



ITIA BULLETIN

September 2008

In This Issue

■ Editorial.....	2
■ Translation Prize winner	2
■ Translation problem in Russia-Georgia peace plan.....	2
■ Interpreters and Translators.....	2
■ 22nd ITIA Annual General Meeting.....	2
■ Joining the ITIA	3
■ Obituary of Séan Mac Mathghamhna	4
■ The Idiom: Yesterday's News	4
■ Publishing House Dedicated to Literature in Translation	5
■ MT company sees bright future	5
■ Murder case based on faulty translation.....	6
■ European Commission threatens Irish State with legal action over Lionbridge contract	6
■ Conferences, Calls & Courses.....	7
■ Job Advertisement: German-English Translator	9
■ Contacting The ITIA.....	10

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,

As the ITIA AGM rolls around once more and we look back on the past twelve months, we find ourselves facing new problems within the T/I profession and within a stressed economic context. It's been a year when the ITIA and T/I have seen increasing media interest. While questions of quality and cost have piqued interest in Ireland, pay-rates and employment conditions have made the news further afield. Surely these issues will become ever more pertinent as budgets tighten.

To strengthen the position of translators/interpreters, there is only one answer - unity! Being an active member of your association is a great way to advance the collective interests of the profession and make a few friends in the process. To that end, the ITIA's AGM takes place on Saturday.... All welcome!

Enjoy!

Elizabeth Hayes
Editor ITIA Bulletin
elizabeth.hayes7(a)mail.dcu.ie

have appeared in the translated versions. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner admits that there are several translation problems, one of which is causing particular consternation. The offending translation relates to the sensitive buffer zones (as they are called by the Russians) around the breakaway Georgian provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Russian version refers to "security for South Ossetia and Abkhazia" where the English version refers to "security in South Ossetia and Abkhazia". The difference is significant and the English version is being referred to by Sergei Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister, as a "direct forgery".

■ Interpreters and Translators

The ITIA has been receiving reports of non-payment or very delayed payment by a particular translation agency. Some of these reports are from members of the ITIA and some are from non-members. We'd be interested in finding out more about this. If any of you have had problems of this nature please send an email in confidence to [itiasecretary\(a\)gmail.com](mailto:itiasecretary(a)gmail.com).

■ Translation Prize winner

The *Prix de la Traduction Littéraire* was won this year by Dr. Philip Mosley who is a professor of English and comparative literature at Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Mosley was awarded the prize for his translations of Belgian literature into English such as *Bruges-la-Morte* by Georges Rodenbach, *October Long Sunday* by Guy Vaes, *Tea Masters, Teahouses* by Werner Lambersy and *The Book of the Snow* by François Jacqmin.

The *Prix de la Traduction Littéraire* has been given annually since 1997 by the French Community of Belgium to a translator who has contributed, through the quality of his/her translations, to the diffusion of Belgian literature in the French language. The value of the award is €5,000.

■ Translation problem in Russia-Georgia peace plan

The recent Russia-Georgia peace plan, which was brokered by France, was written and signed in French before being translated into Russian and English. The Russian delegation are infuriated by differences that

■ 22nd ITIA Annual General Meeting

SATURDAY, 11TH OCTOBER 2008 AT THE IRISH WRITERS' CENTRE, 19 PARNELL SQUARE, DUBLIN 1

- ◆ 10.30 am – 12.00 pm: Workshop on Legal Interpreting (all welcome)
- ◆ 12.00 - 2.00 pm Lunch break
- ◆ 2.00 – 3.30 pm: Workshop on Legal Translation (all welcome)
- ◆ 4.30 pm: Annual General Meeting (members only) followed by a wine reception

For details of the workshops, please see <http://translatorsassociation.ie/content/view/33/57/>. If you wish to participate in the workshops please email [admin.itia\(a\)gmail.com](mailto:admin.itia(a)gmail.com)

Notice: An email regarding the AGM was sent to all members listed on the ITIA register. If you did not receive this email, please check the ITIA website for information and update your email address if it has changed.

■ 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 Ordinary Members

ELEANOR BOURKE

29 Old Connaught House
Ferndale Road
Rathmichael,
Co. Dublin
Tel: 086 381 8887
Email: Eleanor5555(a)hotmail.com
FRENCH from English - general

LYDIA FOSTER

C/ Asturias 26c
Cerdanyola del Valles 08290
Barcelona
Spain.
Tel: +34 6206 81873
F: +34 935910661
Email: lidfoster(a)gmail.com
ENGLISH from Spanish and Catalan
SAP, gastronomy, oenology, marketing transport & commerce

SERGEI GORDIENOK

147 Brookwood Avenue
Artane, Dublin 5
Tel: 085-725 44 60
Email: sergei_gordy(a)hotmail.com
ENGLISH from Russian; RUSSIAN from English
general

ANNA LUCZYNSKA

Apt. 47, Creagan
Barna,
Co. Galway
Tel: 085 753 5937
Email: annaluczynska(a)yahoo.com
ENGLISH from Polish; POLISH from English
general business

MAGDALENA RAVEN, B.ENG

'Glencora'
Rednagh Road
Aughrim,
Wicklow
Email: magdalenaraven(a)gmail.com
POLISH from English; ENGLISH from Polish
general

CAMELIA SHANAHAN

6 St. Ailbe's Terrace
Thurles,
Co. Tipperary
Tel: 0504-22859
Email: camishan(a)gmail.com
ROMANIAN from English; ENGLISH from Romanian
textile engineering, IT, medical devices
Interpreter

KATE WATERHOUSE

31 Mount Sandfore
Milltown,
Dublin 6
Tel: 086 8139336
Email: kathrynwaterhouse(a)hotmail.com

New Corporate Member

INDEPENDENT TRANSLATORS GROUP

1 Wyse Cottages
Blarney St.,
Cork
Tel: 021 439 8304
Fax: 021 421 7122
Email: info(a)itg-group.org
Website: www.itg-group.org
Contact: Daniel Gorbaczuk
Polish / English. on-site interpretation services
legal, medical, technical translation

■ Obituary of Séan Mac Mathghamhna

Honorary member of the ITIA, Séan Mac Mathghamhna, passed away in September. Séan was born in Co. Limerick and worked most of his life in the Department of Lands, as it then was. A modest retiring man, he quietly pursued the art of translation from various European languages to Irish, eventually gaining recognition from such bodies as *Oireachtas na Gaeilge* through their translation competitions. He was predeceased some years ago by his wife Máire Áine Ní Dhonnachadha, the celebrated *sean-nós* singer from the Carna Gaeltacht area of Co. Galway.

■ The Idiom: Yesterday's News

The use of idioms has spread like wildfire lately, and it's not a pretty picture. To my eye, it's crystal clear that idioms are holding writers back. Unfortunately, the cure is not as simple as taking two and calling me in the morning. The first order of business is to get to the root of how and why idioms have become the talk of the town. The blame cannot fall squarely on the shoulders of the writers, because everybody and their brother knows a cliché can sneak up on you and make itself at home. Writers often give up the fight because using idioms is as easy as pie. If they aren't paying close enough attention, writers might even labor under the delusion everything is right as rain, but all that glitters is not gold.

Writers often give up the fight because using idioms is as easy as pie.

Of course, many idioms have a nugget of truth within, but we must not let that fact lead to them becoming too big for their britches. Just off the top of my head I can think of myriad reasons why idioms are bad to the bone.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize that rampant use of idioms makes readers' minds as slow as molasses in January. And is it just me, or are most idioms older than dirt? I'm sure your grandpa's grandpa knew what "no skin off my back" and "by the skin of his teeth" meant, to those of us in the here and now it's just gross. This weird obsession with skin is holding us all back. Even my good friend Joe, who's not the sharpest

tack in the box, tells me: "Idioms are not the bee's knees. I wouldn't be sorry to see them go the way of the buffalo."

One cannot overlook the occasionally offensive nature of the idiom. Think of the dogs, will you? They are loyal to a "T" and often serve as our best friends. One dog, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told me there are a lot of canines who are hot under the collar about all the slanderous idioms directed their way. What, exactly, is a "dog day of summer" they wonder. Why does it rain cats and dogs? Why does a person get "dog tired" or "sick as a dog"? My source even claims that dogs really don't mind if you bother them while they sleep. One idiom the dogs do enjoy is "there's more than one way to skin a cat" though that gets back into all that skin business. All the dogs ask is that we stop dogging them.

Other figurative language has repeatedly denied their relationship with idioms, even though it's as plain as the nose on your face. "To us, overuse of idioms is like cooking using mediocre ingredients," said the head of the Simile Board of Trustees. "We have boxes of unused, high-quality similes stacked as high as the clouds. Instead of hearing 'smooth as a baby's bottom' a million times a day, what about a 'smooth as an old man's head' thrown in there somewhere?"

The hot-headed folks over at Metaphor Incorporated issued the following terse statement: "We hope the idiom has reached its twilight." The International Hyperbole Organization was similarly short of breath: "We've told our writers to cut down on their idiom use at least a billion times." *Personification Today* held a lengthy press conference on the matter. I won't give you the whole story here, but suffice to say that the reporters' chairs sighed with relief when it was all over.

If there is one silver lining to this cloud, it's the fact that there are still a select few who buck at convention. As long as there are writers committed to shaking things up, writers who are giving it their best shot, there is still reason to believe. Me personally, I'll start using idioms when hell freezes over. There's no way on God's green earth you could get me to use an idiom. This may seem like a devil-may-care attitude, but my conscience is clear. I sleep like a baby at night. My advice to all those aspiring writers is as simple as 1,2,3: Avoid idioms like the plague.

Paul Allen

Paul Allen is a US-based English teacher. The above article was taken from his blog <http://syasse.blogspot.com>

■ Publishing House Dedicated to Literature in Translation

In conjunction with its developing literary translation programs, the University of Rochester (New York) launched Open Letter, a publishing house dedicated to international literature, in July 2007

Beginning in fall 2008, Open Letter will publish twelve works of international literature a year, focusing on modern classics and contemporary works of fiction.

“We are focusing on twentieth- and twenty-first century literature from around the world—cosmopolitan literature, books that stimulate and provoke readers, and which we hope will be read for generations to come,” said director Chad W. Post, co-founder of Reading the World and former Associate Director of Dalkey Archive Press.

Post is joined at Open Letter by E.J. Van Lanen, former Assistant Editor at Ecco, and Nathan Furl, former Marketing and Production Director at Dalkey Archive Press.

Open Letter’s first publication will be Nobody’s Home by Dubravka Ugresic (Thank You for Not Reading, Museum of Unconditional Surrender). The other title currently signed on to the initial list is Bragi Olafsson’s The Pets. These titles will be available at better bookstores everywhere.

“Along with a handful of prestigious literary presses like the New York Review Books Classics, New Directions, and Archipelago, Open Letter is dedicated to enriching our culture by making the best of the world’s literature available in English. And at the same time, this important mission creates thrilling educational opportunities,” said Joanna Scott, author of

the Pulitzer Prize finalist *The Manikin* and Roswell Smith Burrows Professor of English at the University of Rochester.

This new publishing venture is one of the key components in the University of Rochester’s academic programs designed to train a new generation of literary translators and writers. In addition to publishing trade books, Open Letter will oversee Three Percent (www.rochester.edu/threeppercent), a new website featuring an international lit blog, reviews of untranslated books, sample translations, and a calendar of grants and prizes for translation.

■ MT company sees bright future

Language Weaver, a company that provides machine translation services, recently announced that it is expanding its focus and offering its services to an ever broader base of clients. As per the latest announcement, the company will focus on the massive volumes of digital content in Web Content, Business Intelligence, and Customer Care markets. The move suggests that they have very strong confidence in the future of MT. Although Language Weaver is not a household name, its work is well-known to many as it is the company that provides Babelfish with its MT engine.

...the vast swathes of user-generated content that is produced online daily could never be translated by human translators.

According to independent research, the translation market today is worth \$14 billion and Language Weaver believes that if cheap translation services could be provided, the market could be worth as much as \$67.5 billion. The belief is that when translation can be provided for a tiny fraction of today’s costs, then much more content would be translated. Language Weaver, according to CEO Mark Tapling, is able to provide an automated communication solution that dependably conveys meaning for applications with continuously high volumes of content that require speed, and accuracy. For example, the vast swathes of user-generated content that is produced online daily could never be translated by human translators. Translating this type of content can be useful to MNCs in terms of market research across language barriers.

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 Elizabeth Hayes at [elizabeth.hayes7\(a\)mail.dcu.ie](mailto:elizabeth.hayes7(a)mail.dcu.ie).

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Language Weaver's TM system is statistics-based (as opposed to the more traditional rule-based systems). According to Tapling, "This methodology allows Language Weaver to develop and improve translation systems at a significantly faster rate, and the output is more fluent and natural sounding because the software learns to translate from examples of human translation rather than relying on hand-crafted linguistic rules."

■ Murder case based on faulty translation

When Scottish woman, Emma Caldwell, was found murdered in 2005, the police investigation centred on a Turkish café in Glasgow that Caldwell was known to frequent. The investigation led to the arrest of four Glasgow-based Turkish men. Some of the men arrested were secretly taped and a Turkish-born police officer was brought in from another district to translate the conversation. According to this policeman, the men were heard talking about having committed the murder and wrapping Caldwell's body in a carpet.

However, as the court case was proceeding, the defence team had the tape transcripts independently translated from Turkish into English and the Courts did likewise. According to the second and third translations, the men covered many topics in the conversation including football and carpets but at no point did they discuss murder or Emma Caldwell. At this and some doubts related to forensic evidence, the murder case fell apart.

The Turkish-born police officer... was questioned in relation to the serious errors in his translation.

The Turkish-born police officer who produced the original, and faulty, translation was questioned in relation to the serious errors in his translation. He is still working with the police force. It is believed that the inaccuracies in the translation were due to linguistic inability rather than anything more sinister.

None of the media reports on this case have questioned why a police officer was brought in to do the work of an interpreter. The case highlights how important the use of reliable and professional translators/interpreters are in the courts.

■ European Commission threatens Irish State with legal action over Lionbridge contract

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE IRISH TIMES ON SEPTEMBER 20 2008.

The European Commission is threatening to take the Government to court over its award of a multimillion-euro interpretation service to US firm Lionbridge Language Services.

This week Brussels sent a final written warning to the Department of Justice arguing that it changed the rules of a competition for the contract during the tender process. It asked the department to explain why it applied the award criteria in a different way than stated in the tender documents.

"The commission considers that by modifying the emphasis between the award criteria following the submission and an initial review of the bids, Ireland has failed to fulfil its obligations under the principles of equal treatment and transparency," it said in a "reasoned opinion" letter to the Irish authorities.

Lionbridge Language Services has been paid €1.9 million under the terms of the contract for providing interpretation services to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, and the Reception and Integration Agency. The commission began its investigation after receiving a complaint from a rival firm.

A Government spokesman said it was aware of the commission's concerns but the department was satisfied that it had honoured its obligations in conducting its procurement process. He said the department was happy to engage further on the issue. If the commission is not satisfied with the response from the Irish authorities, the next step in the infringement procedure is to take the State to Europe's highest court, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

Jamie Smith
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[Click here to access the original article](#)

■ Job Advertisement: German-English Translator



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- abgeschlossenes Hochschulstudium als Diplom-Übersetzer oder gleich zu bewertende Qualifikation
- Muttersprache Englisch, sehr gute Deutschkenntnisse, möglichst eine weitere Fremdsprache
- fachsprachliche Spezialisierung im Fachgebiet Technik, Wirtschaft oder Recht
- Erfahrung im Umgang mit Translation-Memory-Systemen und Terminologiedatenbanken
- hohe Dienstleistungsorientierung und ausgeprägter Teamgeist

Passen auch wir zu Ihnen?

Dann schicken Sie uns Ihre Bewerbung mit Ihrem frühestmöglichem Einstiegstermin, Ihrem Gehaltswunsch unter Angabe der Kennziffer 771 per Email an: bewerbungen@dfs.de. Wir freuen uns darauf.

Petra Griebmann, Telefon 06103/707-3258, beantwortet gerne weitere Fragen.

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■ Conferences, Calls & Courses

Translating Thought / Traduire la pensée University of Nottingham, UK, March 25-26, 2009

Published in France in 2004, the *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* represents both a reflection on the difficulty of translating philosophical thought and an attempt to 'think philosophy in languages'. This conference will continue the discussions initiated by the *Vocabulaire*, asking what is at stake when thought

passes from one language to another, and interrogating the liminal spaces of languages and the refractions of meaning that are imposed by experiences of difference and confrontations with the untranslatable. According to Barbara Cassin, 'untranslatable in no way implies that the terms in question [...] have not or cannot be translated – the untranslatable is rather that which one never stops translating'. If, as Derrida asserts, translation allows us to 'read language in its own effacement', then it is these effaced traces of a passage (odos) of thought, created through the ordeal of language, that might most usefully be explored when examining the relationship between philosophy and translation. This conference aims to explore these issues within the framework of post-war French thought, examining the symptomatic traces left by the passage of certain terms through the language of the other, and exploring the extent to which thought is constructed around the impossibility of its own translation.

Confirmed Speakers & Paper Titles

- ◆ Barbara Cassin, Directrice de Recherche au CNRS, Directrice du Centre Léon Robin de recherche sur la pensée antique, CNRS, Paris IV-Sorbonne, ENS Ulm "Philosopher en langues"
- ◆ Peggy Kamuf, Marion Frances Chevalier Professor of French and Comparative Literature, University of Southern California. "Translation without Representation"
- ◆ Michael Syrotinski, Professor of French and Francophone Studies, University of Aberdeen. "Translating the subject à la française"
- ◆ Marc Crépon, Directeur de recherche au CNRS, archives Husserl de Paris, ENS Ulm. "Identité et traduction"
- ◆ David Macey, Independent writer and translator (including sections of the *Vocabulaire*). "Translation, vocabulary, quotation"
- ◆ Jean-René Ladmiral, Philosophe/Traducteur Directeur du CERT, Directeur du CRATIL de l'ISIT (Institut Supérieur d'interprétation et de Traduction) "Babel & Logos"

Event Contact: Kathryn Batchelor ([kathryn.batchelor\(a\)nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:kathryn.batchelor(a)nottingham.ac.uk))

Website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/french/research/conferences.php>

Eighth annual Portsmouth translation conference

Registration is now open for the eighth annual Portsmouth translation conference which will take place on Saturday 8 November 2008. Full details are available at www.port.ac.uk/translationconference.

This year's conference aims to foreground the very great diversity of roles and modes of translation which make up today's translation profession. It is supported by the National Network for Translation, a Routes into Languages initiative, and attendance for school or undergraduate students is subsidised by the Network. The conference will also be of interest to scholars, students of translation and translation professionals. All enquiries should be directed to Ian Kemble at [ian.kemble\(a\)port.ac.uk](mailto:ian.kemble(a)port.ac.uk).

E-learning programme for professional translators

Imperial College London, 12 January - 30 March 2009

Imperial College London is pleased to announce a new 11 week e-learning programme for professional translators. This is an exciting new course on software and games localisation run in collaboration with the Humanities department at Imperial College London.

This course will be valuable to anyone who wants to further their career in the translation industry, and is a very important stepping-stone to becoming a software localiser.

Topics will include -

- ◆ Introduction to the key concepts of localisation
- ◆ Localising resource (software) files
- ◆ Localising help files (WinHelp and WebHelp)
- ◆ Screenshooting and localising graphics
- ◆ Localising games

Places on the course are strictly limited, EARLY BOOKING IS STRONGLY ADVISED. For further details please visit our website: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/cpd/localisation>

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■ Contacting The ITIA

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

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

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Editor: Elizabeth Hayes
[elizabeth.hayes7\(a\)mail.dcu.ie](mailto:elizabeth.hayes7(a)mail.dcu.ie)
Layout: Jody Byrne

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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*
- ◆ *Database Entry*
- ◆ *Code of Practice*
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