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Calling all interpreters!

Do you know how many on-site jobs you would do in a year: 400, 500, 600, or more ...?

If you work part time, how many 90-minute jobs would you expect to average over four working days of interpreting: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, or more ...? Information like this is essential when calculating an interpreter's fees. If you are willing to share your experience in this area with others, please contact member John Gare at (03) 9859 3361 or <johngare@westnet.com.au>.

A '90-minute job' means 90 minutes on site. Count any assignment of up to two hours at a separate location as one job, a half-day or three-hour assignment as two jobs, and a full day or six hours as three and a half jobs. The results of this mini-survey will be published in the next newsletter.

All respondents' names will remain confidential.

John Gare

Contract interpreters and the federal minimum wage

I wonder sometimes if contract interpreters realise how little they are paid. I have done some sums and would welcome discussion on the figuring presented below.

I managed one week to convince an agency that \$60 for an hour and a half is not enough to get out of bed for. I used the argument that it represented an inadequate equivalent annual full-time salary, and that is putting it mildly. From \$60, deduct \$14 for the direct cost of use of vehicle/public transport getting to and from the average on-site assignment: \$60 - \$14 = \$46.00; multiply this by 598 (the number of one and a half hour jobs that can be done in a year after allowing for holidays, sick days, etc. and an unbookable time of two hours per day): \$46.00 x 598 = \$27,508; from this, deduct indirect costs of \$5,400 to get an

equivalent full-time annual salary of \$22,108.

Depending on the individual contract interpreter's actual costs, this is roughly what \$60 for a 90-minute minimum assignment converts to if superannuation is paid, as it is by TIS and CentreLink. This is \$2000 below the federal minimum wage of \$24,388 p.a., or \$467.40 per week.

If the \$60 comes from an agency which does not contribute to the contract interpreter's super fund at the superannuation guarantee rate of 9%, the annual wage of \$22,108 should be divided by 1.09 to give \$20,283 p.a., or \$4,000 less than the federal minimum wage.

John Gare



From the president

Yveline Piller writes on the AUSIT submission to parliament, raising our profile, and accreditation

This quarter, a team of members is working on one of our most important Pay and Conditions projects: the preparation of a submission to a parliamentary inquiry on labour conditions and contracting.

The submission focuses on the pitfalls of contracting for large government bodies. Whilst contracting is often perceived as a glamorous profession providing flexibility, independence in choices, freedom from bosses and negotiating power, it is important to show that market forces can be severely distorted when many small, isolated suppliers of services—T & I practitioners—face a few large clients, such as government bodies, who are capable of imposing standard and onerous conditions and who may leave little or no room for negotiation of fees and conditions.

Active discussions on the e-Bulletin demonstrate that we often wonder what the appropriate level of fees should be. Some believe that it should be entirely determined by market forces, yet for many this is a bread-and-butter issue.

A groundbreaking analysis of interpreters' remuneration has just been completed by AUSIT member John Gare. His detailed and documented calculations provide long-awaited answers on this subject, showing the costs of operating as a contractor and determining what an interpreter needs to earn per assignment to make a reasonable living. This gives us a solid reference for collective representations or when individually negotiating our fee for a new assignment. Access to this document will be available to members on the AUSIT website and copies will be distributed to stakeholders in the industry.

Lifting the profile of the profession is another key goal we pursue at every opportunity.

In a new website section 'The profession in the media', located on the home page at <www.ausit.org>, you can find some of the great interviews that members have given to the print media and on the radio in recent months.

Cleverly combining serious goals with glamour and entertainment, a task force led by our vice-president is devising means to gain leverage from the soon-to-be released Hollywood thriller *The Interpreter*, starring Nicole Kidman in the title role.

We are also linking up with a mining journal, literary groups, AUSTRADE, and several Chambers of Commerce to promote AUSIT and its members through relevant websites and publications. We plan to investigate other publications for advertising suitability, such as those of our fellow members in Professions Australia. Even though we are the smallest member in this body, Professions Australia has taken one of our ideas on board and is planning to organise a seminar which, among other things, will survey the requirements for professional development and practice in professional organisations.

Just as AUSIT is reviewing its membership requirements and structure, I noted from an email received the story of a potential practitioner who, having recently completed a Graduate Diploma in Translation Studies with two High Distinctions and one Distinction, found that agencies ignored her formal university qualifications and were only interested in NAATI accreditation when giving her work

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as a translator. Some practitioners who do not wish to work in the government field where NAATI accreditation is preferred are well qualified to work in other areas. In line with existing provisions within our Constitution, I'd like to see our membership criteria expanded to include degrees from Australian universities, leaving members free to choose whether or not NAATI accreditation is needed for the work they prefer. This would bring benefits all around, adding qualified members to our ranks, supporting university courses, and drawing the attention of the market to the existence of other qualifications.

Other trends are occurring. A draft standard was recently released by the European Committee for Standardisation, with the following goal:

'... to establish and define the requirements for the provision of quality translation services ... This standard ... is designed to provide translation service providers with a set of procedures and standard requirements to enable them to meet market requirements. Certification is envisaged for translation service providers who satisfy the requirements of this standard.'

As is the case in many other fields, this standard (which seems to target T & I agencies) aims to support quality assurance for clients and will benefit practitioners since one of its requirements is *'continued professional development of all persons involved in the translation process'*. The standard should help provide a more level playing field by setting recognised standards which could be a marketing point for competing agencies.

We can expect this trend to take hold in our market at some stage. In line with these developments, AUSIT is pursuing the establishment of a Board of Professional Conduct and has been running preliminary tests prior to the board's forthcoming official launch.

AUSIT National Council Members March 2005

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VIC/TAS	Chair Treasurer Secretary	Sarina Phan John Crone Chris Poole
WA	Chair Treasurer Secretary	Rita Pasqualini Diana Rodriguez Yutaka Kawasaki

The following resolutions have been passed by the National Council since the last newsletter.

Resolution No 70 of February 05:

That the following person be admitted as a student member:

Ayumi Wada SA.

Resolution No 71 of 16.03.05:

That the following persons be admitted to AUSIT associate affiliate membership:

Pierre Riant VIC; Mar Saba VIC; Roz Wolmerring VIC.

Congratulations and welcome to all new members!

From the editor

Thank you once again to all who contributed for this issue.

I would like to remind members that the deadline for the next issue is 5 June. I received a lot of late submissions for this edition, and as a result this newsletter reaches members' letter boxes a little late.

Special thanks go out to Yveline, Annamaria, Barbara, Louise, and all other members. Your feedback and suggestions are most welcome, as are any personal anecdotes (see Chrys Chrystello's on page seven).

TM: All the answers

Ignacio Garcia, Senior Lecturer at UWS and **Vivian Stevenson**, Freelance Translator, provide an introduction to the whys and hows of Translation Memory software

This article, intended for publication over two issues of the AUSIT newsletter, attempts to address some of the questions that AUSIT members have commonly asked about Translation Memory (TM) software in the various professional forums and reunions organised by the Institute: *What does TM do? How do I work it? Do I need it? And, perhaps most of all: Am I missing out?*

Translation Memory – Who needs it?

In the UK, an Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) survey showed that only 15% of all respondents used translation memory; however, for those earning £75k+ that proportion rose to 50%. Moreover, these figures are from 1999, when the technology was less robust, less affordable, and not capable of handling non-Roman scripts.

Since then the number of TM users appears to have steadily grown. According to information from the leading brand Trados, the number of licences it sold jumped from 40,000 in December 2000 to 80,000 in September 2004.

Large public and private entities are constantly generating the kinds of outbound texts for which TM offers distinct advantages. For most jobs in the technical translation area and jobs that pay best, TM is a must.

So what is Translation Memory?

Translation Memory (TM) is not to be confused with Machine Translation (MT). TM is human translation assisted by computers—the machine only helps to achieve greater productivity and consistency by offering previous translations of the same or similar material. The principle and utility

of TM can be encapsulated in the famous catchcry: ‘You never need to translate the same sentence twice’. (This concept is termed ‘leveraging’.)

The virtue of TM is that its translation solutions are human ones, performed by translators who are aware of issues of style, register, genre, and who most likely have topic knowledge to help them resolve ambiguities and perform intelligent reordering. They use judgement and experience to decide whether to accept proposed solutions, modify them, or reject them and generate new solutions.

These features make TM attractive for producing ‘outbound’ (i.e. publication quality) translations of repetitive texts such as manuals, or of texts where incremental changes occur periodically, as in website content.

Where does Machine Translation (MT) come in then?

With MT, translation solutions are generated by a machine, either autonomously or with some human assistance at the input and/or output stages. The machine uses all of its number-crunching power to parse a text (identify parts of speech, find equivalent terms) and then rewrite it in the target language.

Unaided MT is what you will get most of the time at Google (Translate this page) or at Word 2003: Tools > Language > Translate. Unless the languages in question are lexically and syntactically very close, or the source text is written very simply and unambiguously, the most you can hope to obtain will be a ‘gist’ requiring human input (pre-editing of the source text, post-editing of the target text).

If we liken TM to a lever, perhaps MT can be likened to a sledgehammer. Unlike a human translator, an MT program will not remember what it has done before, and will plough through new and old material alike. For example, a server-based MT program may translate a single web page hundreds of times each day, as each new user who wants to view it in their language hits the ‘translate’ button.

For internal, or ‘inbound’ applications, human-aided machine translation can produce sufficient quality at relatively low cost. However, in order to obtain output of publishable quality and utilise existing material, TM is more efficient and economical to use.

How does TM work?

TM is a database of translation segments (the unit, in most cases, being the sentence) which places each source segment side-by-side with its translation. It also contains the algorithms needed to retrieve the translation when the same (or a similar) segment occurs in another text. TM is a software package with many useful tools besides the database itself; it has become a catch-all term encompassing the concept, the software package you buy, and the database at the core of the package.

TM is not language specific: when you buy a program all you get is an empty database which you gradually fill with segments in whichever source and target languages you wish. As long as your computer operating system supports those languages, current commercial TMs will support them as well. The algorithms which leverage target language information from the database are determined by computational, not

linguistic means. (MT by contrast is language specific: you need a different set of dictionaries and parsing rules for each language the machine translates from and into).

When your TM software finds an identical segment in a new project, it retrieves the previous translation for you as a perfect match; if no perfect match is found, the program will offer you similar segments instead. The degree of similarity is expressed as a percentage in what is known as a 'fuzzy match'—the higher the percentage, the more useful that match will be.

In some cases a few editing keystrokes are all that is needed for you to turn a fuzzy match into a perfect one. You store this solution and your database grows. As you fill your TM database there is a greater likelihood that work you have previously done can be reused in future projects (leveraging again).

Leveraging is most useful with updates: only changed text needs to be addressed, and the program's matching facility makes it easy to see where these changes have occurred. For applications, think of spare parts catalogues for Boeing, help files for Microsoft etc. The more repetitive the text, the more gains in speed and consistency. For TM to work, the text must be in digital form.

Components of a typical TM software package

Let's take a more detailed look at the five main components contained in most TM software:

Translation Memory database: this is the core of the entire package—a memory you fill with a side-by-side list of source language segments (the separators used are usually the full stop or the colon) together with vetted translations of them in the target language. In theory, because of its nature as a collection of matched segments, a TM database should be available for sharing with different TM packages, given the appropriate

filters.

Terminology database: while the TM is a database of segments (sentences), the terminology database consists of a side-by-side table of source and target language terms, plus the algorithms to leverage those terms when required.

Alignment tool: this allows translators (plus clients and agencies) to build up a translation memory out of existing translations ('legacy material'). The tool is used to bring together parallel texts (an original and its translation), and line them up sentence by sentence, ready for importing into a translation memory. The bigger the TM, the more useful it becomes.

Filters: Most TM packages come with filters (or offer them as add-ons) which separate out formatting instructions and allow the translator to focus on the text. Translators do not need to know HTML programming or have fancy desktop publishing programs to translate content without disturbing layout. The right TM software does it all.

Project management features: Quality assurance features help ensure that all the sentences have been translated, and that the correct terminology is consistently applied. TM programs also have simple word-processing features such as search, find and replace, cut and paste, and a spell-check for the supported languages.

Word count tools in TM programs have an important advantage over those in word processors because they distinguish between translatable text and text which is part of the formatting code and does not require translation. Since payment is often by words (or characters), an accurate calculation here is most important. Database analysis features allow translators (and translation managers) to calculate how many perfect and fuzzy matches already exist in the TM for a new text, and thus calculate how much time will be

required to complete the work, or what discount can be offered.

TM looks complicated – how exactly do you work with it?

If TM software is characterised by five basic components, we can also divide its use into five basic steps. While each software brand has its own particularities (which you will need to learn) they are variations on a standard theme. Let's look at a typical workflow for a freelance translator starting a new project:

Creating a project: involves specifying source and target languages, and opening or importing the memory and associated terminology database (or databases).

Importing the source text: the files to be translated are imported to the TM editor, with formatting code and/or tags separated from the translatable text.

Pre-translating: perfect and fuzzy matches from the databases are automatically brought into the TM editor.

Translating: the translator accepts or edits the input from the databases, then translates all untranslated text and sends the newly translated segments and terms to the databases.

Exporting the target text: the formatting code is merged back into the output file, which after proof reading is ready to be sent to the client.

The concluding part of this article will appear in the June issue.

Pay and conditions news

AUSIT members describe the work being done on behalf of T&Is

Rates of pay for Auslan interpreters

ASLIA has worked with various deaf societies over the years to lobby government for funding to cover private medical interpreting. Last year the federal government allocated \$18.4 million to cover private medical interpreting for Auslan users Australia wide. Tenders were called to administer this funding on a national basis, with Wesley Mission Brisbane winning the bid.

Their tender outlined the fees they would pay as follows:

1.5 hrs	Level two	- \$ 69
	Level three	- \$ 84
2 hrs	Level two	- \$ 84
	Level three	- \$112.

There is also a travel component additional to these rates. For a round trip from home for a job up to 100 km away, interpreters will receive \$40; if the distance is over 100 km and up to 200 km, \$50 will be paid.

The Information Kit provided to all interpreters when they register outlines additional benefits to be paid if practitioners are required to travel in excess of 200 km.

If you would like to know more about the National Auslan Booking and Payment Service, or NABS, please go to the Wesley Mission Brisbane website where you will find the home page for NABS. The service commenced 1 February 2005 and, although managed out of the Brisbane office, provides nationwide coverage for all Auslan users. Private medical services include not only GP and specialist consultations, but also physiotherapy, ophthalmology, mental health (private), dental services and more.

A person was employed to map Auslan interpreters around Australia; after interpreters' contact details were fed into the national data base, they were each sent an information pack that included a registration form.

Part of the agreement NABS has with the federal government is to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for Auslan interpreters throughout the term of the contract.

This is an exciting initiative and the first of its kind in Australia.

Once a precedent is set who knows where it may lead.

Merie Spring—Brisbane

It should be pointed out that the 'good deal' given to Auslan interpreters by the government doesn't apply across the board. The rates quoted apply to the private medical area only. There are areas of interpreting in parts of Australia where the rates of remuneration paid to Auslan interpreters are as meagre as those paid to LOTE interpreters.

John Hallett—SA

CRC interpreters receive pay boost

Interpreters working for the Community Relations Commission in New South Wales recently received some good news.

In a letter dated February 2005 they were told that, as a result of a decision by the Industrial Relations Commission concerning the interpretation of the Crown Employees (Interpreters and Translators, Community Relations Commission) 2003 Award, all work exceeding three hours during normal business hours will be rounded up to the next hour. For example, a person completing an assignment of three hours and 12 minutes will be paid for four hours.

The letter states: '... CRC has undertaken to backdate the change in rounding to 10 December 1998 (six years prior to the IRC decision).'

The letter also mentions that '... the PSA and CRC agreed to commence discussions with

respect to the development of a new award.' Members can contact AUSIT representatives if they wish to provide input on this topic; we will forward any such input to the CRC.

Yveline Piller—NSW

PSA welcomes AUSIT SA members' support

Attention AUSIT SA members,

As you may already know, the Public Service Association (PSA) has been representing casual interpreters for the ITC, or Interpreting and Translating Centre, through the enterprise bargaining process and now through arbitration with the Industrial Relations Commission. The following paragraphs are excerpts from their latest letter to me.

Dear Ms Schulz

... Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2005 enclosing copies of correspondence to various state government departments regarding the accuracy of pay calculations for casual interpreters and translators.

Firstly, the PSA wishes to formally recognise you and your colleagues' support in our wages and conditions campaign. Your continued lobbying has been paramount in ensuring this important issue is attended to ...

As you are aware, following the resounding ballot defeat of the Government's wages offer, an application for a new Award had been instigated by the Employer ...

There are a number of matters that are on the table for further discussion with Government, including the outstanding matter you have raised (the accuracy of pay calculations).

Please be assured that the

PSA is continuing to demand that pay justice occurs for our Interpreters and Translators. In addition to our continued campaign, your persistence in clarifying a number of concerns with various government departments is invaluable ...

Yours sincerely

Jan McMahan
General Secretary PSA.

*Nella Schulz,
BA Int/Trans.*

Talking at cross purposes?

Back in 1984 or 1985 on assignment from TIS to a medical centre in Bondi Junction:

Patient: I was overtaking on a crossway when I was hit by the car.

Interpreter (me): Ditto

Doctor: You call yourself an interpreter ? This person was run over by a car on a pedestrian crossing and you just translated that he was overtaking on a crossroad?

Interpreter: I am so sorry sir, but I am here only to interpret what the client says, and that is exactly what he just told me. Unfortunately, it is not my fault he—like thousands of people from his country of a similar age—has not attended any primary school. He is basically illiterate in his own mother tongue, thus explaining the incorrect use of the wording I have just interpreted for you.

Of course the client did not know (in Portuguese) the difference between crossing the road and overtaking.

Of all the ones I have had over the years this is definitely the best—I feared I was going to be kicked out of the doctor's room!

Chrys Chrystello

Branch reports

NSW branch

Money

We transferred the lion's share of 'national money' still held in the state account to the national treasurer. The branch plans to rely more on its own activities for funding in coming years. We would like to see funding guidelines adopted by the NC.

Competency-based training

Several members attended a workshop on skills-based training which may be useful in future to develop TAFE training courses for T&Is by providing a more comprehensive and nationally unified set of skills.

Getting it Right

The marketing brochure on translation developed in NSW is being used by the branch to raise the profile of the profession. State Chinese and German Chambers of Commerce have published advertisements referring to this very useful tool. The French, Italian and Spanish Chambers are next in line.

NAATI Regional Advisory Council

Branch input to the RAC aims at directing more awareness activities towards those businesses and commercial organisations as they appear to be taking an increasingly prominent role in providing T&I income.

Worries about membership numbers

NSW membership numbers went slightly backwards recently. More

efforts will be made to retain existing members and win new ones while maintaining the three-sponsors requirement.

Ongoing T&I professional development

At the most recent PD event on 24 February, professionals explained in detail how they approach their work. The involvement of Macquarie University staff turned a good event into an all-round success, with over 70 members and guests attending. The next session will be about speech-recognition software.

Proposed NAATI revalidation

Committee members believe that our new membership system could replace NAATI reaccreditation because professional practice and PD will become part of the membership criteria. Furthermore, accreditation may not be as central to working in T&I any more since the business sector pays hardly any attention to it.

Next National AGM

The NSW branch committee has expressed interest in hosting the national AGM on 22 and 23 October 2005 in Sydney. Provided the NC agrees, there will be two events: one on developing AUSIT as a professional body, and one on the future of T&I training, PD and accreditation.

Uli Priester,
Chair

VIC/TAS Branch

Dear colleagues and friends, Business must be booming in Victoria because every interpreter/ translator friend I have met after the break has said how busy the year has started for them. This kind-of explains the number of absentees at our first committee

meeting of the year. Regardless, the team went on with the task at hand and successfully organised our first event for the year: the networking session and workshop 'Development of National Competency Standards for Translation and Interpreting',

held on Friday 25 February 2005 and facilitated by Susan Briggs, SISC, and Chris Poole. There will be a follow-up session for those interested in putting together the comment and feedback document from the Vic/Tas branch.

Eva Hussain has also been busy working with Duncan Markham (who is now an associate affiliate AUSIT member) in developing a series of linguistic workshops for interpreters and translators. Watch for the dates and don't miss out; places are limited. Nelida Gambetta (Interpreters' Groups Co-ordinator) has been busy collecting interpreting stories as part of a special project to put together a book of interpreting stories. In the meantime Kate Ritchie and Silke Gebauer have again put on their thinking caps as they continue their work on the AUSIT Vic/Tas Excellence Awards, our biggest project this year.

The membership for this branch is increasing steadily, especially associate affiliate membership. This is the result of networking outside of the association, a strategic decision made by this committee. We see benefits for AUSIT in reaching out to relevant bodies and organisations to promote our profession. AUSIT Vic/Tas also recognises the benefits of joining the Associations Forum (an organisation for associations) as there is plenty of room for growth for an association such as ours.

I very much look forward to another successful year for AUSIT, and for all interpreters and translators. I leave you with this quote: 'TEAM WORK: You are doing good and we are looking good.'
(Fabio Marshall 2004)

Sarina Phan
Chairperson
Vic/Tas Branch

WA Branch

Quarterly Report

Two very important and well-supported PD sessions were held in the fourth quarter of 2004 in WA. In September a 'Translators' Brainstorm with a Teacup' session was held, where translators were able to exchange their views, concerns and stories with each other.

Then in October we had a 'Conference Interpreting Seminar', featuring distinguished guest speakers Associate Professor John Kinder of UWA and Ms Felicity Mueller, practicing interpreter and translator, Conference Interpreter (Senior), AUSIT member, and part-time lecturer at the University of Western Sydney. This seminar functioned also as a launch for our web-based *iLecture* system, which will enable regional and interstate members to participate. More details will be discussed in coming newsletters and other appropriate fora.

In December we held a traditional

end-of-year function, which was also very successful. This year it was particularly memorable as we celebrated our dear member Iby Marian's longstanding contribution with a 'Certificate of Appreciation'. WA is at a transitional stage with an interim chair and secretariat. However, thanks to a very dedicated PD committee and the hard work of other committee members, this was a very productive quarter. I would like to thank all committee members as well as all WA AUSIT members who gave tremendous support to the organisation. All the best for 2005.

Yutaka Kawasaki,
Principal Delegate WA

Events

Festival of Poetry in Translation

The inaugural festival of poetry in translation will be held at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne on 12, 13, 14 August 2005.

Themes are 'Language', 'Place' and 'Identity'. The festival will encourage maximum audience participation through its panel discussions and workshops on, e.g. 'How to turn a literal translation into literature', and through its 'Open Readings' program segment.

Interested members should contact the following email:

<mailto:clementina@pacific.net.au>.

'Where practice meets theory' PD event

The NSW professional development event, 'Where practice meets theory', held on 24 February was a terrific success, and attracted quite a crowd (around 60-70 people), including several who were interested in joining AUSIT.

A big thank-you to Barbara McGilvray, Lynne Honan and David Huang for giving others the benefit of their time, thoughts and experience on how to approach translation, and to Eddie Ronowicz of Macquarie University for linking their presentations with current translation research. An equally big thank-you to the behind-the-scenes team which made it all happen: Felicity, Terry, Uli, George, Maria, Fergus Grieve, and to Michael and Stephen, who did all the yummy food.

It was fantastic to hear AUSIT professionals talking about their own experience—the PD committee is doing a wonderful job in providing variety in the topics presented, and in balancing the social and PD aspects of the events.

Sarah Walls

FIT news

Latest updates from the International Federation of Translators

China's translators and FIT in the spotlight

The Executive Committee met in Beijing on 29 and 30 October, 2004 in conjunction with the Fourth Asian Translators Forum and the Fifth National Council Meeting of the Translators' Association of China. The EC also participated in the launch of an exhibition of translators' achievements in China. The three events received tremendous media coverage in newspapers, radio and television. Betty Cohen and Huang Youyi were invited onto a TV program and were also interviewed by China Radio International. Some of the coverage can be viewed on the Internet under : <<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Nov/111147.htm>>; <<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Nov/111206.htm>>; <<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Nov/111249.htm>>; and <<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Oct/110745.htm>>. At its last meeting in Helsingborg, the Council approved the study of several projects. Some of them have been abandoned after investigation and consultation, others are being pursued. Here are the latest developments:

Intra.net Project – This was a partnership proposal to offer an Internet portal for clients and providers of translation services. After a thorough study of the proposal and a lot of email exchanges between the Council members, it was decided to decline the offer. Council felt FIT was not ready to undertake such a demanding task. Council members also had some reservations about whether FIT should become involved in commercial projects.

International Translator's Card – Peter Krawutschke began consultation with member associations and received a positive

reaction. He is now working on the card itself and the mechanism and organisation of the service. A complete draft will be presented to Council in May.

Humanitarian Assistance for Translators – FIT sought to develop a watch system based on the model of 'Reporters sans frontières' for the protection and defence of translators who are abused, oppressed or in danger. However, such an organisation requires funding and unfortunately, as an international organisation, FIT does not satisfy the criteria for national funding programs. Therefore, the project cannot be implemented. However, Michael Friel, Chair of the FIT Committee on Human rights, is studying possible cooperation with 'Reporters sans frontières'.

Proficiency Standards – A small team has been formed to gather information on existing standards. This information will provide a base on which FIT will set its own standards. A project will be presented and discussed during a workshop at the FIT World Congress in August.

History of FIT
Marion Boers, from South Africa, kindly volunteered to translate René Haeseryn's book on the history of FIT—*1943-2003 Cinquante ans de la FIT*— into English. The official launch of the English version will take place in Tampere in August.

CEN draft standard
The Conseil Européen de Normalisation has issued a draft project on standards for providers of translation services and asked for comments by February 2005. The document was sent to FIT Council members for comments. The results of the consultation were summarised and sent to CEN by the set date.

XVII World Congress of the International Federation of Translators Tampere, Finland, 2-7 August 2005

Welcome to the XVII FIT World Congress!

The International Federation of Translators holds its World Congress every three years, when about 500 translators, interpreters and terminologists from all over the globe and from all walks of life meet to discuss the latest issues. Divided into a series of sessions according to the various interests and disciplines, these Congresses cover all the activities and concerns of the profession, from scientific and technical translation to literary translation, via copyright, new technologies and training, to the status of the translator and even more. They are an overview of the situation of the profession worldwide.

In response to input from participants at the previous Congress, sessions at the 2005 Congress will go beyond simple presentations and will allow more in-depth exchanges about issues affecting translators, terminologists and interpreters in their daily lives. We hope this will enable participants to adopt a stance on matters concerning them, and will enable FIT to pursue its activities constructively.

The 2005 Congress, with the theme of translators' rights, is hosted this year by the Finnish association in a university town conducive to acquiring knowledge. We hope to see you there in force and hope that once more, the FIT World Congress will be a chance to chat, to meet up again, to meet new people, and above all, to develop solidarity among translators.

See you soon!

*Betty Cohen, c.tr.
President, FIT*

Recognising literary translators

In this article **Ros Schwartz**, Chair of CEATL, describes some of the challenges facing literary translators can face offers a few excellent tips on getting your work to print

The following thought-provoking piece on literary translation will interest many of our members, especially those wishing to venture into literary translation.

We have some good literary translators in Australia (including the three interviewed for the recent feature in *The Age*, also posted on the AUSIT e-Bulletin on 24 February), but since the Australia Council suspended its literary translation grants program and ALiTrA went into hibernation a few years ago we hear very little about or from them.

Some authors prefer not to have anything to do with their translators, regarding the translated version of their work as a separate creation entirely. Others take the view that the translator is making their

writing accessible to a whole new readership, so they are happy to address the queries that arise in the process of transferring the work into another language and for another culture.

In this article Ros Schwartz illustrates a few of the central ideas peculiar to literary translation, and in the second part provides some valuable suggestions for approaching publishers. The article originally addressed a UK audience, but it is equally valid in the Australian context. (Local directories of the kind mentioned in point two can be obtained from state writers centres.)

Ros makes the point that reviews of translated books rarely mention the translator. The Italian literary translators' group, *Bibliit*, began a

campaign against this a couple of years ago and now has volunteers on permanent media watch, with an annual award for the publication or program that most consistently names the translator and one for the worst offender. One thing we can do in Australia is write to the editor whenever we see a translated book reviewed in the newspaper with no mention of the translator or the quality of the translation. It's a small step towards achieving proper recognition of the work we do.

Ros Schwartz is Chair of the European Council of Literary Translators Associations, CEATL <www.ceatl.org>, and has kindly given us permission to publish the piece.

Barbara McGilvray

Between the covers

Czech novelist Milan Kundera was being interviewed on the publication of his latest work to appear in translation. The journalist remarked, 'I see you've completely changed your style in this latest novel.' Kundera replied, 'No, I changed translator.'

This highlights the extent to which a translation is very much one person's reading of the work. No two translators, like no two readers, are alike. A translation is refracted through the prism of the translator's subjectivity. Even when the translator thinks s/he is acting as a transparent pane of glass and providing a mere conduit for the author's voice, they are filtering the text through their own particular linguistic and cultural preferences and associations, whether they acknowledge it or not. Words have different resonances and connotations for each of us, and when we translate we dredge

up expressions from subconscious pools of language and experience.

Literary translation is about endless choices, weighing up whether to privilege meaning over music, rhythm over rules of grammar, the spirit rather than the letter of the text. The translator is simultaneously both reader and writer.

It is important to recognise that a translated work is a separate creation, and that to serve our authors well we must produce a translation that reflects the spirit and intentions of the original while having its own distinctive and coherent 'voice'. It should evoke a similar response in the reader to that of the reader of the original work, although the means of achieving this may be different, especially when it comes to poetry.

There's an incident that has stayed in my mind for twenty-five years and which I feel is deeply

connected with what I do as a translator. While living in France I had an argument with an Italian friend. We were both speaking French. He talked about *le rouge de l'œuf* – literally 'the red of the egg', a direct translation of the colloquial Italian, *il rosso dell'uovo*. I leaped in saying: No, it's *le jaune*. He would not believe me when I said that the French word for egg yolk is literally 'the yellow', for he claimed that it was actually red. We broke open an egg, which had an orangey-coloured yolk, and then spent hours placing pillar-box red and canary yellow objects next to this yolk. But Piero could no more see the yolk as being akin to the yellow than I could see it as being closer to the red. This exchange reveals a lot about how perception is conditioned by language, and this is something that we as translators need to know and convey.

I'd like to give an example of cultural adaptation from a novel I translated.

In *Orlanda*, by Belgian author Jacqueline Harpman, one of the characters suddenly switches from the formal *vous* to the informal *tu*. This is a crucial moment in the narrative. The speaker is a prissy, bourgeois woman of thirty-five. She is addressing a young man with whom she entertains a somewhat ambiguous relationship. For the Francophone reader, this unwitting switch from *vous* to *tu* signals an important shift in the woman's feelings. The problem for the translator is how to convey this to the English-speaking reader with equal subtlety, when we only have the word *you* for both *tu* and *vous*. The characters are already on first-name terms, so that is not an option. I decided to have the woman put her hand on the man's arm.

'As-tu remarqué que depuis tout à l'heure tu me tutoies?

Elle ne s'était pas rendu compte et rougit violemment.

Haven't you noticed how you've suddenly become quite familiar with me?

She had put her hand on his arm without realising and blushed deep red.'

I think this works in terms of cultural equivalence. And that is what translators need to do — find cultural as well as linguistic parallels. We make choices; some people may agree with those choices, others may disagree, but we need to have a coherent approach and be prepared to defend it.

What do reviewers mean when they talk about a 'good' or 'bad' translation?

Reviews of translated books rarely mention the translator. There is no discussion of the criteria for evaluating a translation. Few critics are able to read the book in the source language so how can they judge the translation?

Often, what is termed a 'good' translation is one that reads like a piece of seamless English. A 'bad' translation is somehow bumpy, or difficult. There's a fine line between making foreign authors accessible to English-speaking readers and making them sound like English writers. Their rhythms and patterns, their 'foreignness' is what makes them interesting. Salman Rushdie wrote, 'to unlock a culture you need to understand its untranslatable words', and that is why he uses a lot of Urdu words in his novels. Publishers and copy-editors do not always agree, and sometimes try to pressure the translator into bowing to what they think readers can cope with by ironing out all the 'foreignness'. But if we flatten the text to keep the copy-editor happy, we are in a way 'colonising' the writer. This is an ethical problem for translators which calls for vigilance.

Interestingly, writers in English sometimes sound more 'foreign' than translations. Joyce, for example. Author and translator Tim Parks, who teaches translation in Italy, does the following exercise with his students: he takes a passage in English and the same passage in Italian without telling the students which is the source text and which is the translation. One is a seamless piece of flowing Italian prose, the other a quirky, stilted piece of English. The students are asked to identify which is which. They always assume the Italian is the original and the English a poor translation. In fact, the English source text is a passage from a novel by DH Lawrence, and the Italian is the translation.

I believe translators need to be more explicit about what they do, even to the extent of writing a foreword or an afterword to let the reader know how their intervention influences the text. This goes against the grain here in the UK, where one of the great publishing myths says that since the public is reluctant to buy foreign authors it is better not to draw their attention to the fact that a work is a translation.

Nicholas de Lange, the translator of Israeli novelist Amos Oz, compares the translator's role to that of the performing musician. 'People don't say that there's a right way or a wrong way to perform a Tchaikovsky symphony. There may be unsuccessful versions of it, but on the whole the good orchestras produce good but totally distinctive renderings. Every soloist performs in a particular, personal way, and that performance is signed by the performer. People will go to a record shop and ask for a recording by a specific artist ... I wonder if there'll ever be a day when customers go into a bookshop and say they'd like something translated by a particular translator. That responsibility of the performing musician is analogous to the way I see the responsibility of the translator. The translator is giving a personal interpretation, a personal rendition. The text as it exists on the page in the original language is like a musical score, and it's like the musical score also because it's locked up, because the English readers don't have access to it, just as only the few people that can actually read music and hear it in their heads can read the score. It needs to be performed. So it's there in a potential, and the performance is going to be totally unique and distinctive.'

Getting into print

Publishers are always on the lookout for new writers, and approaching them proactively is a good way to build contacts. It isn't easy: only 3% of published works in the UK are translations, as compared with 40-50% in other European countries. But a number of literary translators have launched their careers by taking suggestions to publishers (myself included), so it is not impossible. The main thing to bear in mind is that publishers are deluged by books already in English, so a foreign book needs to be really special for them to consider it.

Below are some guidelines:

1. First check that the English language rights for the book are available. Contact the foreign rights manager of the publishing house and if the rights are free, ask for permission to seek a publisher for your proposed translation. Some countries work through agents, but most foreign publishers are delighted that a translator wants to do their job for them!

2. Identify potential publishers. Publishing directories such as *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook* or *The Writer's Handbook* [In Australia try *The Australian Writer's Marketplace*—Ed.] list all publishers with descriptions of their spheres of interest and the names of the editors. It is important to write to a named person.

3. Professional presentation is very important. Put together a 'pack' which should include:

- a letter describing the book, explaining why you are so enthusiastic about it and why you think it is appropriate for that particular publisher (reference other titles in their list);
- a synopsis and sample translation (a chapter, or around 2-3,000 words—enough to give a flavour of the book);

- facts and figures: length, number of words or pages, sales figures, bestseller placings in the country of publication and in translation in other countries (which can be obtained from the original publisher);
- translated excerpts from press cuttings;
- information about the author (previous books, sales history, prizes, films based on their novels etc.);
- your own résumé.

4 Factors affecting the publisher's decision:

- Length
- Cost of translation
- Skill of translator
- Is the author alive, 'promotable', available for launch?
- Is the book part of a series?
- Is the country of origin fashionable?
- Can the editor read the language or will s/he need to rely on an outside reader?
- Can the editor fight for and win this book in an editorial meeting?

It is advisable to approach several publishers at once. If you don't

receive a response within a month, follow up with a telephone call. The publisher may not be interested in the book you are proposing, but might ask you what else you've been reading in that language, so have another couple of titles up your sleeve! There are numerous grants for translations, which most publishers seem unaware of. Contact The Arts Council of England [see the Australia Council—Ed.] or the Cultural Attaché of the embassy concerned for details of subsidies and remind the publisher that funding is available.

I believe translators have an important role to play in bringing foreign works of literature to the attention of publishers. Not only does this create individual opportunities, but it raises the profile of our profession as a whole, showing that translators can be instigators and active partners rather than humble slaves grateful for any crumbs publishers deign to throw our way. And hopefully it will help remedy the woeful lack of literature available in English translation.

Article © Ros Schwartz (first published in *The Linguist* no.42, Feb/March 2003)

Stories from AUSIT members

Rolf Bueskens has found the opportunity of his translating lifetime

After doing translation work for many years as a sideline, I took it up full time during the mid-1990s as a result of a decline in opportunities in the engineering field, which had to that time been the main source of my income.

Returning from a family holiday in Europe in early 2001, I checked the usual websites for translation assignments; one stood out clearly from the rest. This was a long-term project translating a German encyclopaedia on classical antiquity, stretching over eight years. Coincidentally, the publisher was located in Leyden, Holland, a place we had just visited during our

trip.

The encyclopaedia is called *Der Neue Pauly*, which I knew from my student days in Germany; it has become *The New Pauly* in English, with several volumes having been published already.

When I saw the advertisement I became very interested in applying for a position on the team of translators, even though I did not meet all of their requirements. I felt my background was such that I could contribute to the project. So I applied and, after a selection process of several months involving a daunting test translation, I became part of a worldwide

team of ten translators and five 'understudies' chosen to work on the project.

The quality and diversity of the work, as well as the interesting subject matter, has made this project a most rewarding part of my work as a translator. Entries I have translated include Amphitheatres, Aegean Culture, Ancient Canal Systems, Eroticism, and the Byzantium and Dark Ages. As I near the end of my career and look forward to semi-retirement, this project has provided the opportunity of a lifetime; I hope to participate in and enjoy the work until its completion.

Justify every word

Part of a series of articles on editing and writing style by **Bradley Dawson**

Who worries over whether to use *that* or *which*, italics or quotation marks, numerals or written figures? I do. Like any good translator or interpreter, an editor has to be pedantic (I prefer the word *aware* myself). I consider every single word important and want to justify the usage of them all.

The use of the relative pronouns *which* and *that* is gradually becoming less frequent; but there is a rule governing their usage. Consider the following sentences:

The statements that were controversial were never read out by the solicitor.

The statements which were controversial were never read out by the solicitor.

The statements, which were controversial, were never read out by the solicitor.

The first example makes it clear the controversial statements were the only ones not read out. The third example makes it clear no statements at all were read out. The second example is ambiguous: were no statements uttered, or just the controversial ones?

This usage is phasing out, however, and most grammarians or editors will now leave *which* in where *that* would be the proper word.

Personally, I hate the word *that*. I avoid it when translating or writing, and try to remove it wherever possible when editing. Sure, you can use it when pointing to something a distance away or comparing things:

What is that over there?

This translation flows, but that one is a bit stilted.

But in most sentences, if you can cut *that* out, do it. Sentences such as:

I heard that you were busy.

A dictionary that/which contains verb declensions is preferable

to one that/which lists verbs and their meanings only.

can always be recast thus:

I heard you were busy.

A dictionary containing verb declensions is preferable to one listing verbs and their meanings only.

Quotation marks should be used for the following purposes:

- To set off quoted material;
- To set off dialogue;
- To set off titles of songs, articles, poems, essays, short stories and TV shows;
- To indicate irony or sarcasm; (His 'dream home' was little more than four walls and a roof.)
- To set off the first use of a nickname. (The irony of referring to our Prime Minister as 'Honest John' is lost on many.) Use quotation marks also for slang, colloquial or humorous words.

Italics should be used for the following:

- Titles of books, plays, periodicals, ships and works of art;
- For word emphasis;
- For foreign words and phrases that are unlikely to be familiar to readers;
- To coin or define a term or phrase (first use only);
- For words referred to as words, with no other function within the sentence.

Writers, publishers and editors all differ when deciding whether to represent numbers in with words or numerals. Many use ten as a general cut-off point for words, after which numerals should be used. But this will vary: an article on statistics may contain only numerals, especially where the authors are trying to conserve space; a descriptive or narrative

text may use words for up to one hundred.

Here are some other rules for number usage:

- Never, never begin a sentence with a numeral; write the number out in words or recast the sentence; (Six hundred members were present. There were 600 members present.)
- Always use numerals for numbers accompanied by a symbol; (10 km, 45 kg.)
- Use a combination of words and numbers for larger numbers; (3.8 million, not 3 800 000.)
- Percentages can be written in various ways, but use the symbol % only for numerals; the words per cent can be used with words or numerals; (35%, 35 per cent, thirty-five per cent.)
- When two sets of numbers appear together in a text, insert a comma between them to prevent confusion or rearrange the sentence; (By 2005, 90 more members will be on the books.)
- Use hyphens to connect numbers up to ninety-nine comprising two words;
- Use words to express times of day and in adjectival phrases, except where exact times are important; (The AGM starts at eleven o'clock. Our train leaves at 9.55 am and arrives at 3.24 pm.)
- Express dates using numerals for the day and year and words for the month. No commas are needed, even when including the name of the day; (The branch meets on Thursday 24 February 2006.)
- Words are preferable for ordinal numbers up to one hundred. (The fourth edition of the book.)

Next issue I will discuss hyphens, brackets, noun/verb agreement and methods of citation.

T&I glossary of terminology

Chris Poole's new online reference aims for consistency and clarity of meaning

It has often frustrated me that our industry, supposedly so sensitive and skilled in relating words to meaning, is chronically unable to discuss matters of relevance to translation and interpreting with anything like a uniformly understood and rational set of terms. Doctors know the difference between 'occipital' and 'sagittal', lawyers know the difference between 'negligence' and 'malice'; these words are strictly defined and misapplication would be the mark of an ignoramus. Yet in our industry the adjective 'community' (for example) is applied will-nilly to a shifting list of nouns such as 'interpreter', 'language' etc.

I know from experience that when pressed, the users of such terms have no clear definition in mind, and what explanation they are able to make differs from person to person.

Building on work done originally while representing the AUSIT VicTas Branch on the Victorian Language Services Project Group (a part of DIMIA), and with considerable more impetus from the current National Competency Standards Project, I have developed a draft glossary of terms that have (or ought to have) strict meanings in relation to our profession.

As far as possible the definitions reflect current usage within the industry, but only where it is consistent throughout the industry, or within sets of terms that seek to describe the whole of a particular thing or concept, comprehensively and without overlap. There are many colloquial usages amongst T&I practitioners that fail this test and so this glossary attempts to tidy up these areas of overlap or contradiction and propose stricter conventions of usage. I have also

consulted a number of references to ensure that wheels are not being reinvented, have found many terminological issues still open, and have taken the liberty of attempting closure.

The established reference works still seem to be oriented more towards those teaching or theorising about T&I than those purely concerned with making a living from it. It is hoped this terminology will also help give the profession the greater prominence it warrants.

The glossary is on the AUSIT website <www.ausit.org>. Click on the word *Glossary* on the Home page, or view it through the 'Consumer Guide' page.

If I've missed something, or if you think the definitions of some words are incorrect or not useful, please contact me and we will update regularly.



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Rod Fletcher

The death of an AUSIT member brings tributes from Australia and Finland

Colleagues and friends of Rod Fletcher will be sad to hear of his death on 14 November 2004 in Helsinki, where he had been living for some years with his wife, Finnish translator Leena Vallisaari. Rod was originally from Melbourne, and was an accredited translator from German to English. His areas of specialisation were history, biography and linguistics, and after moving to Finland he also worked in television and opera subtitling. He was a founding member of the Australian Literary Translators' Association (ALiTrA)—Barbara remembers him telling her the original ALiTrA logo was designed by his aunt—and of AUSIT, of which he remained a member after moving to Finland.

One day back in the early 1990s Rod rang Terry and Barbara in Sydney to ask us to look after a Finnish translator he'd met, who was completing her Australian trip with a visit to Sydney—he assured us we would like her. We did, and in the course of our sightseeing we also noticed that she spent a fair amount of time telling us what a nice person Rod was. A few months later, at an AUSIT NAGM in Melbourne, he told us they were getting married and would be living in Finland.

David Connor recalls that until Rod left Australia in the early 1990s he was very active on the Victorian Branch Committee of AUSIT. After the move to Finland he mastered the language there and worked from Finnish, as well as from German to English.

Adolfo Gentile remembers Rod as one of the key instigators of AUSIT's successful bid to host the 14th FIT Triennial World Congress in Melbourne in 1996. He was involved in the initial planning for the FIT Congress, but soon after moved to Finland. Adolfo, as the chair of the organising committee and later as President of FIT,

received great encouragement and valuable hints from Rod and Leena. He met them at various FIT events and visited them at home in Helsinki; they visited him when back in Melbourne. You could rely on Rod for insightful and deadpan comments—he was a master at understatement—and if you didn't know him, you might have thought he was an irredeemable cynic. Rod and Leena also attended the 15th Congress in Mons in 1999, and Leena continues her involvement in supporting the forthcoming FIT Congress in Tampere, Finland, in 2005.

*Barbara McGilvray, Terry Chesher,
David Connor and Adolfo Gentile*

In homage to Roderick Fletcher

The news of Rod Fletcher's serious illness in early autumn, and of his untimely death hardly more than six weeks later, took us all by surprise. How could such a lethal enemy have been hiding so long in the vivacious character we knew?

It seems to me that Rod had always been around—I can't recall where and when we first met: Was it at some social function, through his wife Leena Vallisaari? Or was it in some professional capacity, under the auspices of the SKTL, the Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters? I suppose I was one of several factors steering him towards the professional path he followed for the last decade of his life: I helped him become established here as a freelance professional translator, editor and language reviser. I also gained a good friend whose unfailing sense of humour and whose boundless compassion and patience with others were heartening.

During the latter half of the 1990s, Rod and I worked closely together on several large projects. If I was unable to meet a client's needs,

I would refer the client to Rod whenever his skills matched the client's requirements—Rod did the same. As time passed, Rod acquired a broader client base of his own and did increasingly more work outside my sphere of expertise; most notably in translation of Finnish literature as well as translation of librettos and surtitling for the Finnish National Opera and the Savonlinna Opera Festival.

Rod became an active member of the SKTL. For several years he headed the English Group, an informal monthly gathering where Finnish translators working with English had the opportunity to discuss various aspects of English vocabulary and usage with native English speakers. These meetings were always sprinkled with witty comments and a somewhat sarcastic yet humorous and deep insight.

I learned to know and appreciate Rod as a meticulous and unusually widely read professional of high integrity who had a scrupulous ear for, and a deep love of, good English. His familiarity with classical languages and his broad knowledge base made him a valuable source of advice, as well as a formidable 'adversary' to tenacious clients who assumed they always knew more than the translator. For myself, I shall long miss Rod's helpful comments and useful sounding board about translation issues and good English usage which were always but a phone call away.

*When you part from your friend,
you grieve not;*

*For that which you love most
in them may be clearer in their
absence, as the mountain to the
climber is clearer from the plain.*

'On Friendship', from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran.

*Sheryl Hinkkanen
SKTL Finland*

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