



ITIA BULLETIN

April 2011

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Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association
Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Teangairí na hÉireann

19 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland
Tel.: +353-1-872 1302 Fax: +353-1-872 6282
Email: [itiasecretary\(a\)eircom.net](mailto:itiasecretary(a)eircom.net) Web: www.translatorsassociation.ie

■ Editorial

Dear Readers,

First of all let me thank you for all the positive feedback I received after the last issue of the Bulletin, which was the first ever issue that I edited. It was definitely encouraging and motivating. I can only hope that my further work will not disappoint you and that every reader will always be able to find something interesting for themselves in each future issue edited by me.

I am glad to announce that the search for a new proofreader of the Bulletin has ended. This position has been filled by Anne Larchet, to whom I am very thankful for taking on this new duty. Apart from Anne, a number of other readers came forward offering their help and I would also like to express my gratitude towards them.

The last two months were filled with particularly terrifying international news. At the forefront was the devastating tsunami in Japan with the ensuing nuclear crisis and the Libyan revolution which unlike the other recent revolutions in the Arab world turned out to be a lot bloodier and more brutal. Among all these sometimes overwhelming news broadcasts relating to those events, there were also mentions of our very own profession. We heard about brave interpreters being flown to Japan to help in the rescue efforts.

A frequent image on our television screens was also an interpreter relating into English the very momentous messages sent from Colonel Gaddafi's aides to the rest of the world. Perhaps these are reminders of how crucial effective communication and those who facilitate it can be in today's world. Perhaps it is a truth worth remembering not only when calamities strike, but also during times of peace and normality, as through it catastrophes can sometimes indeed be averted from happening.

On behalf of the ITIA I would like to applaud all volunteer interpreters who travelled to Japan to aid the rescue effort for their immeasurable courage in the face of life threatening dangers. Hats off to you, dear Colleagues.

Adam Brozynski
Editor ITIA Bulletin
theitiabulletin@gmail.com

■ Over 300 interpreters ready to help quake-affected foreigners

A volunteer group is set to send more than 300 Japanese-speaking interpreters to help foreigners in the areas of north-eastern and eastern Japan that were stricken by the devastating earthquake, among other movements aimed at providing linguistic support there.

The Japan Guide Consortium Volunteer Interpreters Bureau based in Tokyo keeps on stand-by interpreters, both in and outside Japan, in more than 10 languages including English, Chinese, Korean, Russian and French.

The bureau will have the interpreters work for relief teams and volunteers from overseas as well as quake-affected foreigners at places such as hospitals and evacuation centres.

“We’re sure there are many who want to get help but don’t know who to ask for. Feel free to call us if you have any language problems,” one of its staff members said. The contact number starting with the country code for Japan is 81-3-3233-7518 and the email address is boran@coolworldexpo.co.jp

A sociolinguistic study group at Hirosaki University in quake-hit Aomori Prefecture is posting online many sample signs and instructions relating to post-disaster information for foreigners written in easy-to-understand Japanese.

The group at the university’s Faculty of Humanities created the samples as well as an online brochure so that municipalities and non-profit organizations can use them to inform foreign evacuees about off-limits places and the dates when open air soup kitchens are operating. The URL is: <http://tinyurl.com/6g7wk8h>

In Iwate, the International Association is providing information online on the whereabouts of foreigners with Iwate prefectural residency. The list, updated daily, offers data on the missing person’s nationality, place of residence, age, and the name of the person seeking the information.

Reproduced with permission from 2011 Kyodo News

■ Lancashire Police interpreter contract is scrapped

A contract designed to save Lancashire Police hundreds of thousands of pounds on interpreters has been ripped up. The force only struck a joint deal, alongside three other North West constabularies, with interpreter agency Applied Language Solutions (ALS) in August last year.

In a five-month period up until January 1, 2011, it had cost Lancashire £68,000 bringing in interpreters to translate during interviews with witnesses, suspects and victims with limited English.

In the three years previously it cost £1.2m – including £444,000 during 2009/10 – according to details obtained via a Freedom of Information request. However, interpreters belonging to the *Professional Interpreters Alliance* (PIA) refused to work for ALS and launched a judicial review of the contract.

A spokesman for Lancashire Police said the deal had been axed over concerns whether the contract was promoting good relations with different ethnic groups under the Race Relations Act. They said: “This judicial review resulted in the quashing of the service level agreements following negotiations with PIA’s solicitors based on the acceptance that equality impact assessments should have been undertaken and documented.”

“Lancashire Constabulary, Merseyside Police, Greater Manchester Police and Cumbria Constabulary are currently in consultation with the PIA about how forces will move forward and how they will deliver interpretation services in the future.”

A spokesman for ALS said the contact had saved taxpayers money and managing director Gavin Wheeldon said the decision to axe it was unfair. He said: “I think it’s just a failure in the process.”

Between August and December 2010, Eastern division spent £20,600, the majority on Punjabi, Urdu and Polish. Pennine spent £15,700 including Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Polish and Lithuanian.

By Sam Chadderton

Reproduced with permission from the Lancashire Telegraph.

Original source: <http://tinyurl.com/5rfmws9>

There are many interesting comments under the article on the webpage. They are usually very negative and condemn the idea of spending large amounts of money on interpreting in general. You can find them by clicking on the link above.

However there is also one comment, contradicting the other comments, which was so enlightening and comprehensive that I decided to publish it in full.

Comment on the article by a member of the Professional Interpreters' Alliance

I think some of the comments above may well come from an impassioned place but I need to inform some of your readers of a few distinctions that they are overlooking.

Firstly, here is a link (<http://tinyurl.com/6hryfqe>) to the story of a British man in a Greek court who was provided with someone who according to the story, didn't have the first idea of how to interpret.

The way the total cost of interpreting services is presented as a single figure is highly mischievous...

Now that you have read it in full, consider this - you could well be passing through a country and be accused of something you may be innocent of. Do you want someone competent or incompetent to express the words that you may need to use in your defence to keep yourself out of prison?

Many people in the UK who require an interpreter are passing through. Some of them require interpreters because they have been the victims of a crime, so the idea this is all about criminals is not the full picture.

Even then, everyone is innocent until proven guilty and the cost of trying anyone is huge, and interpreting costs are a small part of that. The way the total cost of interpreting services is presented as a single figure is highly mischievous because what you are not told is the total cost of all the investigations that use those services and the percentage of all of it formed by interpreting costs.

Furthermore, there are interpreters used when a completely independent witness sees a criminal offence involving two people, and that means that if your loved one was beaten senseless by a thug on a Friday night,

and a Polish or Portuguese person saw it, their evidence could well form a crucial part of the case. If their words are not interpreted correctly, the resulting statement is liable to be worthless.

I should also draw attention to the vast difference between receiving electricity bills for a foreign property and being in the Criminal Justice System of a country. I appreciate that the person above who posted a comment about owning a property in France probably worked very hard to be able to enjoy such a pleasure, but I don't think the UK is any different in that you will also receive bills in English here. And although in the UK there are many public leaflets printed in other languages, the social services and local government worlds are NOT the Criminal Justice System.

In other countries, contrary to claims made here, there are systems for providing court and police interpreters, although clearly, the case in the link I posted shows that not all countries have a good system. In a few years, it will be a requirement for all EU states to have an interpreting system. The UK, with the NRPSI, has one in place, and it should be the other way round - we should be seen as a beacon of how it should be done. Unfortunately, in addition to the decisions by the Police forces to outsource, the Ministry of Justice has decided to scrap the National Agreement, which deems the use of the NRPSI to be necessary in all but the most extreme circumstances. The MOJ is also planning to outsource to an agency. What several interpreters' groups are campaigning for is to have the NA tightened, not withdrawn.

The system as used up until 2 August 2010 by the police forces in question was the NRPSI, and this allowed them to contact, use and pay interpreters individually and directly. The use of agencies is seen by the forces as a single point of contact, with savings of police time and resources in terms of contact and payment. Interpreters' organisations have been suggesting a system which offers that very same service via a call centre and website with a payroll company saving the work of the public services by taking over that function. None of these suggestions have been tried out.

I should also state my position. I am a committee member of the Professional Interpreters' Alliance and I note that in the above article, comment was invited from Lancashire Constabulary and from Applied Language Solutions, but no comment appears from the PIA, although I would also say that I am not aware whether the Preston Citizen attempted to contact someone from the PIA for a statement.

Furthermore, one comment posted above talks about 'ethnics', but I am a British national, and an interpreter who is on the NRPSI. I should state that whether you are a British national, an interpreter or a migrant, you pay taxes, and furthermore, we all pay taxes so that all services across the board can be implemented, including those that do not apply to services that are used by ourselves.

In a few years, it will be a requirement for all EU states to have an interpreting system.

Finally, a couple of years ago, a Portuguese truck driver was involved in an accident on the M56 where fatalities occurred. The driver in question did not live here, but the people who died did live here. He was prosecuted and that case required interpreters. That is one example of many that I could mention.

I hope the above information has been useful and sheds some light on why some countries have formalised interpreting systems that require qualified persons. Being processed through the criminal justice system in a country is a considerably more weighty issue than receiving a gas bill.

■ 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 of the ITIA - February-March 2011

ANAMARIA MAGDALENA BORS

15 The Haven, Tower Cross, Mornington, Co. Meath
Mobile: +353 87 9023291; Email:
Magdalena_luca_bors@talk21.com
ROMANIAN to and from ENGLISH
Community interpreter

ENDA GERARD BREEN

45 Lorcan O'Toole Park, Kimmage, Dublin 12
Mobile: +353 85 148 1718; Email: enda.breen4@mail.dcu.ie
ENGLISH from French – general, scientific, financial, engineering, academic

LOISE DAL POSSO

177, Burnell Square, ClareHall, Dublin 17
Mobile: +353 87 064 9559; Email: loisecri@hotmail.com
PORTUGUESE from English - general

DR. LORRAINE LEESON

4 Mt. Garrett Drive, Tyrrelstown, Dublin 15
Mobile: +353 87 6670028; Email: lorraine@lorraineleeson.eu;
Website: www.lorraineleeson.eu
IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE to and from ENGLISH
Interpreting: conference / community

MIRIAM O'BRIEN

4 Novara Terrace, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Mobile: +353 86 8667724; Email: miriamob@hotmail.com
ENGLISH from SPANISH - general

NURIA SERRADILLA

10 West Gate, St. Augustine Street, Christchurch, Dublin 8
Mobile: +353 86 2354042; Email: eunuri@yahoo.fr
SPANISH from FRENCH, GERMAN – games, gastronomy, literature, advertising

SHAOMIN WANG

No. 1, Hansborough Court, Belgrave Avenue, Wellington, Rd., Cork
Tel.: +353 21 427 8275; Mobile: +353 86 345 1610; Email:
Kelsey_wang@hotmail.com
ENGLISH to and from CHINESE – business, community, healthcare, legal
Community interpreter

■ Conference Report: AVIDICUS Symposium on Remote Interpreting via Video Link

I attended the international Avidicus symposium on Videoconference and Remote Interpreting in Legal Proceedings which was held in London from the 17th to the 19th February 2011. The Symposium was part of the EU Criminal Justice Programme called AVIDICUS (Assessment of Videoconference Interpreting in the Criminal Justice System), which is an EU-funded research project co-ordinated and led by Dr Sabine Braun of the Centre for Translation Studies, University of Surrey.

The use of videoconferences in criminal proceedings, especially for hearing witnesses or experts, has been allowed under EU legislation since 2000 when the

Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between European countries made it a priority for future work in European e-Justice. E-Justice is the use of electronic technologies in the field of justice.

Videoconference Interpreting (VCI) is used when proceedings take place at two different locations, e.g. a court and a prison, that are linked via videoconference. The interpreter is situated either in the court or in the prison with the non-native speaker. The communication takes place at two or more different locations whilst the interpreter is situated at one of these locations.

Advocates of video conference technology pointed out that VCI and RI is a real alternative to the traditional ways of interpreting and provides timely and cost efficient solutions. They claim that these new technologies can overcome local shortages of qualified interpreters for rare languages, ensure communication timelines in unpredictable situations (accident, crime) and reduce interpreter travel costs. In many countries they have been used in criminal cases for remote witnesses or for prisoners in remand extension hearings. However others are concerned with the adverse effects on the quality of interpreting and on interpreters' working conditions.

...new technologies can overcome local shortages of qualified interpreters for rare languages, ensure communication timelines in unpredictable situations...

At the symposium it was pointed out that training for legal practitioners and interpreters on VCI/RI has been almost non-existent. Therefore, among the objectives of the Project was the development of training modules for practising interpreters and legal practitioners based on the project findings and the implementation of the modules.

Remote Interpreting (RI) is used to provide timely access to qualified legal interpreters. In this case, the proceedings take place at a single location (e.g. a court room), but the interpreter is integrated via VC link from a remote location (e.g. at another court house). All primary participants are at one single location. The interpreter is linked to them via VC from a remote location.

Dr Sabine Braun closed the symposium by pointing out the recommendations for best practice in VCI/RI and concluded that more research needs to be done. She commented that: "There is a huge demand for something we know very little about."

VCI and RI can be combined: primary participants can be at different locations and the Interpreter based at a separate location.

Practical issues were discussed such as: where the interpreter should be located in a videoconference as well as the reliability of the interpretation, especially for evidential purposes. I found the symposium very beneficial as I was able to learn more about the skills needed for remote interpreting. The symposium was an opportunity to raise awareness of the critical issues and potential risks to demonstrate the benefits of close co-operation between legal practitioners, interpreters, political decision makers and researchers and to outline the potential for future research in this area.

Dr Sabine Braun (Avidicus project leader) presented the report on the results of two European surveys and comparative studies and presented training modules tailored for legal practitioners and interpreters.

Recommendations presented at the workshop were as follows:

- ◆ Identify interpreters' needs: Map out the settings- who talks to whom, who needs to see/hear whom, where the main parties and the interpreter are located
- ◆ Obtain linguistic, legal and technical expertise at the planning stage:
- ◆ Use the best technology available: Provide high quality sound and video for all parties involved and additional equipment for the interpreter as required.

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 Adam Brozynski at theitiabulletin@gmail.com.

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- ◆ Provide an appropriate working environment for the interpreter
- ◆ Allow a trial and error phase: run a pilot before large scale purchase
- ◆ Allow stage-by-stage introduction of new technology
- ◆ Start with low impact crime, evaluate the effect of technology at each stage and assess implications for the next stage
- ◆ Use trained, experienced legal interpreters
- ◆ Work with lawyers who are experienced in working with interpreters
- ◆ Offer training to interpreters and lawyers: continuing professional training should include how the technology works, the communicative situation and stress management.
- ◆ Agree risk assessment procedures for deciding whether or not a video link in combination with interpreting is appropriate. Consult with experienced interpreters.
- ◆ Develop guidelines/protocols about who is responsible for the booking. Make provisions for problems with equipment: Develop a protocol for communication or technological breakdown. Do not leave it to the interpreter to resolve breakdowns
- ◆ Work towards a code of best practice: Judicial services, legal practitioners and interpreters' associations should cooperate to develop joint codes of best practice for video conferencing and remote interpreting as well as organising debriefing with legal practitioners and public officials.

While, to the best of my knowledge, these new technologies are not in use as yet in Ireland, they probably will be soon. It is clear that videoconference technology is going to have a significant impact on the way we interpreters do our job in the coming years. I believe that interpreters need to be more active in helping the researchers and policy makers to understand what the requirements are for us to do our job and do it well in settings where videoconferencing and remote interpreting are used.

For more information see <http://tinyurl.com/6d5c5q7>

Miren-Maialen Samper

Miren-Maialen Samper holds a postgraduate qualification in community interpreting (Graduate Certificate in Community Interpreting) by Dublin City University and she is an active member of the ITIA Interpreting Sub-committee

■ Huang Youyi: China has stories to tell the world

Huang Youyi, a member of the CPPCC (The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) National Committee and vice president of China International Publishing Group, talked exclusively to China.org.cn about the problems China faces in getting its message across to the world.

“In the first 30 years of China's opening-up, we concentrated on manufacturing, foreign trade and investment. But things have changed recently. We are beginning to realize the importance of cultural exports,” Huang said.

We are beginning to realize the importance of cultural exports...

“In the past, Chinese culture was expressed in acrobatic performances or Peking Opera shows. But now Chinese people are making their voices heard in international forums and Chinese publishing houses are publishing books overseas. The volume and variety of cultural exports have grown enormously.”

But China faces challenging problems, Huang said. First of all, few of China's international communicators have lived abroad, and their understanding of overseas cultures and societies is limited. Secondly, the quality of translation is far from perfect. Chinese is not widely spoken outside China, so good translators are essential to carry the country's message overseas.

But there are simply not enough qualified translators. Perhaps most importantly, China also needs to change its approach. “We must master the rules of international dialogue if we are to successfully communicate our ideas to people from different cultures,” Huang said.

China is trying hard to fill the talent gap. “Universities and colleges are setting up master's degree programs on international cultural communication. They want to train students who are proficient in both foreign languages and Chinese culture,” Huang said. “And Chinese media organizations are increasingly investing in training staff abroad.”

Universities and colleges are setting up master's degree programs on international cultural communication.

Huang gave an example of the misconceptions people have about China. He received a letter from an American reader asking him why the U.S. is flooded with "Made in China" goods while Chinese people buy hardly any American products. Huang replied: "I brush my teeth with Colgate toothpaste, eat oatmeal from Australia, drive a Buick to work, and greet a colleague who carries a Coach bag."

"The fact is that China is actually consuming products from everywhere. Sometimes we just need to set out the facts and let the readers judge for themselves," Huang said.

Huang thinks telling the individual stories of Chinese people is the best way to communicate the real China to the world. "They are easier for foreign readers to accept than abstract concepts. After all, we have a lot in common. Both Chinese and Americans want their children to go to good schools, find good jobs and live a happy life," Huang said.

Huang believes the traditional idea of "harmonious yet different" (*He Er Bu Tong*) best expresses the essence of Chinese culture in today's world. "Though the phrase consists of just four Chinese characters, it contains an enormous amount of information. The ideas of harmony and cooperation come from China's traditional culture but also apply to its modern economy, society and foreign policy. This is something that sets Chinese culture apart from western culture," he said.

Huang is optimistic about China's ability to get its message across, but admits there is still a long way to go. "In the 1970s, there was practically nothing about China in foreign newspapers. But now, you see several articles on the front page of New York Times every day. Our task is to explain China to the world. We are still at an early stage, but our progress will speed up as time goes by," Huang said.

As vice chairman of the *Translators Association of China* Huang is proposing to this year's CPPCC that legal standards should be laid down to regulate translation. Translation companies are currently completely unregulated and the result is that they often

deliver poor quality work and charge widely varying prices. Huang said solving these problems would help the translation industry support China's economic and cultural activities.

By Ren Zhongxi, Reproduced from China.org.cn

■ **Lost in Translation": Courtroom Video-link Interpreting**

Below are two excerpts from an article by Catherine Burton entitled "*Lost in Translation*" relating to courtroom video-link interpreting. If you would like to read the whole article, just click on the link below.

"The defendant and the witness were both from the Czech Republic. The trial was part-heard so when I crept in a witness was watching and reacting to – via video-link – the video of her initial police interview. The police interview used an interpreter to translate both questions and answers. The witness in the video booth also had an interpreter, as did the defendant, who repeatedly questioned parts of the interview in Czech to his translator in court. His comments interrupted the interview, which was barely audible as the interpreter was translating over the evidence. He was repeatedly asked to be quiet but continued to display his frustration at most of the evidence and the fact that, like me, he was freezing cold."

"Twitter may be a worry, but what about translation? Three different interpreters in one case, all speaking over each other, all from different corners and some disagreeing with what was being said by the other (whether disputing fact or translation of fact – impossible to tell). How the hell can a jury follow that?"

Original source: <http://tinyurl.com/6guqpjg>

■ Contacting The ITIA

Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association
Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Teangairí na hÉireann

Address: 19 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland
Telephone: +353 87 6738386
Fax: +353-1-872 6282
Email: secretary@translatorsassociation.ie
Web: www.translatorsassociation.ie

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Editor: Adam Brozynski
theitiabulletin@gmail.com
Layout: Jody Byrne
Proofreading: Anne Larchet

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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.