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# ITIA BULLETIN

March 2010

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**Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association**  
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## ■ Editorial

Dear Readers,  
Welcome to the March edition of the ITIA Bulletin.

The Irish Times reported recently on the new proposal from the European Commission to set minimum standards for interpretation and translation for suspects standing trial in a country where the language is not their own. See below for the details of the proposal and read the full article on The Irish Times' website. Also visit EULITA's website where you can find updates and more information on that issue.

There are some interesting CPD events in the ITIA in April and May. The first one outlines the strategies required to translate business films and the other one is designed for those starting out as translators and interpreters. See below for details on these events and visit the ITIA website for more events to come this year.

All contributions are welcome, so please contact me with any interesting stories, comments or announcements.

**Gosia Emanowicz**  
Editor ITIA Bulletin  
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graphic designer, website designer) and how to act as linguistic and cultural expert within the project.

Workshop features include: a 3000-word handout with concrete strategies; a detailed checklist to manage the task; relevant articles emailed to participants after the event.

### **Course Leader**

Dr Jean-Pierre Mailhac trains professional translators and postgraduate students in various European countries, and carries out research in applied translation studies.

For the last 20 years, he has translated, recorded and also supervised recordings of film material for a wide range of companies (e.g. Marks & Spencer, Astra Zeneca, Motorola, Airbus, P&O, ICI, Pilkington), as well as other types of clients (e.g. BBC, National Geographic, Leprosy Foundation). He has published articles on this topic, lectured on it and run a number of workshops in European countries as part of international conferences and for organisations such as the *European Union*, the *Institute of Translation and Interpreting*, the *Chartered Institute of Linguists*, the *Société Française des Traducteurs* and the *Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer*.

### **Feedback on past workshops**

#### *Professional translators*

- ◆ (...) truly excellent: sensitive to all the related problems and very clear on the strategies for solutions.
- ◆ (...) the practical exercises reflected the points from the morning session very well. Dr Mailhac is an excellent presenter and successfully delivered a considerable amount of material in a short time. (...) The workshop was very enjoyable and useful. (...) having the practical exercises and the ensuing discussion after lunch was ideal.

#### *Postgraduate students*

- ◆ It is very helpful to know which problems to anticipate, rather than getting the blame for not having pointed them out to the client later! I very much liked the hands-on, practical approach.
- ◆ Very qualified and very good examples illustrating problems of translating audiovisual material; everything was really well prepared; practical session was a lot of fun.
- ◆ It's a really interesting topic, delivered in a very exciting way.

## ■ Translating Business Film Material

*ITIA CPD EVENT – 24 APRIL 2010, DUBLIN*

As they strive to keep up with both globalisation and rapid technological change (from video tape to CD, DVD, Internet use and now iPhones), companies constantly increase their use of film to advertise, communicate information or train staff, which generates material to translate.

Using authentic examples, the workshop, which combines a presentation with practical work, outlines the strategies required to translate business films and covers:

- ◆ - aspects stemming from the audiovisual dimension (e.g. synchronisation, intonation, pronunciation of names, text on screen including subtitles);
- ◆ - problems which take on a new dimension in the audiovisual context (e.g. cultural references, currencies, puns);
- ◆ - the requirements of the users (client, viewers, film director, recording artist, sound engineer, video editor,

## Undergraduate student

- ◆ Very good presentation of the materials (in terms of delivery, humour, conveying main points etc.); very accessible (...) very engaging and entertaining overall.

### Date, time, venue:

24<sup>th</sup> April 2010, 9 am to 5.30 pm, Irish Writers' Centre, 19 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

### Cost:

- ◆ €70 ITIA members (and members of another FIT association); €90 non-members;
- ◆ €25 ITIA student/concession members; €40 for student non-members.

Includes refreshments and lunch. For more information and the booking form, visit <http://tinyurl.com/y3wown3> or contact Annette at [cpd.itia@gmail.com](mailto:cpd.itia@gmail.com)

## ■ First steps as a translator or interpreter

ITIA EVENT – 22<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2010, DUBLIN

This full-day event is aimed at those starting out as translators or interpreters, those thinking about embarking on a career in this area and those who simply want to find out more about the profession. This will be a day of talks, lectures, panel discussions with plenty of opportunity to ask questions. Topics will include: freelancing for agencies and direct clients, qualifications, CAT tools, bookkeeping/taxation, pricing jobs, quality control etc.

Details are still to be finalised and will be posted to the ITIA website at <http://tinyurl.com/y3wown3> as soon as they are available.

## ■ Joining the ITIA

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* is pleased to welcome new members to the association. We currently have the following categories of membership:

- ◆ Professional
- ◆ Associate
- ◆ Corporate
- ◆ Institutional
- ◆ Student
- ◆ Honorary

*Professional Membership* is awarded to translators or interpreters who meet the strict criteria of the ITIA based on qualification and level of experience. Applicants must also achieve a PASS in the annual Professional Membership Examination (translator or interpreter) set by the ITIA.

*Associate Membership* is available to translators and interpreters who are starting out on their careers and to those who do not work full-time as a translator or interpreter. Many members avail of Associate Membership until such time as they have acquired the requisite experience and/or qualifications to apply for Professional Membership. Associate Membership is also availed of by people with a professional interest in the professions of translation and interpreting (e.g. terminologists, translation/interpreting tutors etc.) and by those who have a general interest in these professions.

*Corporate Membership* is available to translation companies. As this category is currently under review, we are not accepting applications at the moment.

*Institutional Membership* is available to bodies that do not function as commercial agencies, for example university centres for translation and interpreting studies or cultural institutes. Application documents for Institutional membership are currently being prepared.

*Student Membership* is available to persons undertaking undergraduate studies in any discipline or those undertaking postgraduate studies in translation or interpreting.

*Honorary Membership* is awarded by the ITIA AGM to persons in Ireland or abroad who have distinguished themselves in the field of translation or interpreting.

For further details and application forms, please see our website at <http://tinyurl.com/y65bgtb>

### New Associate Members

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SPANISH, GERMAN from ENGLISH – technical, general

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## ■ The Lives of Others

CARLA GUIMARAES, *EL PAÍS* 21/02/10

French, Arabic, Polish, Turkish, Hungarian, Chinese, Romanian, Portuguese... these are the many languages spoken in a small little room in police headquarters in Madrid. Translators spend hours listening to conversations and transcribing them. Sometimes they listen to very difficult things... threats, fights, accusations. Sometimes they listen to the same person who had been threatening talking to their mother and telling her how much they love her. It is a difficult job in which, for eight hours a day, you live the life of another person.

The Romanian translator is very Catholic and has only known one man in her life; her ex-husband. Ironically, every day she has to listen to calls from a pimp to his girls. She is working for a police unit which is investigating a people trafficking mafia. When she reproduces the conversations on paper, she avoids using swear words or sexual slang, but sometimes she has no alternative and she cannot avoid blushing as she writes them down. In the beginning she noticed that the pimp called all his girls by the same name: Irina. Later on she discovered that Irina was his wife's name and the idea of calling all his employees the same name kept him out of problems at home.

The Hungarian translator was a trainer of the national female swimming team during the time when the country bowed to the extinct Soviet Union. Almost 15 years ago she had to emigrate to Spain and she has not been to a swimming pool for five years: it brings back too many memories. Her physique betrays her sporting past as well as the abuse of steroids, something commonplace at the time according to her. They had to beat the Americans. But the human body has limits. It wasn't she who said it but one of the dealers she listens to. She is married to a Spaniard and sometimes when she goes home, she finds it difficult not to talk about what she has been listening to. She would like to talk about it but she cannot. Nobody must know about it.

When she is asked where she works, she always gives the same answer: in an accountancy firm. People find that so boring that they don't ask any more.

The most senior translator in the place is Turkish. Single and attractive, she is always very made up. The policemen look at her when she passes by. She has an adolescent son and she does a lot of overtime for his upkeep. As she has no time for her own life she spends the day living the lives of others: those who kill for money, those who bring in contraband from Turkey and those who make counterfeit credit cards. She knows them all by name; she knows who their parents are and what they say to their girlfriends at night before they go to sleep. She understands them, she translates them and she detests them, all at the same time. Life isn't black and white, she says, but sometimes it's a bit too grey.

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*It is a difficult job in which, for eight hours a day, you live the life of another person.*

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The Arabic translator has a doctorate in languages and three children. Her husband stays at home looking after the little ones while she works. What can you do? She got a job before he did. She knows every type of hash and almost all the ways of bringing it into Spain, despite never having rolled a joint. One day she came to work a little pale and almost fainted. She was fasting as it was Ramadan. They asked her if she was very religious. She answered that she wasn't, that it was more tradition than religion, and that you didn't have to be very Catholic either to celebrate Christmas, something that all Spaniards celebrate.

A police unit raided a clandestine laboratory where they were making kin, a Chinese drug similar to ketamin.

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\(a\)gmail.com](mailto:theitiabulletin(a)gmail.com).

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The police had to catch the traffickers *in flagranti* and the translator spent the whole night listening to calls until he managed to work out the location of the lab. The Chinese translator is the only man in the room, but he doesn't get noticed. Quiet and efficient he doesn't even take off his headphones to eat. He speaks Spanish with a Madrid accent. He was born here and studied here; he hasn't even been to China on holidays. The truth is that he misses it and he doesn't exactly know why.

All these stories are real, they aren't happening in violent Baltimore like in the series *The Wire* or in the old East Germany of *The Lives of Others* but in the police headquarters in Cuatro Caminos.

I know this first hand because I too inhabited that listening room for a while. I was a Portuguese translator. And I was so caught up in my work that I talked about the people that I listened to as if I really knew them. The other day I thought of each and every one of the people that I met in that room, in the stories that I witnessed, in the moments that we shared and I wanted to dedicate these lines to them. They are the people who do the things in real life that surprise us so much in fiction. With their headphones on and their attention focused, they live the lives of others without missing a word.

Carla Guimaraes is a Brazilian writer living in Spain.  
Source: *El País*. <http://tinyurl.com/y99dmcd>  
Translated by Anne Larchet

## ■ Judges protest at lack of qualified translators in court cases

F.J.B, *EL PAÍS* 03/02/10

A foreigner who has to rely on a bad translator does not have a proper defence. This is happening in the region because of some interpreters who are not trained to work in criminal proceedings or in court cases, according to a complaint made by the Madrid branch of the *Judges for Democracy* association. This group of professionals has uncovered serious problems occurring for some time now and have requested the regional government, who are responsible for this service, to take immediate remedial action in order to put an end to this lack of a proper defence.

The coordinator for the Madrid branch, Judge Luis Aurelio González Martín, emphasized that the main

problems are occurring in criminal cases especially in pre-trial proceedings. "A lot of the time we find that the translators are interpreting very freely and the defendant doesn't know what he is being charged with. This is happening with minority languages", Gonzalez Martín pointed out.

### *All this constitutes a clear lack of proper defence for the defendant...*

Another problem that magistrates have come across is that very often the translators are not capable of simultaneously translating the trial, which means that the defendants do not know what is going on. All this constitutes a clear lack of proper defence for the defendant and an infringement of their human rights, according to the regional co-ordinator of *Judges for Democracy*.

This group is preparing a report which they will submit to the Regional Presidential, Interior and Justice Departments so that the problems that have been happening for some time can be resolved as soon as possible. According to Judge Gonzalez Martín, these irregularities have occurred because of a change of the company contracted to carry out the service.

Sources for the Justice Department point out that the service offered by the company since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January last is adequate and that to date they have not received any official written complaint from the courts in the region. Moreover, sanctions have become more severe and can even go as far as cancelling the contract.

Source: *El País*. <http://tinyurl.com/y9b8pdc>  
Translated by Anne Larchet

## ■ Hundreds of Hungarian Driving Licences Issued Illiterate Romanians

A convoluted story of abusing the system has been unfolding in the Hungarian press about Romanian citizens being issued with Hungarian driving licences with the help of unqualified interpreters. Seventeen Romanian, mostly illiterate, citizens were arrested in Cluj Napoca (Kolozsvár) on 17<sup>th</sup> February last. They all held Hungarian driving licences which they had obtained with the assistance of interpreters who had

given the correct answers during the “Rules of the Road” test.

Apparently, a considerably sized business venture grew out of the discrepancy that a driving license is easier to obtain in Hungary than in other countries. Romanians are not the only ones who have benefited from the system, and Vietnamese and Chinese nationals are also said to have “worked out” the correct solutions with the help of “an interpreter.” In fact, they did not need to answer the multiple choice questions at all – the individuals working as interpreters did all that for them.

The cost of such a project, however, was very high, as much as several thousand euros at a time. The process involved an intricate scam of acquiring fake papers certifying employment and accommodation arrangements in Hungary. According to Romanian sources, at least 56, but possibly as many as 225 individuals have obtained a licence under such false pretences. The two leaders of the gang were finally arrested when they handed over the newly issued driving licences to two undercover policemen who had infiltrated the criminal association and who had been cooperating with the Hungarian secret services. As a result of the investigation, driving theory tests are now recorded in Hungary, although the translation of test sheets is still an unresolved issue.

#### Sources:

- ◆ <http://tinyurl.com/yb4zhhb>
- ◆ <http://tinyurl.com/yedss9z>
- ◆ <http://tinyurl.com/y9hr6yo>
- ◆ <http://mno.hu/portal/696902>

#### Short notes on the Irish situation

In contrast, in Ireland the system has been tightened up a lot in the recent years. The interpreters work separately, in a booth, and do not even see the questions or the possible answers. They automatically hear every question and only the answers which the candidate touches on an interactive screen in a separate testing room through a headset. All questions and answers are pre-recorded, also for the benefit of those who speak English but have difficulty reading and writing, and have been used for testing speakers with limited English proficiency for a number of years.

Therefore, the opportunity for the interpreter to help out the candidate has been minimised. In order to avoid any further doubt of malpractices (for example in the case of a question “What is the official speed limit for motorbikes on a national road” which could possibly be

answered by the interpreter), all interpreted sessions have been digitally recorded for the past few years. These recordings also include the pre-session discussion between the candidate and the interpreter, which involves the explanation of how the system works.

Krisztina Zimányi

## ■ Statistics-based MT gaining ground

AS REPORTED IN THE IRISH TIMES, MARCH 19TH 2010

Until recently, most MT technology worked on a rules-based approach to programming, teaching the computer the linguistic rules of two languages and inputting the necessary dictionaries.

This is being overtaken by a statistical approach. This is more like educated guesswork, aided by feeding in source-language data along with their human-generated translations in the target language. As well as huge amounts of data, it also demands lots of computing power, so it is easy to see where *Google* has spotted an opportunity to muscle into areas previously led by *Microsoft*, *IBM* and *Babelfish*.

But while the search engine giant has been busy capturing many of the headlines in the area of MT, research teams involved in the *Centre for Next Generation Localisation* (CNGL) have also been working on speech-to-speech translation technology and other MT-related areas.

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*...it is easy to see where Google has spotted an opportunity to muscle into areas previously led by Microsoft, IBM and Babelfish.*

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The CNGL, which is funded by Science Foundation Ireland, includes academics and researchers from *Dublin City University*, *Trinity College Dublin*, *UCD* and the *University of Limerick*.

“It’s doable already, especially in limited domains,” says Professor Andy Way, who leads the MT research group at DCU’s school of computing. “Surprisingly, given that speech contains many errors, false starts,

hesitations and so on, machine translation quality doesn't degrade much when confronted with speech input."

The one variable that is proving a challenge, he adds, is the massive range of speakers' voices and accents.

Way's team is also working on smarter ways to translate using the data-driven approach, and merging MT with the translation memory software that many translators now use to improve translation quality and output. "In sum, there's no reason to be fearful of Google," says Way.

For the full article, see <http://tinyurl.com/y31fjpr>

## ■ EC proposes minimum T/I standards for suspects

The Irish Times recently reported that The European Commission has proposed minimum standards for interpretation and translation for suspects standing trial in a country where the language is not their own. The proposed legislation is designed to help people to get a fair trial anywhere in the EU, even when they cannot understand the language of the case. The need for standardised procedural rights and the barriers which can lead to unfair convictions during judicial proceedings in other EU countries have been highlighted by a number of real-life cases. These include an Italian tourist involved in a traffic accident in Sweden who was not allowed to talk to an Italian-speaking lawyer during trial, and a Polish suspect who could not see written translations of evidence used against him in a French court.

The proposed new Directive replaces a Framework Decision on interpretation and translation rights in July 2009, which became void upon the entry into force of the *Lisbon Treaty* on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

On November 30th, 2009, EU governments asked the commission to put forward proposals on a "step-by-step" basis to establish EU-wide standards for a series of procedural rights. The commission is thus turning the proposed Framework Decision into a Directive.

This proposal is the first step in a series of measures to set common EU standards in criminal cases. The Lisbon Treaty enables the EU to adopt measures to strengthen the rights of EU citizens, in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Common standards in relation to these rights would result in a better application of the principle of mutual recognition, thereby improving the functioning of judicial co-operation in criminal matters between EU member states, according to a statement from the commission.

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*The proposed legislation is designed to help people to get a fair trial anywhere in the EU...*

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The proposal strengthens citizens' rights to interpretation and translation in three ways: interpretation would have to be provided for communication with lawyers as well as during investigations – such as police questioning – and at trial; the proposal covers written translation of all essential documents such as the detention order, the charge sheet or indictment, or vital pieces of evidence; citizens must have the right to legal advice before waiving the right to interpretation and translation; translation and interpretation costs will have to be met by the member state, not by the suspect – irrespective of the final decision.

For the full article see <http://tinyurl.com/y25pw77>  
see also <http://tinyurl.com/y3j36ye>

## ■ Pádraic MacKernan 1940-2010

It was with sadness that we learned of the death on January 25<sup>th</sup> of Pádraic MacKernan, former secretary general at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Irish Ambassador to France. Members will recall that Mr MacKernan gave the 2007 International Translation Day talk for the ITIA and spoke on the topic for that year of "*Don't Shoot the Translator*", entertaining us with stories of his many encounters with diplomatic interpreters and translators down through the years. An Irish Times obituary is available [here](#).

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasail.*

John Kearns

## ■ Conferences, Calls and Courses

### **The 4<sup>th</sup> International Media for All Conference** **Audiovisual Translation: Taking Stock**

The conference aims to bring together professionals, scholars, practitioners and other interested parties to explore audiovisual translation (AVT) in theory and practice, to ascertain the language needs of distributors and broadcasters, to discuss the linguistic and cultural dimensions of AVT, to look into potential synergies between the industry and the academic worlds, and to investigate the relevance and application of translation theory for this very specific and rapidly expanding translational genre. Special attention will be given to the notion of accessibility to information and to the social and economic implications of implementing appropriate quality standards.

#### ***Proposals***

Papers are allotted 20-minute slots to be followed by 10 minutes discussion (30 minutes in total). Proposals for papers should be presented on the abstract proposal form which can be downloaded from the website. Abstracts of 250-350 words should be sent to [j.diaz-cintas@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:j.diaz-cintas@imperial.ac.uk) by 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

#### ***Conference venue***

The 2 day conference, 30<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011, will take place at Senate House.

#### ***Workshops venue***

The workshops will be held at the Department of Humanities at Imperial College London on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011. The topics and prices can be found on the conference website.

#### ***Official Language***

English

#### ***Publication***

A selection of the papers presented at the conference will be published by the organising committee

#### ***Local Organiser***

Jorge Díaz-Cintas, Imperial College, London, UK. Email: [j.diaz-cintas\(a\)imperial.ac.uk](mailto:j.diaz-cintas(a)imperial.ac.uk)

For more information see [www.imperial.ac.uk/mediaforall4](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/mediaforall4)

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## ■ ITIA Resources for Translators

For more information about the *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* and its activities, please visit our website at [www.translatorsassociation.ie](http://www.translatorsassociation.ie).