



ITIA BULLETIN

October 2009

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Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association
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■ Editorial

Dear Readers,
Since April 2005, I have done my best to bring you interesting news and features on T/I related issues from Ireland and around the world. Now, the time has come to hand over the role of editor so this, readers, is my last issue. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as ITIA bulletin editor and hope that you have found the bulletin an interesting read.

The work has been made so much easier by the support and help of ITIA members and other bulletin readers. Special thanks go to Mary Phelan, Annette Schiller and John Kearns for their contributions. The bulletin would not get produced at all if it weren't for the excellent work of Jody Byrne (bulletin founder) who does the layout of each and every issue. Jody, I owe you many a beer!

I leave the editorship in the capable hands of Gosia Emanowicz. Gosia is Polish-born but based in Dublin where she works as a translator and interpreter. Best of luck, Gosia!

Finally, I would like to say that the success of the bulletin is due to collaboration so please continue (or start!) to send in hints and suggestions for stories. A simple email with a link can be most useful.

With warmest wishes!

Elizabeth Hayes
Editor ITIA Bulletin
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■ EU funding for literary translation projects

EU support for Literary Translation is aimed at enhancing knowledge of the literature and literary heritage of fellow Europeans by way of promoting the circulation of literary works between countries. Publishing houses can be awarded grants for translations and publication of works of fiction from one European language into another European language.

Responsible entity: EACEA

Projects duration: Maximum 24 months.

Grant allocation: Funds of between EUR 2.000 and EUR 60.000 are available, but EU support is limited to a maximum of 50% of the total eligible cost.

For more information, see <http://tinyurl.com/ydyepjr>

■ HSE's Emergency Multilingual Aid

The August issue of the bulletin contained a piece on the HSE's new multilingual booklets that are being rolled out in hospitals across Ireland. Diane Nurse of the HSE (Health Service Executive) contacted the bulletin requesting the opportunity to respond. Ms. Nurse writes:

1. The EMA (Emergency Multilingual Aid) forms one element of a strategic approach towards reducing barriers experienced by service users and staff in accessing and delivering services optimally. This is clearly aligned with the recommendations of the HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy 2008 - 2012.

2. The EMA was developed as a partnership between the Social Inclusion Unit of the HSE and the Health Promoting Hospitals Network. It takes account of similar initiatives in other jurisdictions and of evidence based good practice in the area of intercultural health.

3. Development of the EMA took place under the guidance of an Advisory Group, comprising a range of stakeholders in the area of intercultural health, including frontline staff and NGO representatives of minority ethnic communities. Mary Phelan - a highly respected member of the professional interpreting community - was a key member of this group and played a valuable role in ongoing development of the EMA.

4. The EMA comprises more than just a set of phrasebooks.

5. Intensive preparation took place around roll-out of the EMA - this included establishment of strong networks for coordination and sharing of information and feedback, while training in use of the EMA formed a key element of implementation. Evaluation of the usefulness of the EMA is underway, with a report on this expected in early 2010.

6. Following much groundwork, the EMA was rolled out nationally across 48 hospitals. Feedback since roll-out commenced at the end of June has been very encouraging, with frontline staff reporting positive

outcomes around its usage. While the evaluation mentioned earlier will inform ongoing enhancement of the resource, it has already become evident that the EMA will also prove useful in a number of identified primary and community settings. In this regard, the EMA is currently being trialled in a number of such settings.

Both the HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy and the EMA are available for download on the HSE website www.hse.ie

■ Joining the ITIA

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* is always delighted to welcome new members to the Association. There are five categories of membership:

- ◆ Associate
- ◆ Professional
- ◆ Corporate
- ◆ Concession (undergraduate & senior citizen)
- ◆ Honorary

Associate membership is open to anyone with an interest in translating or interpreting. *Professional membership* is for those who meet strict criteria set by the professional membership committee of the ITIA and which is part of the drive to raise the status of the profession in the European market.

Corporate membership is for firms and agencies associated with the profession while *concession* membership is for undergraduate students engaged in third level language and/or translation studies and senior citizens. Finally, *honorary* membership is intended for national and international persons who have distinguished themselves in our professional field. For more information on how to join as well as for the relevant application forms, visit the ITIA website at: www.translatorsassociation.ie

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ROMANIAN to and from ENGLISH
medical, law, education, religion, IT, economics, general
Conference / community interpreting

■ R&D into automated translation

The U.S. stimulus package of \$787 billion includes \$1 billion earmarked for research into the area of automating translation. While there have been small victories for industry in the area of machine translation, there have been no ground-breaking achievements. The White House is clearly hoping to get some real, useful results.

The Obama administration have released a white paper, entitled *A Strategy for American Innovation: Driving Towards Sustainable Growth and Quality Jobs*, in which it outlines what results are expected from the \$1 billion investment. "The President's renewed commitment to science, technology and innovation will allow the nation to set and meet ambitious goals that will improve our quality of life and establish the foundation for the industries and jobs of the future. Examples include: [...] Automatic, highly accurate and real-time translation between the major languages of the world – greatly lowering the barriers to international commerce and collaboration."

This move by the Obama administration demonstrates the faith that exists in the future of automated translation...

We have taken the opportunity to laugh at maladroit translations, perhaps convincing ourselves while we laughed that humans would always be central to translation. This is looking ever more naïve and it seems inevitable that the very profession of translation will look very different in twenty years.

The next issue of the ITIA Bulletin will be out next month. If you have any contributions, suggestions or scandals that you would like to share with over 1,000 subscribers worldwide, send them to Gosia Emanowicz at theitiabulletin@gmail.com.

Subscribing to the ITIA Bulletin

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We are already seeing the shift towards a more editorial role where translators are translating in part and, at the same time, correcting machine translated text. Of course, it depends to a certain extent on what kind of translation is involved, with technical translation most susceptible to changing technologies and literary translation most protected.

This move by the Obama administration demonstrates the faith that exists in the future of automated translation and when belief is backed by \$1 billion, it seems inevitable that change will come.

■ Gaddafi's interpreter hits a wall

On September 23rd, Colonel Gaddafi spoke for a full 94 minutes in front of the UN's General Assembly despite being allotted 15 minutes. Gaddafi insisted on using his own interpreters for interpreting into English and French. The reason given for snubbing the UN's own highly-qualified interpreters was that Gaddafi would be speaking a little-known dialect of Arabic which did not turn out to be the case as, on the day, he spoke standard Arabic for the entirety of his speech.

As Gaddafi's speech rolled on and on, his English interpreter (of which there was only one) started to show signs of distress. The valiant interpreter lasted a full 90 minutes before reportedly shouting, "I just can't take it any more", at which point a UN interpreter smoothly stepped in and covered the last four minutes of the speech.

UN interpreters work for a maximum of 40 minutes at a time so Gaddafi's interpreter had already done more than twice the UN limit. Let's hope his brave performance is appreciated and not punished.

■ UNESCO celebrates the Potter effect

A conference of Harry Potter translators was organised by UNESCO to mark International Literacy Day in Paris. Translators of the Harry Potter series gathered to examine the role of translation in enhancing literacy and cross-cultural understanding. The ITIA's own Máire Nic Mhaoláin, Irish translator of the popular children's books, was in attendance.

The translators spoke of the effect the series has had on publishing and literacy in their countries.

Lia Wyler, the Brazilian translator, says the Potter books have helped widen youngsters use of grammar (she's made an effort to reintroduce more tenses in her translations) and boosted numbers visiting libraries. And Wyler's own considerable reader feedback shows Potter fans are from all walks of life, not the usual educated milieu.

"A friend's manicurist was desperately waiting for the next volume to be translated" she laughs, before pointing out the calming effect reading Potter has had on turbulent youth. "You start talking about Potter and even aggressive teenagers calm down. It's incredible".

Reading such popular fiction in your own language can restore a sense of pride in that language. Not least if it's been seen as the language of the oppressor says Kobus Geldenhuys who's translated the last two HP novels into Afrikaans, one of South Africa's eleven official languages.

"To connect Afrikaans children with their mother tongue milieu gives them a feeling their language is good enough. Afrikaans was earmarked as the language of the oppressor, but you know it doesn't belong to an elitist group, Afrikaans is spoken across all social barriers".

"You start talking about Potter and even aggressive teenagers calm down. It's incredible".

Kim Satitwattana, the Thai translator, notes that in Thailand Potter has already inspired a lot of new home-grown writing talent, including 24-year old Dr. Pop. "His 14 adventure fantasy stories have sold 250,000; a successful book sells an average of 3,000" she adds.

This is taken from an article by Alison Hird's on the Radio France Internationale website (English section). For the full article, see: <http://tinyurl.com/ya5w938>

■ The cost of competing in the Polish market

Every once in a while I get lucky. The middleman sends me a batch of documents to translate that he hasn't looked at very carefully (all written in some funny Johnny-foreigner lingo, see?) and it turns out that some of the documents are almost identical – if not to each other, then to something I did earlier and still have on file. Bureaucracy is great for duplicating work; copying and pasting is great for reducing it.

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Here in Poland there is still a legal requirement that certain translations be done – or checked – by sworn translators, so one translation agency went the extra step and started creating translated car importation documents in blanco. All that was missing were details such as registration number, chassis number and what-have-you. And of course the official stamp of the sworn translator (in this case the company boss).

This McDonaldisation of the work enabled the company to offer much lower prices than its competitors. The filling in of details was often done by student translators. The boss would certify them with the magic "sworn translator" stamp and everyone was happy except the competitors who were still, presumably, paying sworn translator rates to type out serial numbers and dates and such like.

The company in question is called *Symultanka*. On June 25th 2008 the police swooped on all but one of its branches in Poland, confiscating documents and computers, and arresting the owners, Ewa Szybawska, her son Jan Szybawski, and his fiancée. Ms. Szybawska was to spend 11 months in jail awaiting trial on charges of organised crime and translating documents by persons not permitted to do so.

While Szybawska was under arrest, the company's head office in Kraków was comprehensively robbed and the firm as a whole is in ruins.

Nie (Sep. 17th 2009) quotes Gregorz Dostatni, co-author of the law on sworn translators: "It doesn't matter who draws up the translation ... What matters is

the certification of the translation, which can only be done by a sworn translator.” But that does not seem to have helped Symultanka. Even the company’s secretaries are now suspects. So next time I get a letter from the Social Welfare to translate – I’ll do it from scratch.

This is a link to Grzegorz Dostatni’s book-length commentary on the law concerning sworn translating: <http://tinyurl.com/yghmw48>

This is a link to a Polish newspaper article on the affair: <http://tinyurl.com/yzlswn9>

Henry Grodsk

■ Concern over shortage of interpreters, especially for French

Considering existing demand and the construction of larger conference centres in the future, the European Commission estimates that around 200 conference interpreters will be needed in the next ten years. Faced with a serious shortage of French interpreters for the coming years, particularly due to retirements, it launched an awareness campaign targeting young people, on 23 September.

As the first element of the campaign, in collaboration with its counterparts at the European Parliament and the EU Court of Justice, the Commission’s DG Interpretation produced a video ‘Interpreting for Europe – in French’ to help young French speakers to learn more about the interpreting profession. The video was published on YouTube, on 23 September, at <http://tinyurl.com/ya44629>.

Although universities are starting to provide a constant flow of qualified candidates for its aptitude tests, the Commission notes that this is not enough to meet current or projected demand, as 75% of all meetings of EU bodies require interpreting into French (practically all meetings of the Council, the Parliament and the Court of Justice).

Apart from the fact that a large number of French-speaking linguists recruited from the mid-1970s and up to the mid- 1980s are reaching retirement age and are not being replaced at the same rate, the Commission gives as a cause of the shortage the fact that the growing use of English as the global language of communication has conveyed a widespread belief that the ability to

speak English is enough for international interactions. The number of young people studying languages has consequently declined.

...the same is true for many countries where learning English is considered essential while other languages are neglected.

This phenomenon is evident in the United Kingdom and in English-speaking countries in general, but the same is true for many countries where learning English is considered essential while other languages are neglected. French is not the only language concerned, notes the Commission. During the next decade, a large number of interpreters into English, German, Italian and Dutch will be retiring. Awareness-raising actions for these languages are already being prepared and will be implemented starting this year for German.

Five years on from the 2004 enlargement and two years after the addition of Bulgarian and Romanian, there is still a shortage of Romanian, Latvian and Maltese interpreters for the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee. DG Interpretation can cover nearly 100% of interpreting needs for most of the more widely used EU15 languages (FR, DE, EN, IT, ES, NL and PT). Demand for Greek is 97% covered. For Swedish, Finnish and Danish, coverage rates range from 81% to 91%.

Details and figures are available at www.europolitics.info

■ Conferences, Calls & Courses

Queens University Belfast to host the 4th IATIS Conference (2012)

The International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) is delighted to announce that its next conference will take place at Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland, from July 17th to 20th, 2012. The 2012 Conference will be IATIS's 4th International Conference, following Seoul (2004), Cape Town (2006) and Melbourne (2009).

More information on the Belfast Conference will follow shortly. In the meantime, please put the Conference dates in your diary.

More information: <http://www.iatis.org/content/conferences/offers-iatis2012.php>

Mediterranean Editors and Translators (MET) 5th meeting Translation, editing, writing: broadening the scope and setting limits

- ◆ 30-31 October 2009, METM09, European Institute of the Mediterranean, Barcelona, Spain
- ◆ 29-30 October 2009, Pre-METM09 workshops

The final program of METM09, complete with abstracts, has been posted on the MET website. This year's plenary talks will follow literary and historical threads, while the presentations and panel discussions will cover a wide range of practical and research-related topics. In addition, there will be a pre-meeting program of training workshops.

Please note that registration for the meeting is filling up quickly and there are only limited places left for certain workshops. To date, we have signed up people of over 15 different nationalities from 14 different countries. If you are interested in attending but are not ready to sign up yet, we suggest you keep an eye on our website in case places for attending the meeting also become limited. For further information on registration, please see http://www.metmeetings.org/index.php?page=metm09_registration.

Since Barcelona is a popular holiday destination, make sure to make your travel arrangements in time. Information regarding travel and accommodation can be found at http://www.metmeetings.org/index.php?page=metm09_local.

The Mediterranean Editors and Translators meetings are aimed at author's editors, copy editors, journal editors, translators, copywriters, proofreaders, teachers of English for specific purposes, project managers, writing instructors, oral communication coaches, web localizers, and any other language professionals working with English at the writing-editing-translation-publishing interface, particularly in the Mediterranean area.

Website: http://www.metmeetings.org/index.php?page=metm09_program

The Author-Translator in the European Literary Tradition

Swansea University, 28 June – 1 July 2010

- ◆ Confirmed keynote speakers include:
- ◆ Susan Bassnett, David Constantine, Lawrence Venuti

The recent 'creative turn' in translation studies has challenged notions of translation as a derivative and uncreative activity which is inferior to 'original' writing. Commentators have drawn attention to the creative processes involved in the translation of texts, and suggested a rethinking of translation as a form of creative writing. Hence there is growing critical and theoretical interest in translations undertaken by literary authors.

This conference focuses on acts of translation by creative writers. Literary scholarship has tended to overlook this aspect of an author's output, yet since the time of Cicero, authors across Europe have been engaged not only in composing their own works but in rendering texts from one language into another. Indeed, many of Europe's greatest writers have devoted time to translation – from Chaucer to Heaney, from Diderot and Goethe to Seferis and Pasternak – and have produced some remarkable texts. Others (Beckett, Joyce, Nabokov) have translated their own work from one language into another. As attentive readers and skilful word-smiths, writers may be particularly well equipped to meet the creative demands of literary translation; many translations of poetry are, after all, undertaken by poets themselves. Moreover, translation can have a major impact on an author's own writing and on the development of native literary traditions.

The conference seeks to reassess the importance of translation for European writers – both well-known and less familiar – from antiquity to the present day. It will explore why authors translate, what they translate, and how they translate, as well as the links between an author's translation work and his or her own writing. It will bring together scholars in English studies and modern languages, classics and medieval studies, comparative literature and translation studies. Possible topics include:

- ◆ individual author-translators: motivations, career trajectories, comparative thematics and stylistics
- ◆ the author-translator in context: literary societies, movements, national traditions
- ◆ the problematic creativity of the author-translator
- ◆ self-reflective pronouncements and manifestos
- ◆ the author-translator as critic of others' translations
- ◆ self-translation: strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ authors, adaptations, re-translation and relay translation
- ◆ the reception and influence of the work of author-translators
- ◆ theoretical interfaces

Proposals are invited for individual papers (max. 20 minutes) or panels (of 3 speakers). The conference language is English. It is anticipated that selected papers from the conference will be published. Please send a 250-word abstract by 30 September 2009 to the organisers, Hilary Brown and Duncan Large (author-translator@swan.ac.uk):

Author-Translator Conference
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<http://www.author-translator.net/>

■ Contacting The ITIA

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■ ITIA Resources for Translators

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* has compiled a series of useful information leaflets for translators and interpreters - both members and non-members alike. These leaflets are available from the ITIA website at www.translatorsassociation.ie.