



ITIA BULLETIN

August 2006

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Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association
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■ Editorial

Dear Readers,

This month, I bring you two articles on the subject of spelling reform. The reform and re-reform of German orthography have stirred up stronger feelings than one might have expected. Being told that spelling and punctuation that you have always striven to use correctly will soon be considered incorrect is a bitter pill to swallow. For those who have not kept up with the reforms and controversy, the article below is a brief introduction.

There are also some groups out there who are calling for reforms to be made to English spelling. The chances of this ever becoming a reality seem remote. With the internationalisation of English, the logistics of such a task would make reform all but impossible. As a translator, it is necessary to keep up with these changes as not only do you need to implement them but you may also need to update your language software to support the changes. Currently, Germany and the Netherlands are engaged in reforms and software companies must speedily produce hotfixes to keep up with the reforms.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any suggestions or articles. I would be particularly interested to hear from anyone who has been affected by spelling reforms of German, Dutch or any other language.

Enjoy!

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■ Online MT Causes Bladder Problems

Council officials in Wales have been left red-faced after discovering cyclists are being confused by a road sign telling them they have a bladder problem. Officials have translated the command “cyclists dismount” from English into Welsh for the sign between Penarth and the capital, Cardiff.

However, the result has been the baffling phrase: “*Llid y bledren dymchwelyd*” which roughly translates as “bladder inflammation overturn”. “The root of the problem was seeking an online translation and that’s where it went wrong,” a council spokesman said.

“Unfortunately on this occasion we ended up with the problem.”

“The order in which the words have been placed means the sentence makes no sense whatsoever,” Welsh-language expert Owain Sgiv told the South Wales Echo newspaper. The council spokesman says the sign is being replaced.

■ The Reform and Re-reform of German Orthography

Those of you who work through the German language have probably had the opportunity to join in some sporting debates on the issue of the orthographical reforms of German. The reform and the controversy surrounding it have dominated the German media, not least because the media are on the front line. For those who are not up to speed on the story, the following is a quick rundown.

In 1996, an agreement was signed between the governments of Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Liechtenstein that signalled their agreement to reform the orthography of German (*Rechtschreibreform*). It was thought by many that German orthography was unnecessarily complicated which made learning difficult, particularly for schoolchildren. Simplification and clarity were the main goals of the reform. The reforms that were introduced centred on correspondence between sounds and written letters, capitalization, joined and separate words, hyphenated spellings, punctuation, and hyphenation at the end of a line (syllabification).

The new rules were officially adopted in 1998 and both pre-reform and reform rules were to co-exist until 2005 when the reformed spelling became the official spelling. So far, so simple. However, from the outset there has been much resistance to the reform. At the 1996 Frankfurt Book Fair, almost 100 writers, scientists and professors signed the *Frankfurt Declaration* calling for rejection of the reforms. Most newspapers and magazines went along with the reforms but some changed their minds at a later point and returned to pre-reform rules. In 2000, the nation’s leading daily paper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, decided it was returning to pre-reform rules. The move surprised most but their lead was followed 4 years later by *Der Spiegel* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. A reported 80% of Germans are opposed to the reforms.

Politically, it would be disastrous if the reforms were reversed so that seems very unlikely. Nonetheless, a reform of the reform is being undertaken which aims to finalise the reforms with alterations if necessary.

This is not the first time that German orthography has been reformed. Reforms introduced in 1901 were also the source of debate and controversy. In the end, these 1901 reforms stuck, how much of the 1996 reforms will stick remains to be seen.

■ Simplified Spelling for English?

Last month, Associated Press reported on moves by some organisations in the U.S. to simplify English spelling. Those in favour of simplified spelling say children would learn faster and illiteracy rates would drop. Opponents say a new system would make spelling even more confusing.

It's been 100 years since Andrew Carnegie helped create the Simplified Spelling Board to promote a retooling of written English and President Theodore Roosevelt tried to force the government to use simplified spelling in its publications. But advocates aren't giving up. They even picket the national spelling bee finals, held every year in Washington, costumed as bumble bees and hoisting signs that say "Enuf is enuf but enough is too much" or "I'm thru with through." Thae sae th bee selebraets th ability of a fue stoodents to master a dificult sitem that stumps meny utherz hoo cuud do just as wel if speling were simplr.

"It's a very difficult thing to get something accepted like this," acknowledges Alan Mole, president of the American Literacy Council, which favours an end to "illogical spelling." The group says English has 42

■ Next Issue of the ITIA Bulletin

The next issue of the ITIA Bulletin will be out in September 2006. If you have any contributions, suggestions or scandals that you would like to share with over 950 subscribers worldwide, send them to Elizabeth Hayes at [elizabeth.hayes7\(a\)mail.dcu.ie](mailto:elizabeth.hayes7(a)mail.dcu.ie).

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sounds spelled in a bewildering 400 ways. The United States, of course, made some spelling changes in the past. Webster in the nineteenth century and the Simplified Spelling Board in the early twentieth century proposed many spelling changes, only a few of which have become common usage like donut, color, honor, labor, theater and center.

The *Simplified Spelling Board* was funded by Andrew Carnegie who used simplified spelling in all his correspondence. Carnegie's passion for spelling reform was influenced by Melvil Dewey (of Dewey Decimal System fame). Melvil Dewey walked the walk by dropping the last 'le' from his own name.

Students come to understand how meaning is preserved in the way words are spelled...

During his presidency, Franklin Roosevelt tried to get the government to adopt simpler spellings for 300 words but Congress blocked him. He used simple spellings in all White House memos, pressing forward his effort to "make our spelling a little less foolish and fantastic."

From 1934 to 1975, The Chicago Tribune had a policy of simplified spelling mostly driven by its publisher Robert McCormick. Words such as catalog, dialog, worshiped, kidnaped, bureaucrat, cotilion, hocky, doctrin, derth, yern and jaz were introduced. If readers complained about particular spellings, they returned to printing the accepted standard. On September 29, 1975 when the newspaper definitively returned to standard spelling, the editor wrote, 'Sanity someday may come to spelling, but we do not want to make any more trouble between Johnny and his teacher.'

"The kinds of progress that we're seeing are that someone will spell night 'nite' and someone will spell through 'thru,'" Mole said. "We try to show where these spellings are used and to show dictionary makers that they are used so they will include them as alternate spellings." In languages with phonetically spelled words, children learn to spell in weeks instead of months or years as is sometimes the case with English, Mole claimed.

But education professor Donald Bear said to simplify spelling would probably make it more difficult because words get meaning from their prefixes, suffixes and

roots. "Students come to understand how meaning is preserved in the way words are spelled," said Bear, director of the E.L. Cord Foundation Center for Learning and Literacy at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Michael Marks, a member of the executive committee of the largest teachers union in the U.S., said learning would be disrupted if children had to switch to a different spelling system. "It may be more trouble than it's worth," said Marks, a High School teacher.

Despite the efforts of these people, spelling reform has long since slipped off the agenda and is even less likely to capture the public imagination on this side of the Atlantic. Further, given the huge number of regional variations in English, the task would soon prove nightmarish.

■ Joining the ITIA

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

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

Ordinary 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

New Members of the ITIA

The ITIA welcomes the following new members...

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■ Conference Report

INTERVENTION IN TRANSLATION, INTERPRETING & INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS: THE SECOND IATIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA, JULY 11TH – 14TH 2006.

As a country which boasts 11 official languages, South Africa provided an appropriately multilingual backdrop for the second international conference of the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS). Building on the success of the inaugural conference in Seoul in 2004, this year's event featured over 150 papers along with 6 plenary lectures, complemented by workshops, all addressing a wide variety of issues in translation, interpreting, and intercultural studies.

The day preceding the conference was devoted to workshops, the first of which was led by Jorge Díaz-Cintas and Aline Remael and tackled issues of subtitling training. This was followed in the afternoon by a workshop organised by Gabriela Saldanha and Marion Winters, the editors of the online journal *New Voices in Translation Studies*, which addressed the issue of writing successful academic papers and was geared towards those embarking on research in Translation Studies. Attendance surpassed the expectations of the workshop organisers and a lively discussion with Carol Maier, Mona Baker and Jeremy Munday on the vagaries of academic publishing closed the session.

The conference proper began with the first of the plenary lectures given by the Secretary General of the International Pragmatics Association Jef Verschueren: "*Translation and / as (Re)Contextualization*" which examined translation broadly – and non-traditionally –

as an impulse present in many linguistic contexts, notably social-institutional contexts and the international media. The second plenary session later that day was delivered by a founding member of IATIS Rosemary Moeketsi, who spoke on attempts to improve the provision of interpreting, along with working conditions for interpreters, in South African courts.

The other plenary lectures delivered during the conference dealt with a variety of topics. Carol Maier's "*The Person to Whom it Happened: Current Perspectives on the Translator as an Intervient Being*" examined the effect which the activity of translation has on the translator him or herself, proposing that Translation Studies should accord greater attention to the individuals engaged in translation activity. Basil Hatim's "*It May Be in the Text But Is It Also in the Discourse?*" was rooted firmly in text linguistics and discourse analysis and examined the problems which can arise in translation when fundamental considerations of discourse are not borne in mind in the analysis of texts. Rita Kothari's excellent talk "*Translating Subalterneity: Yet Another Role for English in India*" discussed the translation of Dalit literature in India (i.e. literature by those among the caste of untouchables), and in particular the peculiarly liberating role which English can play in this respect. Liu Yameng's "*Southward Ho, or How to Become a Translator Engagé in Our Time*" addressed the issue of representational justice in translation practice for peoples of the South, with the proposal that professional translation communities should turn their attention towards the peripheries and use them as a new point of reference.

Obviously given the vast number of papers presented at the conference, it would be impossible to do justice to all. The twenty separate thematic panels addressed issues as diverse as "*Translating/Interpreting for/in Grassroots Movements and NGOs*", "*The Global Initiative for Local Computing*", "*The Bible and its Translations: Colonial Encounters with the Indigenous*", and "*Sexualities in Translation*". Particular highlights for this reviewer included Theo Hermans's "*The Translator as Ironist*", Jude Inggs's "*The Rewriting and Retelling of Traditional South African Folktales: Mediation or Imposition?*", Elisabeth Gibbels's "*How Humboldtian Can Translator Training Become and Should It?*" and Christine Wilson and Rita McDade's "*SLIP: A Tool of the Trade Married to an Educational Space*" on British Sign Language. There were, however, many more which were equally interesting. Irish interests were particularly well represented at this conference, with papers from Sharon

O'Brien, Minako O'Hagan, Marion Winters, and Aileen Pearson-Evans all from DCU, along with other contributions from Reinhard Schäler and Carol O'Sullivan.

The IATIS general meeting brought members up to date on the wide range of activities which the Association is involved in. In its brief existence it has already brought out one yearbook of essays (*Translation and the Construction of Identity*) with another being promised for later on this year. The IATIS Bulletin is also going strong and the current issue may be downloaded for free from the IATIS website. Further activities – including training workshops and local network groups – were also discussed. The probable venue for the 2009 IATIS conference now appears to be Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, though there will be several IATIS activities planned between now and then. Check the IATIS website for further details: www.iatis.org

John Kearns
kearns(a)pro.onet.pl

For more details about the conference, please see the conference website: <http://www.iatis.org/content/iatis2006/>. For information on how to join IATIS, see <http://www.iatis.org/content/membership.php>.

■ 20th Anniversary Celebration of the ITIA

Reminder: 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Irish Translator's and Interpreters' Association on Saturday, 9th September 2006

Saturday afternoon: the present and former chairs of the ITIA will discuss the changing world of translation. This session will be chaired by Michael Cronin.

Saturday evening at 7.30:

A conversation between Irish novelist Patrick McCabe and his German translator Hans-Christian Oeser with readings in English and German of extracts from "*The Butcher Boy*", "*Breakfast on Pluto*" and "*Winterwood*", his new novel due out on 20th November.

The evening will include discussion on the role of music in Pat McCabe's novels, the focus on the pathological, the quest for love and redemption, questions of style, problems of translation etc.

■ Conferences, Calls & Courses

2nd Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting METM 06: International Communication-Promising Practices

Institut Europeu de la Mediterrania, Barcelona. October 27th-28th, 2006
Carrer Girona 20, 08010 Barcelona, Spain

METM 06 will promote training for and networking among language specialists who work primarily with English in the European and Mediterranean area. A new feature in 2006 will be one afternoon of training workshops.

Who should attend?

Editors, author's editors, translators and project managers, writing and ESP instructors, web localizers and content providers, and oral communication coaches.

The program will consist of:

- ◆ Plenary lectures on two big issues: working with demanding clients and plagiarism in academic manuscripts
- ◆ Panel discussions on communication organizations, translation standards, and more
- ◆ Short presentations with discussion
- ◆ Short workshops with tasks and discussion of concepts or practices
- ◆ Training workshops with task-based learning experiences that go more deeply into editing, translation, or oral communication skills

The full program for METM 06 is posted at:
http://www.metmeetings.org/pagines/metm06_program.htm

VIII. Leipziger Internationale Konferenz zu Grundfragen der Translatologie Jubiläumskongress zum 50-jährigen Bestehen der universitären Ausbildung von Übersetzern und Dolmetschern in Leipzig

Institut für Angewandte Linguistik und Translatologie (IALT), Universität Leipzig, Beethovenstraße 15,
D-04107 Leipzig. October 4–7, 2006.

Preliminary Programme:

- ◆ Section 1: Translation Theory and Translation Quality
- ◆ Section 2: Norms, Standards and Regulations
- ◆ Section 3: Evaluating Translation in Academic and Practical Contexts
- ◆ Section 4: Quality Assurance

For more see <http://www.lictra.org/>

Call for Publication

Contributors are invited for the forthcoming edited collection of essays *Boundaries: Critical, Creative and Interdisciplinary methods of Making, Breaking, and Negotiating Boundaries**

The papers presented at the recent "Boundaries: Critical and Creative" Postgraduate Conference at Loughborough University in June 2006 highlighted the quality of academic research being done which interrogates, acknowledges and challenges boundaries in critical and creative literature. This collection is in part inspired by and, in part, a response to the success of the conference and the wide range of high-quality academic discussion that came from it.

This book has been contracted by Cambridge Scholars press and the anticipated publication date will be autumn 2007. Successful contributors will be expected to submit a 6000-8000 word article (excluding notes) that addresses the ways in which critical and/or creative boundaries apply to their research.

Subjects might include, but are not limited to: Geographical boundaries; Sudden boundaries: Wartime shifts in geographical borders; Cultural boundaries; Boundaries of translation between different languages; Sense/Nonsense; Reason/Unreason; Life, Death and the Afterlife; Exceeding human boundaries: ESP, telepathy, mediumship; Interzones: automata, robots and science fiction; Critical/Creative boundaries; Historical events/fictional depiction; Writing creatively about other cultures; Moral responsibility/creative licence; The literary canon; Literary boundaries: genre; The boundary of the stage in theatre; Transgression of legal boundaries: criminality; Social boundaries: criminals, prostitutes, poets; Class boundaries; The Living space and its boundaries: home, cell, ward; Gender boundaries; Bodies, starvation and the self; Sexual boundaries.

If you would like your paper to be considered for inclusion, please send an email indicating your interest in this project to both J.K.Ramone@lboro.ac.uk and G.L.Twitchen@lboro.ac.uk and we will forward a copy of the submission guidelines. Completed essays should arrive to us no later than November 15th 2006. Accepted contributors will be notified within one calendar month.

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ITIA BULLETIN

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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.

- ◆ *The Translation Profession*
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