



ITIA BULLETIN

May 2006

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Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association
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■ Editorial

Dear Readers,

The professions of interpreting and translating remained fairly stable through the years until the last century. The second half of the twentieth century brought the winds of change and so far the profession has adapted well to new technology and demands. The FLOSS articles that have been published in this bulletin recently are an example of how we can make technology work for us. This month's issue contains two articles on issues that look set to make an impact on the profession in the future - the huge growth of English as a lingua franca and the improvements in Machine Translation. Read on to decide if you feel there is a real threat to your future profitability.

The series of articles on FLOSS is on hold to be resumed in the near future. Also, I hope you have had the chance to go to the events organised to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ITIA. If not, there is one on Wednesday 31st (details below).

Elizabeth Hayes
Editor ITIA Bulletin

■ US declares English the 'National Language'

In the United States, English is to become the national language under a bill passed on May 18th 2006 by the US senate. Surprisingly, the USA currently has no official language. The current bill was intended to designate English the 'official language' but the term was changed to 'national language' under pressure from the opposition.

The language issue is being bundled in with a larger bill on immigration. While at first glance, it might seem strange to deal with official language status with immigration issues, a closer look at what is being proposed shows that these issues are very closely linked, at least in the public mindset. Among supporters of the bill, there are claims that this is the best way to ensure that immigrants learn English and are thus given the best possible chance of succeeding in the US. On the other hand, campaigners against the bill claim that the move will hinder access to the political system, justice and healthcare for the same immigrants. There are fears that the new bill could lead to reduced spending on T/I as there will no longer be an obligation to cater for non-English speakers in many areas.

While immigration seems to be the major issue in the English question, there is also the argument that linguistic unity leads to patriotism and national unity. The organisation U.S. English has been campaigning for this day since its foundation in 1983 and believes in language as a marker of nationhood. Chairperson of U.S. English said, "Making English the national language is a longstanding oversight that today's Senate vote corrected. The vote heeded the voices of the vast majority of Americans who believe that English is a crucial part of being an American....In our diverse country, we must focus on the things that bring us together. Without a common language, we are not a nation of immigrants, but instead groups of immigrants living in a nation."

The current climate of fear in the U.S. has undoubtedly fed into and fanned the debate. "Language is never about language," commented Walt Wolfram, a social linguist at North Carolina State University, "Why should it be any different in the United States?" That point is seconded by Richard Tucker, an expert on language education, planning and policy at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University, "The discussion is ... related to fears of immigration issues. I think it's related to a worry about the changing demography of the United States. I think it's a worry about who will continue to have political and economic influence."

■ Professional Membership of the ITIA

The Professional Sub-Committee of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association (ITIA) is due to meet on 24th June 2006 to consider applications for Professional Membership from our own Ordinary Members and from overseas translators not yet members of the ITIA.

Now is the time to submit your application for Professional Membership for 2006. Please visit the Association's website at www.translatorsassociation.ie/content/view/11/23/

and download the two documents which refer to *Professional Membership* applications

- ◆ Professional Membership Application form
- ◆ Professional Membership admission criteria
- ◆ Declaration
- ◆ Code of Practice and Professional Ethics

■ 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 MT tool due on the market

The ITIA bulletin has previously reported on the Phraselator, a device developed by the *Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency* and private contractors to enable 'communication' with occupied peoples where communication means the occupied people's ability to understand and obey orders from the occupying forces. Another MT (machine translation) device has come on the market in the last few months which claims to have turned a corner in the area of translation technology. The new technology, which is being tested at the moment, differs from the Phraselator in that it translates spoken word to spoken word.

Also, while most MT systems have been using a rule-based approach in the past, the new technology is based on statistics. This works by feeding thousands of previously approved texts with their translation into the program. The text and its translation need to be aligned in order for the computer memory to be able to retrieve it later. Rules and patterns are built around the aligned

translations that allow the program to retrieve the most suitable match based on probability. According to Language Weaver, the company that developed the technology, 'Because the system uses advanced machine learning methods, it actually learns from previously translated parallel texts, and translation quality improves with greater amounts of parallel data, which is not true in traditional MT systems.'

So, the phraselator (and its predecessors) came and went without having any major impact on anyone, least of all interpreters and translators but will it always be so? Right now, it seems impossible that any computer could take the place of a human linguist but, in fact, it is already happening to a small extent. MT systems are being used to translate highly technical, low importance documentation. MT is not going away and one of the main stumbling blocks to Machine Translation is computer power. As that improves, so will machine translation. Perhaps the limits of MT are not as limiting as some had hoped.

■ The new English

A recent *Newsweek* article revealed how English is now being used in our world more widely than ever.

According to this article, the ratio of non-native to native speakers of English is three to one. As we already know, in many parts of the world, English is seen as the language of success. Parents keen for their children to achieve are forking over tuition for English-language schools. And governments from Tunisia to Turkey are pushing English, recognizing that along with computers and mass migration, the language is the turbine engine of globalization. As one 12-year-old self-taught English-speaker from China's southwestern Sichuan province says, "If you can't speak English, it's like you're deaf and dumb."

The main thrust of the article was that all these EFL learners are not simply learning to speak as we do – they are also bringing their own languages and cultures to the English language in varying ways. Halfway languages are springing up in far-flung corners of the world where English is being mixed with Hindi (*Hinglish*), Japanese (*Japlish*) and Tagalog (*Englog*). Often, English acquires a certain coolness as it is mostly being spoken by young people. As a result, it is often used in advertising in non-English speaking countries.

All languages are works in progress but globalization will revolutionize English in ways we can only begin to imagine. In the future, suggests English-language

expert David Crystal, there could be a tri-English world, one in which you could speak a local English-based dialect at home, a national variety at work or school, and international Standard English to talk to foreigners.

Because so many of the world's English speakers are non-native, the perceived need to mimic native-speaker accents is greatly diminished. When there are so many people speaking English with, for example, an Indian accent, that accent becomes a valid flavour of English. Researchers are starting to study non-native speakers' mistakes as structured grammars.

Of course, it must be remembered that all these people who are learning English are not doing so only to be able to communicate with native English speakers. As a lingua franca, English is used between non-native English speakers of differing mother tongue. This type of communication is often more free-flowing and comprehensible to the interlocutors than where a native speaker might be involved. The article goes so far as to state that, in fact, native speakers have the most to lose from the globalization of English, "Cambridge dons who insist on speaking the Queen's English could be met with giggles—or blank stares. British or American business execs who jabber on in their own idiomatic patois, without understanding how English is used by non-natives, might lose out on deals."

And that brings us to what the scramble to learn English is all about – jobs. In the past, most of the jobs that required English were at the higher end of the scale. Today, most decent jobs in China, India etc. require it. Ireland, as we all know, has been quick to jump on the bandwagon and set itself up as a learning centre. If we needed it, proof of how lucrative the market was provided by the recent news reports of fake schools and sub-standard educational standards in some of the English language schools. International communication is changing, that much is certain but will the power of

English as a *lingua franca* impact on the interpreting profession?

■ ITIA 20th Anniversary Celebrations

You can still catch the last event to mark the 20th Anniversary of the ITIA. All the events were made possible thanks to funding from Ireland Literature Exchange, the ITIA and Culture 2000.

Translating Irish Literature - Exchanging Experiences Translators from Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia and Poland will meet this month to read and discuss their translations of modern Irish fiction, poetry and drama in a series of early evening events at the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre. Ireland Literature Exchange, the organisation which promotes Irish literature abroad, has planned the talks and public interviews to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association.

WEDNESDAY, 31 MAY, BANK OF IRELAND ARTS CENTRE, FOSTER PLACE, 6.00 P.M.

KLAUDYNA ROZHIN AND KRISTA KAER
Klaudyna Rozhin (Poland) specialises in theatre translation and direction. Her translations of Irish plays into Polish include: Martin McDonagh's *Leenane Trilogy*, Enda Walsh's *Bedbound*, Conor McPherson's *This Lime Tree Bower, Rum and Vodka* and *The Weir*. She has directed plays throughout Europe including *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* in Slovakia, Russian Folk Tales for GITIS Scandinavia, Aarhus and *The Martyrdom of Peter Ohey* by Slawomir Mrozek, Theatre Royal Plymouth and Ustinov Studio, Theatre Royal Bath. Her translation of Mark O'Rowe's *Howie the Rookie* was premiered at Rozmaito'ci Theatre in Warsaw in 2001.

Krista Kaer (Estonia) has translated over 50 titles in the course of her career. Translations of Irish literature have included John Banville's *The Newton Letter*, Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis* and *Fairy Tales* and Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* and *Aristocrats*. In 2000 she won the *Estonian Cultural Endowment Annual Translation Award* for her translation of Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* and of the Harry Potter books. She is editor-in-chief at the Varrak Publishing House.

For further information contact:
Sinéad Mac Aodha or Máire Ní Dhonnchadha
Ireland Literature Exchange, 25 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2 tel: 01 678 8961 or email: info@irelandliterature.com
Admission is free of charge.

■ Next Issue of the ITIA Bulletin

The next issue of the ITIA Bulletin will be out in June 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).

Subscribing to the ITIA Bulletin

To subscribe, simply send an Email to [itia-ezine-subscribe\(a\)yahogroups.com](mailto:itia-ezine-subscribe(a)yahogroups.com)

To unsubscribe, simply send an Email to [itia-ezine-unsubscribe\(a\)yahogroups.com](mailto:itia-ezine-unsubscribe(a)yahogroups.com)

■ Conferences, Calls & Courses

LRC XI

The LRC is now inviting proposals for relevant papers for LRC XI. Papers can cover topics similar to (but not confined to) the following:

- ◆ Automating the localisation process
- ◆ Interoperability
- ◆ Localisation File Formats
- ◆ Localisation tools and technologies
- ◆ Localisation process
- ◆ Machine and machine-assisted translation
- ◆ Open source localisation
- ◆ Regional localisation activities
- ◆ Development localisation
- ◆ Management of localisation projects
- ◆ Localisation standards
- ◆ Standards Verification
- ◆ Standards Certification
- ◆ Quality assurance and testing
- ◆ Computational linguistics and localisation
- ◆ Translation studies and localisation
- ◆ Cultural issues and localisation

Proposals should include contact details for the authors and a short, one paragraph, biographical note. They should be approximately 200 words long and should reach the LRC not later than 3rd July 2006. An international panel of experts will review the proposals and authors will be notified by 24th July 2006.

Full versions of the accepted proposals are due by 25th August 2006. An instruction document for submitting papers for the conference is available [here](#). All submitted papers should adhere to this guide. Proposals may be sent by email to [LRC\(a\)ul.ie](mailto:LRC(a)ul.ie)

Or by mail to:

Localisation Research Centre,
CSIS Department,
University of Limerick,
Limerick, Ireland

Please note that all presenters are expected to register for the conference and pay the relevant registration fee.

Training Action On Translation And Interpretation In Public Services Universidad De Alcalá 2006-2007 (dates and fees to be confirmed)

Aim: To train specialists to be a linguistic and cultural links between public services and foreign population.

1. *Official Master In Intercultural Communication, Interpretation And Translation In Public Services*
(Arabic-Spanish, German-Spanish, French-Spanish, English-Spanish, Romanian-Spanish) (A bachelor's degree is required)
Schedule: 600 hours. Practical lessons in the pair of languages chosen.
October: online lessons; November-February: on-site lessons, Monday-Thursday, 16:00-20:00; March-September: internships in institutional centres and the presentation of a final research paper for the Master.
Information: Escuela de Postgrado; E-mail: servi-postgrado(a)uah.es; Tel.: 91 885 6865 /5357 /6856)
3. *Course on Interlinguistic Communication (170 hours, online)*
Pre-registration deadline: September 2006
Schedule: October - November 2006
Provisional fees: €800. A limited number of scholarships are available.
4. *Course on Translation and Interpretation in Hospitals and Health Centers*
(170 hours, practice lessons in the pair of languages chosen)
Pre-registration deadline: October 2006
Schedule: November - December 2006, Monday-Thursday, 16:00-20:00
Provisional fees: €800. A limited number of scholarships are available.
5. *Course on Legal and Administrative Translation and Interpretation*
(170 hours, practice lessons in the pair of languages chosen)
Pre-registration deadline: December 2006
Schedule: January - February 2007, Monday-Thursday, 16:00-20:00
Provisional fees: €800. A limited number of scholarships are available.

Further information at: [traduccion.sspp\(a\)uah.es](mailto:traduccion.sspp(a)uah.es); [mcarmen.valero\(a\)uah.es](mailto:mcarmen.valero(a)uah.es)
<http://www2.uah.es/aulatraduccion> or <http://www2.uah.es/traduccion>
Fax: 91 885 44 45, Tel: 91 885 53

Online Postgraduate Certificate in Translation Studies (Specialisation: Spanish-English/English-Spanish Commercial Translation)

The Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies is offering a programme designed for people who would like to obtain a postgraduate qualification in translation studies from the University of Manchester but who are unable to attend a part-time or full-time programme in Manchester. The Postgraduate Certificate in Translation Studies is delivered via the web and requires only part-time study (approx. 5 hours per week) so is ideal for those who wish to combine it with other commitments.

The programme runs from October 2006 to June/July 2007 and consists of two course units:

- ◆ Introduction to Translation Studies
- ◆ Commercial Translation, Spanish-English or English-Spanish

Each course unit is assessed through a variety of coursework tasks. Successful completion leads to the recognised award of Postgraduate Certificate. For more information, please consult the following webpage:

<http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/Research/Centres/CentreforTranslationandInterculturalStudies/OnlinePostgraduateProgramme/>

Alternatively, go to <http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk> and follow the links to Translation and Intercultural Studies.

AFLS Symposium**University of East Anglia, Norwich, November 3-4 2006**

CALL FOR PAPERS

*Cross-Cultural Pragmatics at a Crossroads: Speech Frames and Cultural Perceptions**Keynote speakers:*

- ◆ Helen Spencer-Oatey (cross/intercultural studies)
- ◆ Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni (discourse in interaction)
- ◆ Declan McCavana (non-standard language varieties)

The purpose of this interdisciplinary event is to bring together, under the umbrella of cross-cultural pragmatics, researchers from domains which are particularly sensitive to cross-cultural issues, to promote the cross-fertilisation of ideas and theoretical approaches, and explore, beyond stereotypes, key concerns associated with verbal communication across language, culture and acquisitional divides.

Domains of specific interest will be interlanguage pragmatics, mediation (with reference to real-life or fictional contexts, i.e. translation/interpreting, but also dubbing / subtitling / translation / adaptation of fictional interactions, for example) and non-standard varieties of language. These are spheres of enquiry in which cross-cultural issues and their implications in various respects (e.g. pragmatic development for interlanguage) surface with peculiar acuteness, and which give us privileged access to data for refining their study. Questions the workshop will aim to explore include: the interface between the linguistic and the cultural, between speech frames and cultural perceptions, misapprehensions of pragmatic values across languages and their implications, issues of membership knowledge generally, issues of transfer, intercultural styles.

The workshop will focus principally, but not exclusively, on the French/English pair, a combination of languages which has received comparatively limited attention in cross-cultural pragmatics (but see Béal, Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Traverso), and even less in interlanguage pragmatics. It will, by virtue of its themes and the inbuilt interdisciplinarity of cross-cultural pragmatics generally, be informed by different theoretical paradigms (e.g. conversation and interactional discourse analysis, intercultural communication, politeness theory and, for interlanguage, second language acquisition and psycholinguistics). Proposals, for individual papers (20 minutes, with 10 minutes for questions) or proposer-led round-table sessions on a particular theme (1h30), will be expected clearly to identify their theoretical frame(s) of reference.

The general framework for the workshop will be provided by plenary papers delivered by distinguished scholars representing complementary perspectives: cross / intercultural studies (Helen Spencer-Oatey, Cambridge University), discourse in interaction (Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Université Lyon 2), interpreting and non-standard language varieties (Declan McCavana, Ecole Polytechnique, Paris).

Practical information:

Abstract deadline: 31 May 2006

Language: English or French

Proposal: 300-word anonymous abstract sent as an attachment (Word doc) to an email message containing the author's name and affiliation

Submission to: m.guillot@uea.ac.uk***Organisers:***

Dr Marie-Noëlle Guillot and Dr Roger Baines

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■ Contacting The ITIA

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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*
- ◆ *Background Information*
- ◆ *Translation Services in Ireland*
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