well before speaking, reading, or writing. As the latter three communication skills evolve, though, listening tends to suffer. And, far from being a passive listening experience, I've always found listening to audiobooks a deeply interactive and interpretive process if approached correctly. Yes, we have to re-develop our listening stamina if our 24/7 online world has destroyed it. But

consider how effective language learning, in terms of both comprehension and interpretation, is impossible without strong listening skills. Consider how the best communication strategies involve evaluative listening abilities.

Over to you. How do you feel about audiobooks? Do you have any particular strategies for improving your language learning and translating skills through listening (whether you do that with audiobooks or something else)? Please let me know via the social media links or in reply to this newsletter. I'll share it on.

Until next week.

Warmly,

[Jenny Bhatt](#)

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## Some interesting links

**BOOK RECOMMENDATION: Translating Myself and Others by Jhumpa Lahiri**

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**READ: How Does Language During Sex Translate Across Cultures? Polly Barton on the Way We Communicate in the Bedroom (Lit Hub)**

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**SUBMIT (US ONLY): NBCC Emerging Critics Fellowship**

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**SUBMIT: Propose an ALTA-Sponsored Translation Event for AWP23**

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**SUBMIT (INDIA ONLY): 2022 Charles Wallace India Trust Translation Fellowship at @bcltuea (11 September - 12 December 2022)**

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