



ITIA BULLETIN

November 2007

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Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association
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■ Editorial

Dear Readers,

This month, I bring you two articles on the translation of literary works - one positive and one less so. Browsing through the shelves of any bookshop, one would be forgiven for thinking that the only good and worthy writers are Anglophone. The dearth of literary works translated into English is nothing short of scandalous. This road to monoculturalism is a dangerous one and every time we buy a translated work, we make a tiny difference. In the Arab world, a project has been initiated to translate many works into Arabic for the first time. The same project aims to be bi-directional in the future by funding the translation of Arabic works into other languages. Despite the apathy of the Anglophone publishing world, there is hope.

Enjoy!

Elizabeth Hayes
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■ TV ad leaves Polish audience perplexed

A recent TV ad broadcast by and for RTE has brought derision and criticism to the national broadcaster. The ad informs people of their obligation to pay for a TV licence and the risk and penalty of being caught. In the ad, an inspector pays a visit to a licenceless apartment to find three (Irish looking, Irish accented) students in front of the box. Their excuse? "No English I'm Polish," says the first man. "I'm Chinese not a word of English," says the girl. "I'm from Barbados," says the third. Alas, the three are foiled by the inspector's linguistic range as he responds in English to the man from Barbados, and then in what we presume is Polish and Chinese to the others. Meanwhile, the English subtitle gives us the words, unpoetic in any language: Non payment can mean a heavy fine.

All the actors are Irish and the Chinese and Polish translations were carried out by WordPerfect, an Irish company specializing in translation and interpreting services. According to RTE, the exact translation of the text was too long to try and communicate in subtitles and in the script, an abbreviated version, a phonetic representation of the text and a recording of a native speaker reading the text was supplied by WordPerfect. The translation provider is standing over their translation and says that the abbreviation of the text was done by RTE.

Whoever is to blame, the result was incomprehensible and one Polish caller to a radio show said, "I don't understand a word. Neither do any of my Polish friends."

■ Online MT causes embarrassment

Recently in this publication, we reported on a new book written by an Australian diplomat that charts various diplomatic faux pas caused by translation errors. The days of linguistic faux pas are not over and will only become more common if online automatic translation systems are resorted to. This type of translation (*Babelfish* is being blamed in this instance) was the source of an embarrassing incident for a group of Israeli journalists. The popular online translation site was used by the journalists while they were attempting to arrange a fact-finding mission to the Netherlands. Unfortunately and unsurprisingly, the emails sent to the Dutch Foreign Ministry caused some

confusion.

The journalists, in what one can only imagine was extreme naivety, simply wrote emails with the questions they had, popped them into Babelfish (EN>NL) and then sent them off to the Netherlands. It is hard to imagine this level of ignorance about the failings of online MT systems especially among those who make their living with words.

The emails that were sent contained some gems (back-translated into English here) such as, "*Helloh bud, enclosed five of the questions in honor of the foreign minister: The mother your visit in Israel is a sleep to the favor or to the bed your mind on the conflict are Israeli Palestinian*" and "*What in your opinion needs to do opposite the awful the Iranian of Israel*". As Babelfish does not support Hebrew, the final translation was from English to Dutch. It is unclear whether the translation from Hebrew to English was done by another MT system.

Reports that this has caused an international incident are exaggerated, to say the least. The Dutch Foreign Ministry, as one would expect, are a sane bunch. It is, nonetheless, worth noting how utterly incomprehensible the translations are. Often we read that online MT systems can be effectively used for 'gisting' – a myth best put to rest.

■ 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

■ Review: 500 Seanfhocal / Proverbs / Refranes / Przysłów

BY DONLA UÍ BHRAONÁIN

ILLUSTRATIONS FINTAN TAITE

POLISH TRANSLATION ANNA PALUCH

SPANISH TRANSLATION CARMEN RODRIGUEZ ALONSO

DUBLIN: COIS LIFE, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-901176-75-9. 105 pp, PBK, €12.

Cois Life, and Donla Uí Bhraonáin of *Fiontar* in DCU are to be congratulated for putting together one of the most ideal Christmas presents of 2007. This collection of 500 Irish proverbs, in English, Polish and Spanish translation, is beautifully illustrated with cartoons by Fintan Taite and would make an ideal gift for any speakers of the languages it features.

Editor Uí Bhraonáin began by compiling a set of 500 Irish proverbs thematically, from various sources, in particular *Seanfhocla Chonnacht* by Tomás S. Ó Máille from 1948. (Incidentally, a new edition of Ó Máille's

compendium will be published by Cois Life, again under Uí Bhraonáin's editorship, next year.) The 88 thematic sections range from *Eolas* (Knowledge) to *Díth Céille* (Stupidity) and *Grá* (Love) to *Eascairdeas* (Enmity). Irish is used as the primary language for all purposes – resulting in the book opening somewhat ominously with proverbs about death, *Bás* coming first alphabetically in the list of sections – with English occupying more or less the same target status as the Polish and Spanish though the Polish, if anything, appears occasionally more polished (excuse the pun!) e.g. when 'Little' is used somewhat awkwardly as the English section heading for '*Beagán*', the Polish *Malo* sounds much more comfortable).

...triadic proverbs reflect our typically Irish tendency to list things in threes...

At this point, however, I should clarify that I don't know a word of Spanish so I am not in any position to judge the translations of Carmen Rodriguez Alonso. However, it is important to note that both she and Anna Paluch (the Polish translator) have studied Irish in their home countries of Spain and Poland respectively and thus did not need to rely on the English glosses which are provided.

Paluch's Polish translations make a deliberate effort to be explanatory, and hers are the most frequent of the translations to supplement the literal version with equivalent Polish words of wisdom (her introduction reveals she immersed herself in an early edition of Julian Krzyzanowski's *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażen przysłowiowych polskich*, a book I remember as a massive four-volume affair, demonstrating the richness of the Polish proverbial tradition). Thus for proverb 467 - *Ag iarraidh dhá éan a mharú le haon urchar amháin* – we get a literal translation and an equivalent in both English (“Trying to kill two birds with a single shot” and “Killing two birds with one stone”) and the same in Polish, though with a more inventive Polish equivalent (“*Próbowac zabic dwa ptaki jednym strzałem*” and “*Upiec dwie pieczenie na jednym ogniu*”, literally “Cooking two roasts on the one flame”).

Elsewhere, particularly as Paluch notes in her Introduction, where triadic proverbs reflect our typically Irish tendency to list things in threes, she keeps things simple so that the confused outsider may focus on getting the gist.

As uí Bhraonáin notes at the outset, while many of the Irish proverbs may have been generated in a world quite far removed from our twenty-first century lifestyles, they maintain a relevance today and this relevance finds itself reflected in many similar philosophies articulated in both the Polish and Spanish equivalents.

The only desideratum this reviewer has with this excellent volume might be an index of some kind, in addition to the Table of Contents, which could make the book more than a dip-in read for the curious. One wonders too whether there might have been space for more languages – Chinese in particular would have been welcome, given the extremely high status it has attained in Ireland in the past decades. As it stands, however, this very modestly priced book makes the perfect intercultural Christmas gift!

500 Seanfhocal / Proverbs / Refranes / Przysłów is available from all good Irish-language book sellers and may also be purchased directly for €12 (+ p&p) from Cois Life – [click here](#) to go to their webpage.

John Kearns
Kearns(a)pro.onet.pl

■ DCU research get funding for automatic translation project

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), a body that organizes grants for scientific research on a competitive basis, is funding a multi-million euro project that aims to develop the next generation of high tech automatic translation.

DCU is collaborating in the project with academic partners, UCD, UL and TCD, and with renowned global technology leaders, IBM, Microsoft, Symantec, Dai Nippon Printing, and Idiom Technologies as well as key Irish SMEs, Alchemy, VistaTech, SpeechStorm and Traslan.

The Minister for Enterprise and Employment, Michael Martin, announced the award of €16.8m to the project by SFI, and the industry partners are contributing €13.6m in materials, research services and additional funding. The SFI funding is the largest ever in the state.

Ireland already has a substantial global footprint in the localisation industry – the process of adapting digital content, download manuals, software and other materials, to different languages and cultures.

Localisation as an industrial process was developed in Ireland.

The project will tackle three critical problems for the localisation industry:

- ◆ Volume: The amount of content to be translated and localised to the destination culture and environment is growing rapidly and massively outstrips the supply of human translators.
- ◆ Access: Powerful, small devices such as mobile phones and PDAs require novel technologies integrating speech and text to support “on the move” delivery of, and access to multilingual information.
- ◆ Personalisation: A new demand has rapidly emerged for the adaptation of a huge amount of multilingual content now available on the web, for individual needs. It needs “instant” localisation and personalisation to meet the demands of the users.

DCU Professor Joseph van Genabith, Director of the new Centre said: “Localisation as an industrial process was developed in Ireland. We have a unique concentration of university- and industry-based research and development expertise in language technologies, machine translation, speech processing, digital content management and localisation. The research centre is going to pool that expertise and develop the next generation of language and content management technologies to support and develop the localisation industry.”

■ Kalima project to bring world literature to Arabic speakers

A huge and ambitious project known as the Kalima project has recently been announced in Abu Dhabi. The *Kalima* (meaning “word” in Arabic) project aims to revive the art of translation across the Arab world and reverse the long decline in Arabic readers' access to major works of global literature, philosophy, science and history.

Inspired by Karim Nagy, a literature-loving Egyptian entrepreneur and former McKinsey management consultant now based in Abu Dhabi, Kalima has become an official venture of the Abu Dhabi government. One of the triggers which led to its creation was a widely-circulated statistic from the 2003

UN report into human development in the Arab world. It estimated that more books (about 10,000) were translated into Spanish every year than had been translated into Arabic over the past millennium.

Kalima is endorsed by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, and backed financially by the emirate's authority for culture and heritage. The authority's director-general, Mohammed Khalaf al Mazrouei, said the Crown Prince saw the UN figures and "commissioned us to work to revive translation".

...the project aims to revive the art of translation across the Arab world...

Mr Nagy admits that Kalima has deep-rooted obstacles to overcome such as the Arab world's sense of exclusion and estrangement from the West, weak publishing and distribution networks, official and informal censorship and political diversity across the Arab world.

In the absence of significant bookshop chains, Kalima will donate books to libraries and universities, sell via dedicated websites and post the complete texts of non-copyright classics online. "Wherever we are allowed to make a book available digitally, we will," Mr Nagy pledged.

The 100 books chosen to inaugurate the project are a testament to the broad-ranging scope of the project. Authors include Jacques Derrida, George Eliot, Geoffrey Chaucer, Sophocles, Albert Einstein, A.J.P Taylor, Edward Said etc.

The next issue of the ITIA Bulletin will be out at the end of December 2007. If you have any contributions, suggestions or scandals that you would like to share with over 1000 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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■ Revival needed for translated works

An article published during November in The Guardian comes back to an issue that most translators, and especially literary translators, think about often – the lack of works of fiction that have been translated into English. Where in non-English speaking parts of the world, translated works are always well-represented on the book shelves, in the Anglophone world, only a tiny proportions of works published are translated from other languages.

The combination of financial and linguistic muscle that English wields puts writers in other languages under enormous pressure. Creative writing schools in the UK and America are now seeing writers already published in their own languages enrolling for writing courses in English, a solution to the problems of getting translated which leaves the language they leave behind in deeper trouble.

Publishing companies are very reluctant to publish translated works. Christopher MacLehose, publisher, says, "the idiotic notion is that there's enough being written in English, so you don't have to bother." English is so generally spoken that it's possible to read very widely and not notice that you're only reading books written in one language. Another excuse is that author and translator must both be paid, which is, according to the director of the British Centre for Literary Translation, Amanda Hopkinson, the prime reason for publishers' "resistance" despite "opportunities for funding within the EU which they're not taking advantage of". For Hopkinson, translation is a crucial tool for promoting mutual understanding. "We shouldn't be discussing other cultures through English culture," she says, "we should be discovering their own cultures, what they have to say for themselves."

But for Peter Ayrton, founder of Serpent's Tail Publishing, the larger houses have it wrong: a foreign author can be a strength. "There's a general perception in the trade that these books can be difficult to sell," he says, "and as long as that persists it's a self-fulfilling prophecy." The popularity of international travel demonstrates an appetite for something a little different, he suggests, so translation is not "something you hide. If you're publishing a book from Istanbul or Barcelona you want to make it clear that's what it is. There'd be no point in packaging it as if it's from Middlesbrough." He feels that the situation has reached some kind of turning

point. "It's getting easier to the extent that it can't get any more difficult," he says.

■ The first Duais Uí Dhoibhlin awards ceremony

Tá Éigse Cholm Cille ag dul duais ar luach £2,000 a bhronnadh le ugach a thabhairt d'aistritheoir atá ag tabhairt faoi thogra aistriúcháin ó theanga de chuid na mór-roinne. Tá an sparánacht seo ainmnithe as Breandan Ó Doiblin a bhfuil cion fir déanta aige le canon litríochta na hEorpa a chur ar fáil i nGaeilge

I nDoire a bheas an bronnadh ann ar an Chéadaoin 5/12/07 ag 7.30 tráthnóna i dTeach Aberfoyle, Campas Mhig Aoidh, Ollscoil Uladh. Is é Diarmaid Ó Doibhlin a dhéanfas é. Ní sceithfear ainm an bhuaiteora go dtí an tráthnóna sin. Beidh céad fáilte roimh chairde uilig na heagraíochta agus na litríochta ar an ócáid thábhachtach seo.

■ Turkey promises to amend infamous Article 301

Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code makes insulting 'Turkishness' a crime. Any person who publicly denigrates Turkishness, the Republic, the National Assembly, the government, the judicial institutions or the military is punishable. The penalty is increased by one-third for Turkish citizens found guilty of denigrating Turkishness in another country. Although Article 301 only took effect in June 2005, over 60 cases have already been tried. Many of the cases have been quite high profile with Turkey's Nobel prize-winner, Orhan Pamuk, being among those charged. Pamuk fell foul of the law for stating, in an interview with a Swiss magazine, that "Thirty thousand Kurds and a million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it". The charges were later dropped.

Translators are also in the line of fire and the translator of Manufacturing Consent by Chomsky and Herman was brought to trial in 2006, along with the publisher and editors. All were acquitted.

The EU has increased pressure on Turkey to repeal Article 301 and changes are certainly afoot. However, the Turkish government seems to favour an amendment rather than outright abolition. Turkish government

sources said five amendment proposals, drafted in cooperation with criminal law experts from several universities, were being considered. It remains to be seen whether the amendments will go far enough but the EU remain optimistic: "The announcement that Turkey intends to change its law, known as Article 301, is very good news. By removing this obstacle to freedom of expression, Turkey is bringing its legislation in line with European standards and its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights," said Council of Europe Secretary-General Terry Davis on Wednesday.

Elizabeth Hayes

■ Government ministers reminded to use the Irish language

Government ministers have been reminded to use the Irish language when possible on EU business. According to RTE, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern, briefed the cabinet on the serious problem of getting qualified legal translators to translate European legal documents. He said that it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Ahern also reminded the cabinet that a service is available for them to use Irish at EU meetings and this facility should be used when possible.

■ Competition for Lawyer Linguists

A notice of competition for lawyer linguists with Irish is shortly to be published by EPSO, the European Personnel Selection Office. The expected publication date is 28 November and the closing date for the competition will be 9 January (subject to change).

Look out for the competition notice on the EPSO website where new competitions are published:

For more information, visit
http://europa.eu/epso/index_en.htm

■ Conferences, Calls & Courses

Texts in Translation

University of Sheffield, UK, 31st January 2008

The UK Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS) and the English Subject Centre are pleased to announce this FREE day conference.

Of interest to colleagues from Modern Languages and English Studies in particular, this event will focus on such themes as: the pros and cons of teaching literature in translation; using translations as a tool to open up literary study; translations of literary and cultural theory; the use of electronic texts; and modern translations of medieval texts. We hope that the day will result in the sharing of positive approaches to teaching with translations, and ideas for the development of literature curricula.

More information, a provisional programme and registration details are available here:

<http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/llaseventitem.aspx?resourceid=2836>

Call for Papers

London Metropolitan Anniversary Conference: Teaching and researching in translator training and education

London Metropolitan University, July 12, 2008

Keynote speakers:

Daniel Gile, Mona Baker and Dorothy Kelly

The growth of translation has affected the sector on all levels, not least the expansion in programmes teaching translation at university level. Initiatives such as the development of the European Masters in

Translation, the National Occupational Standards in Translation and the ITI's continuing professional development programme reflect the importance of a coherent curriculum and agreed standards and practices in the teaching and training of translators. This is of equal importance for Translation Studies as a discipline and the Translation industry as a profession. But what are the challenges we face, not only in innovative course design, but also in the profile of those who deliver academic rigour and satisfy industry requirements?

This conference seeks to bring together academics and professionals interested in questions and issues such as:

- ◆ Who teaches translation / who 'should' teach translation?
- ◆ Who is taught / needs to be taught?
- ◆ Do we teach or train?
- ◆ Where do we teach / who is the appropriate education provider?
- ◆ Curriculum design and innovative developments
- ◆ Examples of good practice
- ◆ Ethics

Contributions on teaching and researching in interpreter training and education are also welcome

Please send 250 word proposals by January 15, 2008 via email text – no attachments please – to:

- ◆ Dr Nadia Rahab, n.rahab@londonmet.ac.uk for contributions on translator training and education
- ◆ Danielle D'hayer, d.dhayer@londonmet.ac.uk for contributions on interpreter training and education

Decisions on accepted proposals will be sent in the second half of March 2008.

Online University Master's Program in Technical and Scientific Translation

The Universities of Bari, Genoa, and Pisa (IT), in cooperation with the ICoN Consortium Italian Culture on the Net www.italicon.it, issue an Online University Master's Program in Technical and Scientific Translation

from: English, French, and German

into: Italian

Mode of delivery: Blended (on-line + 2 week face-to-face sessions)

Domains: Law, Economics, Engineering, Computing and Localization, Bio-medicine and pharmaceutical sciences in line with the European Master in Translation, Curriculum of the European Commission.

The Master's Program is addressed to translators or candidate translators from English, French, and German into Italian wishing to obtain a high-level specialization and a leading position in the premium segment of the international market in the field of technical and scientific translation into Italian.

The Master's Program is open to undergraduates (*Italian laurea di I livello* or equivalent foreign qualification) living outside Italy with an advanced knowledge of written Italian (near native) and a good knowledge of English.

The Master's Program meets high standards thanks to the collaboration of qualified scholars and professionals from universities, from the translation industry and from leading companies in the field of computer aided and machine translation. Translations done by the attendees will be revised by teachers and qualified translators who will guide participants towards production of professional text according to the market requirements. Participants will be equipped with a dedicated web-based software for assisted translation.

- ◆ The Master's Program is equivalent to 60 ECTS credits (European Credits Transfer System).
- ◆ The Master's Program will last one year (March 2008-March 2009) in case of full-time participation, and two years (March 2008-March 2010) in case of part-time participation.
- ◆ Enrolments will be open until January 15, 2008. The cost is of €5.000 for the full-time option and of €3.000 + €3000 for the part-time option.
- ◆ Those who enrol by December 15, 2007 and those who live outside Europe can benefit from a discount.

Further information: [info\(a\)mastericon.it](mailto:info(a)mastericon.it)

Enrolment procedure:

http://www.italicon.it/index.asp?codpage=master_ts

Translation World Conference

Montreal, Quebec, March 11-13, 2008

- ◆ Translation
- ◆ Interpretation
- ◆ Technology

Call for papers now open - Deadline: 17 December 2007

Translation World is a new international conference dedicated to the art and science of translation and interpretation and the technologies behind them. For the first time there is an event that will bring together buyers and purveyors of translation and interpretation tools and services, managers of government agencies dealing with translation, as well as educators in the translation field. This conference will provide an opportunity for these professionals to meet face to face to look at new developments, discuss best practices and review new technologies. The call for papers is now open and you are invited to submit a paper related to translation and interpretation for inclusion in the program for this conference. The deadline for submissions is 17 December 2007.

Translation World is a collaboration of AILIA, The Localization Institute and Multilingual Computing.

Translating Gender: Women in Translation

Institut du Monde Anglophone, Paris, October 17-18 2008

After the first day spent studying the translation of grammatical gender from French into English and from English into French, the focus will then move to the translation of gender as a socio-cultural construction in the two languages. Some ten years after the works of the Canadians Sherry Simon and Luise von Flotow, the time has come to assess the fertile interaction between gender studies and translation studies.

How is the question of gender constructed, de-constructed, and re-constructed in the passage from one language to the other? What light is thrown on gender, and to what end, when one culture moves to another? Can gender be blurred or denied in the process? If the state of relations between male or female authors and translators can put identity at stake, with translation bringing about a negation or affirmation of self in relation to others, is it not necessary to re-assess the dialectics of the translator/text process by taking into account the position of the translating subject in relation to the text as object, its context and the translating project/scheme? Can otherness be maintained entirely? Or is it absorbed in the act of being appropriated in translation?

Weighing up sex in translation must lead to questions being asked about social stereotypes and linguistic forms, and the cultural context of the original and that of its translations, since the place of the masculine and feminine varies according to the era and the culture. Lastly, translating the body depends not only on these factors, but also implies a political positioning. These are just some of the questions that will be asked with a view to shedding light on the conditions of production, transmission and reception of works by and on women in the transcultural exchanges between French-speaking and English-speaking countries.

The colloquium will take place on October 17 and 18 2008 at the Institut du Monde Anglophone, Paris. Suggestions for talks (a half-page summary, in English or French), and a short CV are to be sent at the latest for March 31 2008 to:

Christine Raguet - [c.raguet\(a\)univ-paris3.fr](mailto:c.raguet(a)univ-paris3.fr)
Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3
Institut du Monde Anglophone
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■ Contacting The ITIA

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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*
- ◆ *Joining the ITIA*
- ◆ *Ordinary Membership Application*
- ◆ *Professional Membership Application*
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