

IN TOUCH

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS

Special features

Literary translation, part 2:

English, with Māori, translated into a Spanish dialect

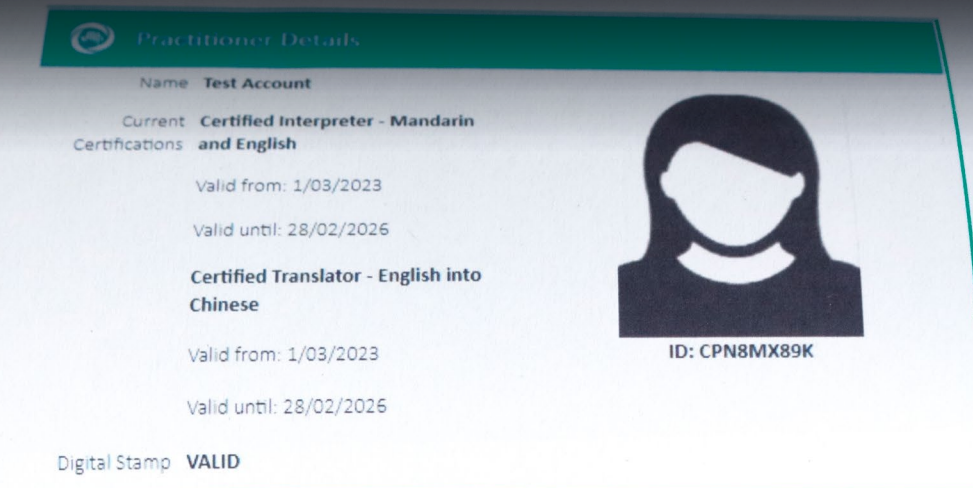
< pages 14–15

Translating the 'untranslatable'

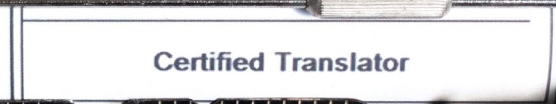
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One translator's visibility

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Scan QR code to verify credentials & stamp
<https://my.naati.com.au/verify-credentials>



NAATI's new digital ID and stamp

A secure and simple way to validate your documents, and more

< pages 8–9 & 24

Our international voice

An interview with FIT's Australia-based President Alison Rodriguez

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A new series: AUSIT stalwarts

Longstanding contributors to AUSIT and/or the T&I profession

< pages 12–13 & 19

Ozterps

A new PD option for Australia-based conference interpreters

< page 4

Plus more ...

... including two members whose research projects have won them international academic recognition through CIUTI; a troubling mistranslation that sparked debate over quality assurance; and how a passion to truly understand another culture has led to a career in T&I

< In Touch

Autumn 2023

Volume 31 number 1

The submission deadline for the Winter 2023 issue is 1 June
Read our Submission Guidelines [here](#)

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NAATI's new digital ID and stamp (see pages 6–7)

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www.ausit.org/in-touch-magazine/

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past and present.

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Letter from the editors

In our first issue of 2023 we bring you the first in what promises to be an extensive and compelling series of interviews with AUSIT members who have served the organisation and/or the T&I industry in Australia over many decades (see pages 12–13) ... and also a reflection by a member who's just starting out. We also have the second in a two-part special

on literary translation (see pages 14–19 ... and wait, make that a three-part series, there's more interesting material coming in!) with an article on the challenges inherent in translating ideophones, another on the translation of girls' fiction in Japan, and a third on the subtleties of translating a novel written in English that is interspersed with *te reo* Māori ... and, as always, plenty more.

Happy reading!

Hayley and Helen



ONLINE FEEDBACK FORM FOR COURT / TRIBUNAL INTERPRETING ASSIGNMENTS

THE RECOMMENDED NATIONAL STANDARDS PROVIDE FOR A FEEDBACK MECHANISM

If you are an interpreter (regardless of whether or not you are an AUSIT member) and you have completed an assignment in a court/tribunal anywhere in Australia, please scan this QR code and fill out the form to report about your experience.



* Your information is anonymous and will be kept confidential. The data collected will provide evidence to support further training and hopefully help the faster implementation of the Recommended National Standards and improving interpreters' working conditions in courts and tribunals.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

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News in brief

(a review of T&I-related items that have appeared in the media since the last issue of *In Touch* went to press):

23 Nov: Six 'phenomenal' translators win inaugural PEN Presents awards for sample translations [thebookseller.com](#)

24 Nov: Making sure storm, flood and cyclone preparation message isn't lost in translation [ABC News](#)

15 Dec: George Orwell's 1984 a best seller in Russia [The Australian](#)

22 Dec: Book translation important in Iran-Venezuela cultural interactions [Iran's Book News Agency](#)

26 Dec: Gains in translation for fiction readers and publishers [The Irish Times](#)

27 Dec: Deaf dad can sue hospital over lack of ASL interpreter for child's birth [Reuters](#)

10 Jan: An early fan of East German feminist writing [The Guardian](#)

11 Jan: Prince Harry's 'Spare' Has Been Brutally Retitled in Some Countries [yahoo.com/entertainment](#)

11 Jan: DeepL, the AI-based language translator, raises over \$100M at a \$1B+ valuation [au.news.yahoo.com](#)

13 Jan: 'Fraud' pretends to be sign language interpreter and starts doing random things on camera [unilad.com/news](#)

19 Jan: Lost in Translation [lsj.com.au](#)
[Access to justice for CALD and Deaf communities, and the Recommended National Standards]

26 Jan: Language project for migrants stops health information getting lost in translation [ABC News](#)

27 Jan: Interpreter charged in connection with fraud investigation: Toronto police [globalnews.ca/news](#)

30 Jan: Upcoming literary events include the Translations and Ozlit book clubs [The Canberra Times](#)

2 Feb: A Translator in Tokyo, or: A Language Love Story [the nation.com](#)

2 Feb: 'Forbidden Notebook' is a slyly subversive novel by a writer once banned [The Washington Post](#)

3 Feb: New careers adviser to link language students in NSW with employment opportunities [greekherald.com.au](#)

4 Feb: Charco Press: The boutique publishing house bringing Latin America's best literature to English-speaking audiences [Buenos Aires Times](#)

7 Feb: Organ harvesting plot: Interpreter tried to help transplant bid - court [bbc.com/news](#)

13 Feb: Over 400 scholarships awarded to state's budding interpreters [nswliberal.org.au](#)

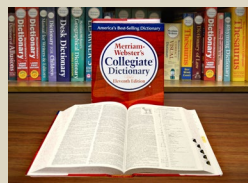
17 Feb: Concert sign language interpreters are going viral, so why don't we do it more in NZ? [stuff.co.nz](#)

20 Feb: Interpreter program first step to helping migrants settle [sbs.com.au](#)

22 Feb: 911 interpreter violated protocols when Hispanic man called after he was shot, paralyzed in New Orleans [fox8live.com](#)

23 Feb: How segregated schools led Black Deaf students to develop their own form of American Sign Language [insider.com](#)

2 Mar: NSW Premier's Literary Awards 2023 shortlists announced [insider.com](#)
[... including the \$30,000 biennial NSW Premier's Translation Prize]



8 Mar: Merriam-Webster asked for words that don't have translation to English. Here are some [npr.org](#)

image: Noah1806, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

11 Mar: Journalists furiously translating Harry's book after it was released early in Spain [7news.com.au](#)

13 Mar: Fornication translation sees charge dropped against anti-China protester [The Sydney Morning Herald](#)

22 Mar: Celebrated LGBTQ+ graphic novel Parallel gets first English translation [yahoo.com](#)

22 Mar: I did everything I could to perfect my English skills, but it came at a heavy cost [ABC News](#)

24 Mar: John Woods, Masterly Translator of Thomas Mann, Dies at 80 [nytimes.com](#)

30 Mar: Notre-Dame sued for English-only translations [news.com.au](#)



Member organisation Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs International Federation of Translators



Ozterps: an exciting new PD option for conference interpreters



The Queensland Branch’s Chair, **Carina Mackenzie**, had often heard of ‘in-person practice groups’ for conference interpreters taking place in Europe – so she was very excited when she discovered one was being organised closer to home, in the state-of-the-art facilities at RMIT. She reports here.

Carina interpreting in one of the sessions

It was so wonderful to get tips and feedback in this safe space ...

In February this year I had the pleasure of travelling to Melbourne to participate in the OzTerps conference interpreting workshop at RMIT University, the first of its kind in Australia.

It was an excellent three-day program put together by two experienced practitioners, Jemma Ives and Rebeca Paredes Nieto. Eleven of us – from five different language groups: Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin and Japanese – turned up for the workshop eagerly on a Thursday morning in early February. We’d been instructed to prepare four speeches each before the event, on any topics of interest to us. These would become the raw material for the workshops.

Each day was divided into four sessions, and in each session we either delivered a speech, or practised simultaneous interpreting, simultaneous with text, long consecutive or relay. If we weren’t interpreting, we were

tasked with listening to colleagues so we could provide constructive feedback.

The time allocated to provide feedback after each speech was just long enough to discuss the use of terms and expressions, voice modulation, techniques for fast, slow and complex or dense speeches, the particular difficulties of a specific text, chunking, making simple ideas out of complex information, decalage, keeping listeners engaged and much more.

It was wonderful to get tips and feedback in this safe space where there was no judgement. We were all working on different areas of our interpreting skills, so it didn’t matter that we were all at different levels, and we had a wide range of interesting topics to interpret, covering the interests of each group member.

In addition to the three jam-packed days of interpreting, we squeezed a good deal of chatting into teabreaks and lunch. Jemma and Rebeca also organised welcome drinks and dinner at fabulous venues for two of the evenings.

These more relaxed social moments gave us time to get to know each other and have lively discussions about our industry from various

points of view, from newcomers to those who have been in the industry for umpteen years.

I felt very inspired and invigorated after the three days, and will definitely be attending similar workshops in the future. It really motivated me to get back into practice, so I can return to the booth with confidence now that in-person conferences are back on the table.

Carina Mackenzie is a Spanish interpreter and translator certified by both NAATI and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She studied conference interpreting in her fourth year in the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, Spain, and completed a postgraduate certificate in interlingual repackaging with the University of Vigo, Spain in 2021. Also certified as a CIOL public service interpreter in English law, Carina currently chairs AUSIT’s QLD Branch and works as a community interpreter and translator.

If you’d like to hear about the next Ozterps workshop (dates TBC), you can express your interest [here](#).



Community Translation: Research and Practice

edited by **Erika Gonzalez, Katarzyna Stachowiak-Szymczak and Despina Amanatidou (2023)**
reviewed by **Ron Witton**

The 10 chapters in this very useful volume report on contemporary research in the context of community translation (CT) theory.

They examine CT practice in such diverse settings as health care, criminal investigations and the documentation of life stories, and also provide valuable guidance as to how the skills necessary for effective CT can be taught. There is much to be learnt from the diverse national settings of the research reported, ranging from Australia to Japan, New Zealand and Spain.

NAATI stresses the difference between interpreting and translating, and many of us are annoyed when Australian media sources confuse the two. However, some languages use the same word for both, and this is reflected in some paragraphs of the volume under review. Nevertheless, the points being made by the contributors are usually clearly made and useful to practitioners.

Of particular interest is the book’s treatment of our daily dilemma: achieving effective T&I when faced with some situations where one’s cultural knowledge and expertise is needed, and others where it is inappropriate to draw on such cultural knowledge and expertise.

One such example appears early in the chapter by Italian academics David Katan and Cinzia Spinzi, fittingly titled ‘The Battle to Intervene: Constrained Advocacy for Community Translators’. They refer to a situation that many of us have experienced: a police officer reading a person their rights (p. 29). The language is phrased in such legalese that many a native speaker would be unlikely to comprehend its meaning – yet it is, of course, quite inappropriate for an interpreter to

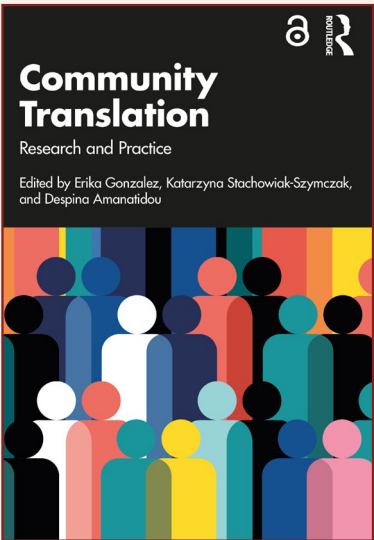
intervene in order to ensure that the non-English speaker understands what is being said. One can only hope that they say: ‘I don’t understand’, and that the police officer is then brave enough to explain in simpler terms.

This contrasts with – for example – a translator being called upon to ensure that a pamphlet setting out a person’s legal rights is written in a culturally and linguistically appropriate fashion.

The authors of this chapter quite perspicaciously identify the dilemma of balancing ‘silent subservience’ with ‘collaborative status’ – in the latter, one is ‘able to mediate between the institution and the more vulnerable client’ (p. 37). This ethical dilemma is further explored by Maho Fukuno in her chapter ‘Translators’ Ethics in Community Translation’, which focuses on ‘the pursuit of social justice in multicultural communities’ (p. 59).

The now commonly used term ‘health literacy’ helps us to understand the central role language plays in understanding fields of knowledge in multicultural and multilingual societies. A good overview of developments in this field in New Zealand is given by Ineke Crezee and Hoy Neng Wong Soon in their chapter ‘Speak My Language! The Important Role of Community Translation in the Promotion of Health Literacy’. It occurs to me that a variety of other ‘literacies’ could be similarly promoted.

The chapters I found the most interesting and useful were those on legal dilemmas and challenges. For example, Mohamed El-Madkouri Maataoui and Beatriz Soto Aranda’s ‘Challenges and Constraints in the Translation of Wiretapping in Spain’ will probably resonate with any T/I who has been called in to assist law enforcement authorities. How many of us are confident in the patois of any particular criminal underground group, or



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feel confident trying to interpret/translate/decipher the text messages of criminal gangs, let alone teenagers – peppered as they typically are with slang, abbreviations and neologisms.

I’ll conclude with another dilemma identified by El-Madkouri Maataoui and Soto Aranda. In a trial relating to an al-Qaeda-inspired attack on European soil, the accused was released because of ‘errors [having] occurred due to the Italian translators’ lack of knowledge of the *Qu’ran* and of classical Arabic and its cultural references’ (p. 173). This included not only such esoteric references as the *Califa al-Mu’asim* (10th century), but also how *jihad* should be translated/interpreted: should the T/I use ‘Holy War’ with all its varied connotations, or assume an adequate awareness and understanding of the term by non-Arabic speakers and therefore forgo interpreting/translating it?

Dilemmas indeed!

Dr Ron Witton gained his BA and MA in Indonesian and Malayan studies from the University of Sydney and his PhD from Cornell University. He now practises as an Indonesian/Malay-English translator and interpreter. Ron is a foundation member of AUSIT.

It’s no joke: a mistranslation sparks outrage



English>Arabic translator **Bayane Abou Saada** has a folder of screenshots on her phone dedicated to poorly translated ads, some of them minor ... but when a recent mistranslation posted by the federal Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) on their own website caught her eye, she says it ‘really got on my nerves’ ... and her subsequent post on LinkedIn sparked a debate around the need for quality assurance and accountability in translation. Here are some excerpts from that debate.

Back-translating the FWO’s statement (see screenshot, right), Bayane reads: ‘Paid leave for committing domestic violence.’

Turning to LinkedIn, she posts a screenshot of the statement (see image right), and asks: *Do people who commit domestic violence get paid leave now???*

Pretty shocking, right? Well, I was a bit horrified too when I read the Fair Work Ombudsman ad in Arabic in my Facebook feeds.

One thing is for sure, the Fair Work Ombudsman is definitely NOT rewarding domestic violence acts. In fact, [its] purpose ... ‘is to promote harmonious, productive, cooperative and compliant workplace relations in Australia’. It also supports employees who are victims of family and domestic violence by offering them paid leave.

However, the Arabic translation ... is conveying a totally opposite meaning ...

To avoid such mistakes in projects aiming to communicate important information to CALD communities, Bayane says, we need: ... quality assurance carried out by highly

‘... horrifying to read ...
Unacceptable and borderline harmful.’

qualified and culturally aware translators in addition to educated community members.

She goes on to caution:

The use of Machine Translation can lower the overall costs, but detract from your message and damage your credibility.

Eman Al-Dasuqi, a health promotion officer working with migrant and refugee women, describes the ‘translation’ as:

... horrifying to read ... Unacceptable and borderline harmful.

AUSIT past president Sam Berner comments:

I have seen a few posts on social media making fun of this ad already. Texts along the lines of ‘if you need a holiday, have a fight with your missus’ ...

Of course, Australian Arabs are not the only ones reading this. Good image of Australian values is being hung out for the world to see.

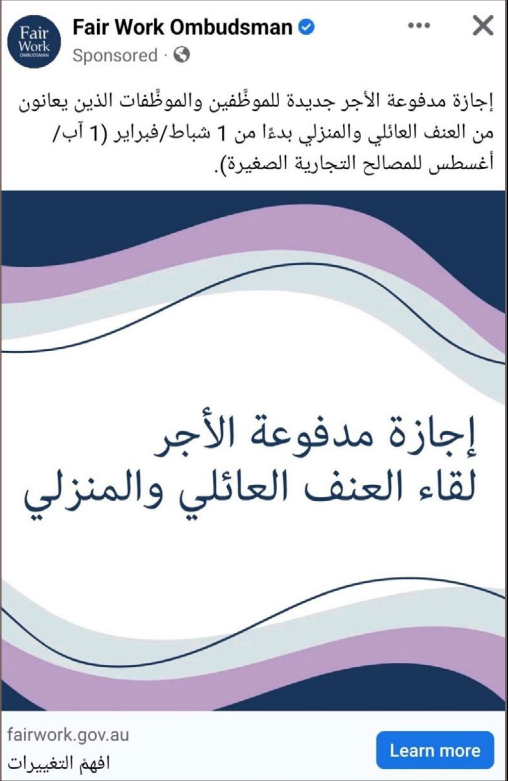


Image: links to ‘automatic translation’ on the Fair Work Ombudsman’s website

Sam goes on to say:

The disregard that organs of the Australian Government show to CALD communities ... [is] borderline racism.

One commentator counters Bayane’s criticism, stating that the word ‘لقاء’ doesn’t mean committed, but Bayane explains:

The word ‘لقاء’ by itself does not mean ‘committed.’ However, when you read the whole sentence, the meaning is distorted.

If you check dictionaries, the word ‘لقاء’ means literally ‘in return for’ ... and ‘in return for’ can be defined as ‘a reward for something’ ... which is why the usage of ‘لقاء’ here can imply that the paid leave is a reward for committing DV.

I am sure you know the importance of paying attention to the meaning of the text as a whole to avoid poor grammatical structures and meaning distortion.

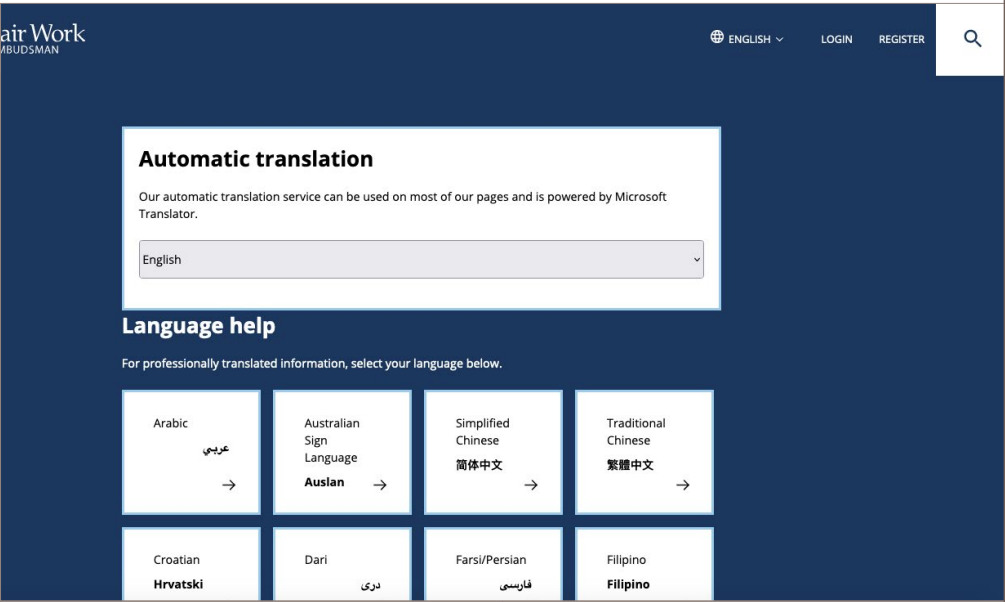
You can practically see Sam Berner throwing up her hands as she resorts to capitals, adding: *Precisely WHY there is a need to teach translation to translators – from how to use a monolingual dictionary for better equivalence, to which translation theory to apply for optimal communication outcomes.*

Precisely why people without ONGOING training AND certification, not just one or the other, should not translate for the public. I could say a few things in Arabic, but I will practise self-restraint.

Along with Bayane, several commentators assume that machine translation is involved in the error, and indeed a drop-down on the FWO’s home page offers what it calls ‘Automatic translation’ in 33 languages other than English (see screenshot above – surely what they are offering is actually links to pre-prepared texts, not on-the-spot translation).

However, the FWO responds to Bayane saying:

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. We can confirm that the text on the post you have referred to was translated using a professional NAATI-accredited translator and checked by a 2nd NAATI-accredited translator. We will continue to assess this issue and will cease promotion of the posts to avoid any confusion for customers while we do so. If you would like to discuss this with us further ...



... and giving her an email address in case she would like to discuss the matter further.

Bayane thanks them, stating:

I have a strong faith in the role "Fair Work Ombudsman" plays in ensuring everyone has access to information and resources no matter where they are from or which language they speak.

It is disappointing to know that this was approved by two NAATI-certified translators.

I will be definitely reaching out to discuss this matter with you in private ...

The fact that two NAATI-certified translators were involved leads commentators to question what else should be done going forward, to prevent mistranslations on serious issues such as this.

Costa Vasili, CEO and Founder of Ethnolink, comments:

I bet that the translation supplier does not hold ISO 17100 certification for Translation Services, and that the supplier was chosen based on having the cheapest price.

... while Ismail Akinci, CEO of All Graduates Interpreting & Translating, says:

I have always advocated that translations produced for public consumption must not be anonymous, i.e. both the translator and LSP should be known. This will mitigate against sloppy work!

... and Sam Berner concurs:

Can we keep saying this LOUDER, Ismail?

Superannuation specialist REN R suggests:

Maybe include a check by a non-NAATI person to determine that the translation meets the message correctly, post translation and before publicly publishing it. Think community leaders.

The various recommendations above, if *all* routinely implemented, would surely go a long way toward preventing such serious mistakes. To summarise:

- adequate certification (NAATI, and possibly also ISO)
- ongoing professional development (ideally including specialist areas)
- post-translation quality checking by a second translator, and possibly also by a suitable non-T/I member of the target community
- accountability of the translator(s) and agency responsible for the translation: no anonymity.

Bayane’s last words on the matter are:

Quality assurance should be a key component of every translation project aiming to communicate important information to CALD communities.

Bayane Abou Saada is an English>Arabic translator and project manager. She is passionate about literature, public health, science and exploring different cultures. In addition to a degree in translation she holds a BSc in biology, and is currently studying for a master’s degree in public health.

Professional ID for T&I: NAATI's new digital ID and stamp



NAATI has developed a new digital ID system for translators and interpreters, including a much requested digital stamp. *In Touch's* T&I editor **Hayley Armstrong** asked NAATI's National Operations Manager **Michael Nemarich** to tell us about the new system and what it means for T&I practitioners.

We're proud to announce NAATI's new digital ID system, which was developed over 18 months with feedback from stakeholders and practitioners.

Although we haven't taken all design ideas on board, we hope we've got the balance right between use and security – for both practitioners and their clients.

Is it easy to use? How will translators now 'stamp' their official translations?

The digital stamp is available if you hold a current translation credential and have multi-factor authentication (MFA) enabled on your myNAATI account. NAATI requires the additional security step of MFA to verify you, in order to digitally authenticate a stamp in lieu of a signature.

You can set up MFA on your account by going to your myNAATI page – My Account section – and selecting Multi Factor Authentication. We recommend choosing Google Authenticator or Microsoft Authenticator as the app for MFA as they are widely used, however you can use others.

To 'stamp' a translation, download a copy of

your digital stamp by going to the My Credentials section of your myNAATI account and clicking on 'DIGITAL STAMP' (see screenshot below).

Once it's inserted, practitioners can resize the image stamp and use the text wrapping function to move it around the page. This function is available by right clicking on the image in

CERTIFIED TRANSLATOR

English into Chinese

ACTIVE

Online Directory

OFF

Start Date

End Date

1/03/2023

28/02/2026

Download icon

DIGITAL STAMP

The download is a .PNG file. This image type was chosen as it allows for graphics that have a transparent background, enabling the downloaded stamp to be overlaid onto document text or graphics. The only part of the file that isn't transparent is the QR code, which requires a white background for scanning purposes.

To insert the stamp into a Word document, go to 'insert' and then 'pictures' and select the stamp location. For Google Docs, go to 'insert' then 'images' and select the stamp location.

Word, selecting 'wrap text' then 'in front of text', or in Google Docs 'image options' then 'text wrapping' then 'in front of text'.

Does the digital stamp show the translator's certification expiry date?

It doesn't, as we know that many practitioners had the issue that clients believed the expiry date on the stamp related to an expiry of the translation rather than the possible expiry of the credential. Stamps can only be generated by currently certified practitioners.

Screenshots of a sample stamp (top) and practitioner details as displayed when the stamp is scanned

Test Account
CPN8MX89K
English > Chinese

Digitally Authenticated by NAATI

Stamp generated on 14/03/2023

Certified Translator

Scan QR code to verify credentials & stamp

<https://my.naati.com.au/759ea0b4-a4c1-4bd8-826b-7d20e04008e>

already translated document, and apply it to a new translation. The advantage of the digital stamp is its ability to be deactivated upon the reporting of misuse or fraud, leaving stamps generated on other days unaffected. It also has the added benefit that once scanned, it will provide your NAATI directory listing, so clients can verify your name and details on the stamp.

Will I be able to download my stamp once and have it preloaded into my translation templates? Or do I have to download it for each document I translate?

When the QR code is scanned, your details and photo are displayed (see screenshot to the right). Your current credential validity dates and the stamp's validity can be checked.

If you haven't recertified and someone scans a document that has your stamp on, the returned information will state that the stamp is valid (see the bottom line, right), but show you as inactive.

What are the benefits over the traditional ink stamp?

It's instantly accessible – you don't have to wait for it to arrive in the mail, it's automatically updated as soon as you have recertified – and you can't lose it.

Will the ink stamp be phased out?

NAATI believes that this will happen over time as acceptance and use of the digital stamps increases, particularly as the vast majority of translation work is done electronically. We haven't committed to a transition date at this stage, with both physical stamps and digital stamps to be offered side by side. With the additional security, quicker access, and significant environmental benefits of not manufacturing and posting stamps around the world, we're hopeful that we can get to a digital-only future in time, but we won't do this without a transition phase and plenty of prior communication.

Practitioner Details

Name

Test Account

Current Certifications

Certified Interpreter - Mandarin and English

Valid from:

1/03/2023

Valid until:

28/02/2026

Certified Translator - English into Chinese

Valid from:

1/03/2023

Valid until:

28/02/2026

Digital Stamp

VALID

ID: CPN8MX89K

What's to stop others from using my digital stamp?

The new digital stamp is more secure than the physical version. Although it's downloadable, this can only be done by a practitioner who has MFA enabled on their account, by entering their password, then the MFA code that will be sent to their chosen device.

With both the physical and digital stamps, it's possible for someone to take a copy from an

You will have to download a new stamp each day. This ensures that if there's ever an issue, that day's stamp can be deactivated by reporting the issue to NAATI. We made the download 'per day' rather than 'per translation' to reduce the number of downloads required. Downloading a stamp each day should still be quicker and more efficient than printing, stamping, signing, and scanning back in of translations as may have been done previously.

continued on page 24, column 3

Small steps lead to a career path: finding passion for interpreting through a desire to understand



When AUSIT’s National President, J Angelo Berbotto, was introduced to Patrick Parsons – a student member volunteering at the organisation’s National Conference 2022 last November, and about to graduate with a master’s degree in T&I – he was struck by Patrick’s passion for his chosen field. We asked Patrick to tell us how this passion developed.

As a native English speaker with no CALD heritage or second language, I found the thought of learning a new language from start to finish daunting. Growing up in a monolingual environment only heightened this feeling.

Starting out, though, my goals weren’t to ‘learn a second language’ or ‘learn Japanese’ – these were natural steps that stemmed from a desire to immerse myself in Japanese culture: watch Japanese music videos and TV programs without subtitles; understand, write, read and think in Japanese; and finally, help Japanese and English speakers to communicate with each other. Like many people first exposing themselves to a new culture, my initial understanding of Japanese came through popular culture: in my case, anime (a style of animation – both hand drawn and computer generated – originating from Japan). Rather than fight the endless battle of ‘subbed versus dubbed’, I thought, ‘Why not

I didn’t want to just wield sounds like blunt objects, I wanted to convey meaning with context.

learn to understand it without either?’ At heart, I wanted to understand the meaning as it was originally conveyed, unfiltered and authentic. Jumping straight into formal study didn’t seem like an effective way to achieve this. I started small, and through doing so began to realise that these small steps would eventually coalesce into a larger understanding. My first step was using the online language-learning tool Rosetta Stone – I failed its voice recognition tests with astounding regularity. Slowly though, through trial and error, I improved my pronunciation and basic phrases ... but I was still unable to fully connect with the culture I enjoyed. Rosetta Stone was also incapable of answering any of the many questions I was starting to ponder. What it *didn’t* teach me was rules.

Every language has them. Again, I came back to my desire for understanding: I wanted to know not just what to say and when, but also *why*. I didn’t want to just wield sounds like blunt objects, I wanted to convey meaning with context and clarity. At this point I decided that formal Japanese study was needed, and I enrolled to study Japanese at the University of Queensland. Though I didn’t know it when I enrolled, adding in linguistics as a second major would prove extremely valuable. Linguistics lays out rules in great detail, and how different languages apply similar rules to different effect: syntax, phonology, morphology, semantics and pragmatics. All of these helped me ‘get to know’ Japanese better.

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There were times when studying was extremely challenging, but at such times I came back to the joy I found in the culture. This increased as I became able to incorporate Japanese more fully into my lifestyle, which I did by:

- putting my video games into Japanese, starting with the audio and progressing to full text localisation – this forced me to practise my reading and listening more regularly than the traditional ‘hour a night’
- switching my phone language to Japanese – this integrated the language into my everyday life and required me to navigate the world through it
- consuming Japanese music, and even trying my hand at singing (when no-one was listening!), which helped me articulate the mouth movements and sounds that Japanese requires at variable speeds and pitches, as being able to understand something said in your second language doesn’t mean that you can replicate it
- reading Japanese books (very slowly at first) – fiction in particular introduced me to concepts outside of what the news covers, and is typically more informal and expressive than non-fiction or news media.

My small steps continued as I completed my bachelor’s degree and stepped straight into the Master of Arts in Japanese Interpreting and Translation program, again at the University of Queensland. Reality set in quickly though – I’d achieved admission with the barest of margins and was on the back foot from the beginning, quickly discovering that I’d need more complementary skills beyond just reading. I learned how to take effective notes, and the importance of vocabulary lists, public speaking and speed reading.

Most importantly, though, I came back to why I was there in the first place: my love of the Japanese culture had evolved into a desire to

share it with others. It was in the latter half of my undergraduate degree that I had an experience I will never forget, one which reinforced why I was working so hard, why I’d put in years of effort: for the first time, I was able to successfully facilitate a dialogue between two people who were unable to communicate with each other. It was at this point that I knew I was on the right path, and this led me on to postgraduate study. Since then, through trials and tribulations, stresses and failures, successes and triumphs, I’ve completed my master’s degree – something I never thought I would do – all in the pursuit of furthering my understanding of Japanese culture. Along the way I’ve learned that small steps, even as small as singing a song I like, can have a large impact over time if I keep taking them. So what small steps can you take? What short-

term goals can you set? Deep down, what really drives you to learn something new? If you know this, it will help you find your path. For me, my next step is to speak like a Japanese native and maybe, just maybe, surprise an unwitting customs agent when I speak to them in their mother tongue.

Patrick Parsons is a ‘skilled techie’ with an enthusiasm for Japanese language and culture. His motivation for interpreting and translation comes from a desire to foster mutual understanding and share knowledge, ‘because after all,’ he says, ‘knowledge is power’. Patrick is also a passionate gamer who is excited by the idea of applying his Japanese skills in localisation of games and other media.

The historic electronics district of Akihabara has evolved into a shopping precinct for video games, anime, manga and computer goods (shutterstock: ESB Professional)



AUSIT stalwarts: Barbara McGilvray

interviewed by Amale Hourani

In Touch is starting a series of interviews with longstanding AUSIT members who have made significant contributions to the organisation and/or the T&I profession over many years. To kick off the series, AUSIT Fellow Amale Hourani interviews a ‘fellow Fellow’ and foundation member of AUSIT, Barbara McGilvray OAM BA MA FAIT.



Barbara (left) and Amale



Amale got to know Barbara at AUSIT social events that were held in Leichhardt, Sydney in the 2000s.

Amale: Could you tell me about your early life, and what set you on a path towards becoming a translator?

Barbara: In my family there is no history of languages other than English: I’m from Scottish, Northern Irish and English stock, and grew up in the (in those days) very white, Anglo-Celtic western suburbs of Melbourne: Ascot Vale, Footscray and Moonee Ponds.

For me the seed was sown in Year 7 (which we called Remove) at Penleigh Girls’ School in Moonee Ponds. We had a lovely French teacher, Mrs Hatton, followed by Madame Ziffer, who I think was Swiss. The two of them inspired a love of languages in me. In my Leaving year (Year 11) I won the Victorian Alliance Française prize for French, and I went on to study French at Melbourne University, which was the only university in Victoria then.

While I was a student the 1956 Olympics were held in Melbourne, and I worked as a waitress for the Olympic Broadcasters’ Club based in Women’s College. That was my initial

... Italy was and remains my spiritual home.

introduction to other languages and cultures. We had only Anglo teachers at university, and French culture remained foreign and exotic for me until I went to Europe by ship at the end of 1960.

After working at MI5 (the UK’s domestic counterintelligence and security service) for a year (in the canteen, but even there we learned a few secrets ...), I hitchhiked around Europe with a couple of friends and ended up getting a job in Rome. I was immediately comfortable with the culture: Italy was and remains my spiritual home.

Amale: I remember fondly those events in Leichhardt, a few people were always at the centre, including Terry Cheshier and – behind the scenes – you. We used to pay \$22 in cash to attend. Life was simple! What can you tell us about this period in AUSIT?

Barbara: AUSIT was simple then too. It was formed in 1987 (under the auspices of NAATI) as an umbrella association incorporating all the individual state associations (except WAITI in WA, which remained independent; AUSIT started life there as a much smaller branch).

The inaugural National AGM was held at the Sydney Opera House (nothing simple about that, admittedly). There was a small national office in Melbourne, but the branches were largely autonomous and initially managed their own funds. The branch committees came together quarterly via teleconference, with documentation exchanged by fax. We met physically once a year at the NAGM, which was held in a different state each year. I still have meeting minutes, agendas and notes from my years as National Secretary recorded on fax paper. Terry Cheshier has some too, but they are all so faded now, they’re well-nigh illegible.

The NAGM weekends were the only national activities we had in those days. That’s apart from the memorable XIVth FIT World Congress we hosted in Melbourne, in 1996 – we spent three years preparing for it under the leadership of Adolfo Gentile,* and a few more years recovering! It was a very exciting time, and ours was judged the best FIT Congress to date. The state branches organised activities for their

AUSIT delegates to the XIVth FIT World Congress (Melbourne, 1996, organised by AUSIT), from left: Bob Filipovich, the late Klaus Hermes, Adolfo Gentile and Barbara

members more or less regularly (SA less so as it was very small, and Tasmania only occasionally in conjunction with Victoria; I don’t remember any activities being put on in the NT). They included lectures or panel sessions on a particular topic, and social networking meetings.

Amale: The main topic being discussed at that time was the emergence of machine translation. AUSIT had adopted Wordfast, and it was offered at a discounted price to members. How do you think technology has changed things for AUSIT, and how did you feel about it? Have you adopted technology in your own translation work?

Barbara: Machine translation passed me by I’m afraid. My work has mostly been in literary translation, apart from the bread-and-butter government-related work. For that I had my own templates, as most of us did. Obviously advances in technology have made communication between branches and individuals much easier, and have substantially broadened the PD offering. My own use of technology has remained pretty basic though: Word documents and the usual search engines. I still have shelves full of dictionaries and other references, because I’d rather work with a book in my hands when I can, rather than reading everything on a screen.

Amale: Speaking about change, can you draw a comparison between AUSIT then and now? Have the changes disappointed you? What aspect(s) do you like or dislike the most?

Barbara: I can’t really compare the new AUSIT and the old because the association has moved on and changed beyond recognition, while I’m now in the ‘retired’ category (although I still occasionally work as a literary translator). My only contribution these days is proofreading for *In Touch*; otherwise I’m just an observer, reading the magazine and the monthly President’s Newsletter with interest. I have no idea about the NSW Branch’s activities, but I hope the Branch committees and the National Council (NC) have the collaborative approach to work and idea-sharing that we had in the old days, and the same camaraderie. I miss those times, but they have given me lots of good memories and enduring friendships.

The 1996 FIT Congress put our association firmly on the international stage (thanks largely to Adolfo – who used his overseas trips as an academic to network on our behalf, and brought results AUSIT could never have afforded or



achieved otherwise – and also to Mary Gurgone’s work here at home as then president). Since then, under most of our successive presidents, the organisation has grown substantially in both size and impact, and AUSIT now has an academic focus and influence we wouldn’t have envisaged in the early days – although it actually began with Sandra Hale, who was one of our very few founding student members and went on to become a professor of T&I and an internationally renowned and respected scholar in the field.

For a few years I thought there was too much NAATI involvement in AUSIT, and in fact we lost some of our members due to that perception. At one stage we had to work to correct an assumption among the public that AUSIT and NAATI were one and the same.

For a while, also, there was a belief that AUSIT was a union, and from time to time there have been proposals to make it one. I’m glad we’ve managed to resist those and remain purely a professional association, although I was also pleased to see the establishment of a union for T&Is, Translators and Interpreters Australia, which I imagine is still flourishing.

Amale: From my days on the NSW Branch Committee, I remember that you would check anything and everything before submission.

[Editors’ note: we still rely on Barbara to do this for *In Touch*!]

You were our safeguard: the silent, fair, genuine person everyone could rely on, consult, and complain to without hesitation. Was this a load on you? How do you describe yourself?

Barbara: And for years you were an amazing, wonderful worker on the NSW Committee Amale. That’s a very nice compliment, thank you, but undoubtedly there were times when I went overboard. I’m still a bit obsessive unfortunately (ask the *In Touch* editors) ... can’t help myself.

[Editors’ note: We’re editors! What’s to dislike about obsessive attention to detail!?!]

Most of the time my AUSIT work didn’t feel like a load because I really enjoyed it, and like most of us I wanted AUSIT to prosper. But the obligations did sometimes eat into my family time, and in retrospect I regret that. Hopefully people are not still making that mistake, and the workload is shared around.

Amale: Are there any other aspects of your life or career in T&I that you think would be interesting to our readers?

Barbara: I think most AUSIT members will have interesting lives – it goes with the territory, doesn’t it? I was particularly lucky to be living in Rome in the first half of the 1960s, when life was pretty simple and before the turmoil that began in 1968 when everything changed. There was even still a degree of post-war euphoria about.

And I was lucky to land a job with a Lebanese-American woman who was opening a glamorous office to provide services for the booming film industry: script translation, secretarial services, telephone answering and so on. I was able to learn the language very quickly on the job and immerse myself in the wonderful Italian culture of that time.

continued on page 19

A novel in English ... with Māori ... translated into Rioplatense Spanish*



Uruguayan-born author, editor and English-to-Spanish translator **Rosario Lázaro Igoa** was intrigued to be asked to translate a novel that has Māori words and phrases scattered throughout the English. She tells us about the experience here.

I welcomed the unexpected opportunity to facilitate the metaphoric journey being taken by *Auē* – a Māori novel – across the southern Pacific Ocean right now, from Australasia to South America.

The first destination of this acclaimed, raw and heart-breaking book by New Zealander Becky Manawatu, written in English with an extensive use of Māori terms? Uruguay, a peripheral Spanish-speaking market of the Hispanic publishing industry.

Even though *Auē* is a text deeply linked to the Māori roots of its author, it is also becoming something else at the moment. Within a few months, when launched by Forastera (a publishing house specialising in translated literature), it will also condense a fresh approach to New Zealand stories that transcend linguistic and national borders.

As translators know, novels do not simply ‘travel’ by themselves. In his 1998 book *Method in Translation History*, Anthony Pym insists on the ‘material body’ of the translator being taken into account. In the journey undertaken by *Auē*, I joined the action as the English-to-Spanish translator – that is, when talking about a work of over 300 pages, an individual who will live

I joined the action as the English-to-Spanish translator ... who will live in the text for several months ...

in the text for several months (a place where the author already spent an even longer period).

Funding from Creative New Zealand’s Translation Grant Scheme, which supports the translation of NZ literary works overseas, allowed me to devote this extensive amount of time to the project. The grant – allocation of which was based on a translation of the first pages of the novel – is certainly playing a part in dynamising an unusual flux of literature, one that is free of interference from the traditional English/UK-centred mechanisms of criticism and consecration.

Every textual mediation has challenges, no matter how intricate or transparent the language might seem at first. Book translation, as a rewriting of every word over a lengthy period of time, seems to enable the closest of readings. From my own experience – as an author, an editor *and* a translator – there are countless traits of an author’s writing that only their translator gets to apprehend, and hence



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disentangle, while rephrasing their words into a new language. I would like to focus here on the inherent and puzzling effect Māori words have in the English original of this novel, and how we dealt with this in the Spanish translation project.

Māori words are to be found throughout *Auē*’s English edition, with no footnotes, italics or further explanations on the pages themselves. There *is*, however, a complete glossary of the Māori words used at the end of the book – an invitation to the curious, but not an imposition (you might not even realise it’s there until you get to the final pages).

From what the translation process enabled me to observe, *te reo* (the Māori language) comes into action whenever the *pākehā* language (English) seems not to be enough for what a character needs to express. There is a certain alienation, combined with a dose of nostalgia for the (in some instances mythical) past, that makes them turn to *te reo*.

As we accompany the character Aunt Kat in a struggle to remember, *te reo* words surface in small actions and remembrances of family events, and there are also longer sentences, such as in Nanny’s dialogue with her grandsons. While her adult grandson Taukiri is dismissive of her stories, his eight-year-old brother Ārama feels the fascination of a language that carries a conflicted and emotional legacy in itself.

As a result of this critical reading of the text, the title remains unchanged in the Spanish translation (unlike the French, titled *Bones Bay* after a key location in the novel). *Auē* means a cry or howl, and is also used as an interjection of astonishment or distress. Given certain similarities between Spanish and Māori phonetics, I presume the word will be pronounced in an analogous way by Spanish readers. However, the strangeness is reinforced: not only does it not refer to anything in particular (as it might for a New Zealander

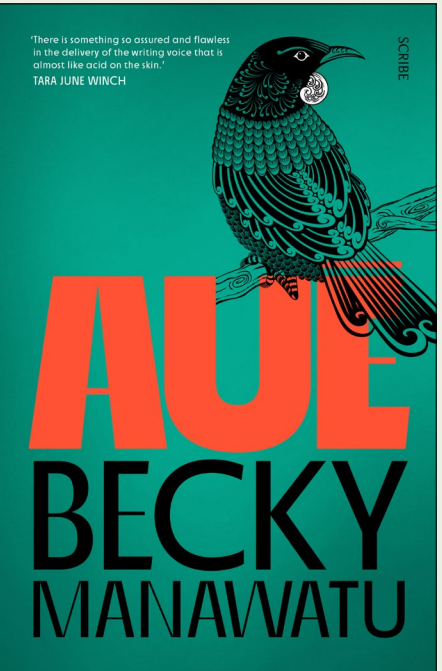
who speaks – or knows some – *te reo*), but there is also a diacritical mark – a bar on top of the ‘e’, indicating extra length and called a *tohuō* in *te reo* or a ‘macron’ in English – which doesn’t exist in Spanish. Readers of the translation aren’t expected to be able to read the *tohuō* – in fact, the intention is to expose them to the foreignness, yet familiarity too, of the text and the story.

As in the original, the translation has no footnotes or italics for Māori words, just a translation of the glossary. The Māori in the text is not an exotic trait, but the language spoken daily by Manawatu’s endearing characters, and therefore a constitutive part of their search for identity. In the translation I attempt to give floor to the conflictive historical link between Māori and *pākehā*: to resignify – but not simplify – the tension already existent in the original, in a different language.

The translation is also an invitation to Spanish-speaking readers to get a glimpse of a reality mostly unknown to them, that of contemporary New Zealand and its thriving literature. And since slang flourishes throughout the pages, a very distinctive Rioplatense Spanish* has been used throughout. Shuffling cards, I could discuss this in another article ...

For those who haven’t yet read *Auē*, the original is available in Australia thanks to Scribe Publications; and in case you’re still deciding whether to read it, there’s a very positive review [here](#).

** Rioplatense Spanish, also known as River Plate or Argentine Spanish, is a dialect of Spanish spoken mainly in and around the Rio de la Plata Basin, which straddles the border between Argentina and Uruguay.*



Rosario Lázaro Igoa is a writer, literary translator and translation studies scholar currently based in Sydney. She holds a PhD in translation studies (UFSC, Brazil), is a member of the National Researchers System (SNI, Uruguay), and currently researches within a group called Literary Translation History in Uruguay. Rosario has edited and translated Brazilian modernist Mário de Andrade’s anthology Crônicas de melancolia eufórica (2016) and translated many other Portuguese and English works into Spanish, and has also written three published works of fiction. You can read more about Rosario [here](#).

Auē covers reproduced courtesy of Forastera (left, designed by Camila Ugarte) and Scribe Publications (above)

Translating the ‘untranslatable’: ideophones



While studying for her master’s in translation, budding Japanese>English practitioner **Laura Fritch** has developed a passion for ideophones. For this special feature on literary translation Laura offered to share what she has learned about this lesser-known word class, and we jumped at the opportunity.

*... the ‘untranslatable’ ... is where much of
the fun of literary translation lies ...*

Literary translators are all too familiar with the ‘untranslatable’ ... yet for me, this is where much of the fun of literary translation lies, as it’s where we can use our ingenuity and creativity to adapt, create, explain and approximate.

Still, there are times when omission is more practical. Perhaps an explanation would be too verbose, or a footnote would be stylistically inappropriate. In the case of translating ideophony [see inset box for a definition of this term], Japanese-to-English translators often choose to omit it.

Ideophony is about putting perception into words, so that the person you’re talking to can also experience the scene depicted. Put this way, ideophones are an expressive way of sharing experience and sensation by mapping meaning onto form. They add colour and vividness to our speech and writing. Why, then, is it common to omit ideophones in Japanese-to-English translation?

One reason is simply down to a difference between the two languages regarding their linguistic inventories. While Japanese has thousands of ideophones, English appears

Ideophones are words that vividly depict sensory experiences and impressions, and they are often characterised by iconicity – that is, the shape of a word resembles its meaning.

A subset of ideophony is **onomatopoeia**, in which words depict sounds through imitation. For instance, both the English ‘cheep cheep’ and the Japanese ‘piyo piyo’ resemble the actual sounds of birds chirping.

However, going beyond this mimicry, ideophones can also imitate sensation, texture, movement and manner. Examples in English include ‘zig-zag’, ‘glimmer’, ‘higgledy-piggledy’ and ‘twinkle’.

to have relatively few, so perhaps it would make sense for this discrepancy to be reflected in translation.

However, I can’t help but feel this is too simple an answer. Is English really so lacking in ideophones? And is it truly acceptable to simply abandon the sensory nature of words in translation?

It’s easy to think that modern translation has moved beyond obsessing over preserving each and every word, maintaining complete equivalence. So long as the meaning is transferred, why fret about the form?

However, in literary translation, sometimes form is as important as meaning. For instance, imagine translating one of the many children’s

picture books written and illustrated by American author Theodor Seuss Geisel under his pen name **Dr. Seuss**. (For those who are not familiar with them: the hugely popular, mainly rhyming books of Dr. Seuss have remained favourites with both parents and children since the first was published in 1937.) While the meaning is certainly important, surely the playfulness of the form is also a key aspect of the work? To my mind, a translation without any rhyming or nonsense words would lack the spirit of Dr. Seuss. A perfect illustration of my point here are the two translations into French of the title of one of his most well-known books, *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, reproduced on this page.

In my case, as part of my degree in translation studies, I’m translating not Dr. Seuss, but a short story for children by Japanese author Kenji Miyazawa. Just as Dr. Seuss is known for his whimsical ways with language, Miyazawa is renowned for his playful use of ideophones. Furthermore, ideophony is a genre convention in children’s literature. These are two reasons why I believe it’s worth striving to preserve ideophonicity in translation.

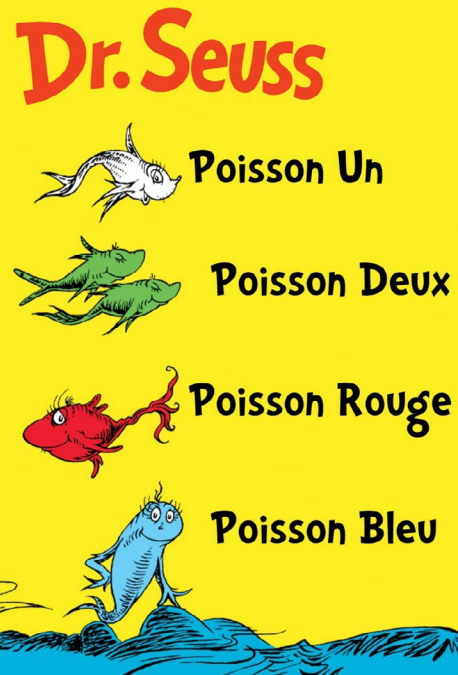
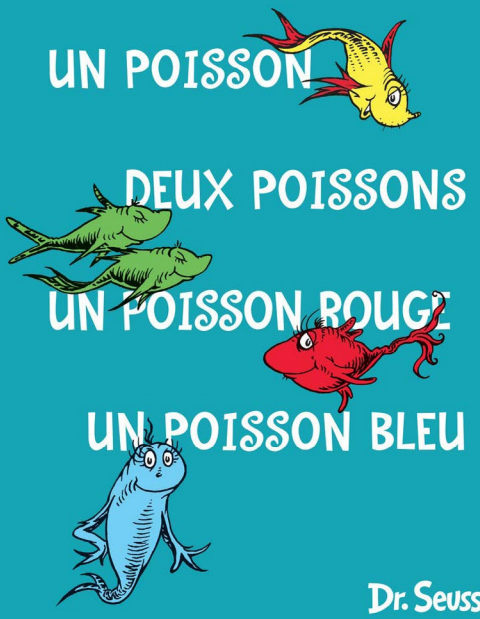
Why, then, has the dominant translation strategy been to omit ideophones?

Perhaps because they are at odds with English language conventions: a book full of onomatopoeia may come across as childish in the English language (although in my case, translating children’s literature, that’s kind of the point). Alternatively, the reason may be a bit deeper than that: it may be linked to the very history of the ideophone.

The term was only coined in the last century, when initially – due to a combination of Orientalism and colonialism – the ideophone was regarded as an ‘exotic’ phenomenon rather than a major word class, and as a result was

linguistically marginalised. These days, in languages such as Japanese, Korean, Turkish, Basque and Zulu, ideophony is being given the attention it deserves, and rich corpuses of ideophones have been developed. English, however, does not yet have such a corpus, and there is comparatively little research into the ideophones we *do* have. Does this simply mean that ideophones are rare in English, or is it a reflection of the marginalisation of this word class in linguistic research and documentation? Probably a bit of both.

By attempting to retain ideophonicity in an English translation – translating the ‘untranslatable’ – our achievement is twofold. We are not only helping others access a foreign language, but also learning more about our own language in the process.



***Laura Fritch** is currently studying Japanese>English translation in the Masters of Interpreting and Translation (MITS) program at Monash University. Having studied ideophony during her undergraduate years majoring in linguistics, she has remained fascinated by this lesser-known word class, and plans to continue studying ideophony in translation as part of a future PhD. Laura is interested in pursuing literary and academic translation professionally.*

In the August issue of In Touch, Laura will tell us how she went with translating Miyazawa’s ideophone-laden text.

The Translator’s Visibility: The Case of Muraoka Hanako



The title of this article by Akiko Uchiyama alludes to translation theorist Lawrence Venuti’s highly influential book *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, which has generated much debate since its original publication in 1995. Akiko tells us a little about one very visible and enduring translator.

Highlighting the issues of fluent, transparent translation that appears not as translation but as the ‘original’, Venuti also discusses the secondary and shadowy status of translation and translator in the Anglo-American context.

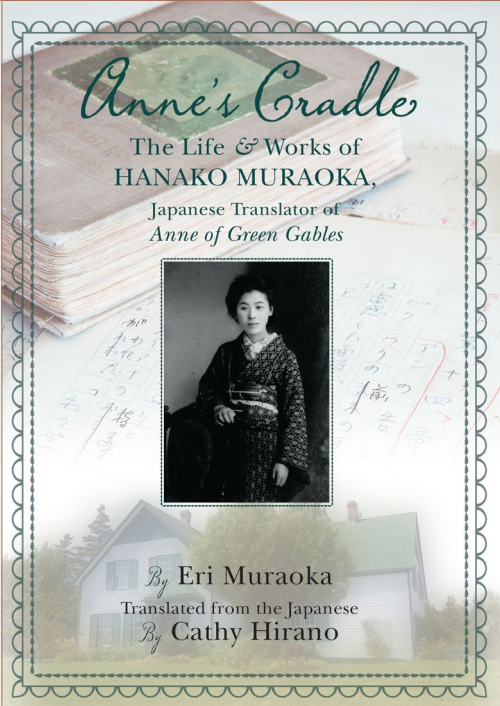
In contrast to Venuti’s elusive invisible practitioners, the Japanese translator I talk about in this article clearly defies invisibility outright. Granted, translations and translators enjoy a relatively higher status in Japan than they do in the United Kingdom and the USA, presumably due to the role they played in the social and cultural development of the country. However, the case of Muraoka Hanako (1893–1968) is unique in that she was featured in a TV drama series – almost half a century after her death. The high-rating TV drama *Hanako to An* (Hanako and Anne) was broadcast by NHK (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*, Japan Broadcasting Corporation) between March and September 2014. It is an adaptation of Muraoka Hanako’s biography, which was written by her granddaughter, Muraoka Eri. *An* in the drama title refers to the character Anne Shirley in Canadian author LM Montgomery’s

NOTE: Throughout my article, Japanese names are written in the Japanese order: surname first followed by first name – ‘Muraoka Hanako’, ‘Muraoka Eri’ – with the exceptions of ‘Hanako Muraoka’ and ‘Eri Muraoka’ when referring to the cover (see opposite page) of the English translation of Muraoka Eri’s biography of Muraoka Hanako.



best-known book series. Muraoka is best remembered for having first introduced *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) to Japanese audiences, as *Akage no An* (Red-Haired Anne), in 1952 (she subsequently translated all the *Anne* books). Even though it was published over 70 years ago, Muraoka’s *Akage no An* is still available, alongside a revised edition published in 2008 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Montgomery’s original publication. Muraoka’s biography, also published in 2008, is fittingly titled *An no yurikago: Muraoka Hanako no shōgai* (Anne’s Cradle: The Life of Muraoka Hanako). The English translation of the biography was published in 2021 with support from the Canadian Government, the Canadian Council of Arts and the Province of Nova Scotia. We can note that the English title includes the word ‘Translator’: *Anne’s Cradle: The Life & Works of HANAKO MURAOKA, Japanese Translator of Anne of Green Gables* ... and also that the name of the translator of the biography, Cathy Hirano, appears on the English cover along with that of the author Eri Muraoka, unlike most translations published in English. As an enduring popular work in Japan, *Anne of Green Gables* has been retranslated many times

by different translators. Interestingly, recent translations specifically target adult readers (although there are also versions tailored to younger readers). The 2011 translation by Hayashi Hiroe is presented as ‘girls’ literature for adults’, while writer Matsumoto Yūko’s version (1993/2019) provides numerous endnotes to explain such aspects of the original as literary allusions and social/cultural backgrounds. (Matsumoto has so far published seven translations of *Anne* books, with the eighth expected to be published in 2023.) The Muraoka version, however, still appears to command a special place as the first Japanese translation, and many readers are attached to this translation that they read through to adulthood. As invoked by the prominence of *An* (Anne) in the title of the biography, Muraoka’s life story is told in a way that foregrounds the tight relationship between the translator and *Anne of Green Gables*. The TV drama emphasises the connection even further by incorporating some *Anne*-inspired events into the drama – Hanako, for example, hits her classmate with a writing slate, like Anne hits Gilbert. Many Japanese audiences would have recognised these borrowed elements, and perhaps doubly enjoyed watching the drama. The *Anne* stories have crossed linguistic and cultural borders, from a provincial island nestling against Canada’s eastern coast, to become part of a narrative recounted in a TV drama in Japan. This journey evolved out of Muraoka’s determination to translate *Anne of Green Gables* during the Second World War, having received the book from a Canadian missionary friend in 1939. At the time, translating English literature could have led to her imprisonment if caught. The translator’s visibility illustrated by Muraoka Hanako also supports the importance of friendship and cross-cultural exchange.



Akiko Uchiyama specialises in translation studies, and her research interests include post-colonial translation theory, gender in translation, girls’ fiction in translation and the history of translation in Japan. She is a lecturer at the University of Queensland, where she coordinates the Master of Arts in Translation and Interpreting (MATT) program in the School of Languages and Cultures.

A longer article by Akiko on Muraoka Hanako’s translation of *Anne of Green Gables* can be found [here](#).

Above: cover image of *Anne’s Cradle* reproduced courtesy of Nimbus Publishing
Opposite page: Muraoka Hanako in 1953 (image available in the public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

continued from page 13

Then in the 1970s and ’80s I worked in the Italian Department at the University of Sydney, and one day a publisher came in looking for a translator for a series of cookbooks. That’s how my translation career took off. Like many of our colleagues I also worked as a translator at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, which sort of closed a circle with my 1956 Melbourne Olympics experience. Other career highlights include:

- the honour of being appointed one of the three inaugural Fellows of AUSIT in 1995
- teaching translation at UWS, and occasional guest lectures at UNSW and the University of Sydney – I had no training as a teacher, but I enjoyed it because I loved the subject
- working at TIS as an editor under the legendary January Blackbourn, and also for a few years as a community interpreter
- along with Terry Chesher, suggesting and subsequently being part of Jo Lo Bianco’s Languages Advisory Committee to SOCOG (the Sydney Organising Committee for the 2000 Olympic Games), and being able to educate many of the stakeholders in matters of language
- receiving the OAM** in 2016, thanks to respected and generous close colleagues including Annamaria Arnall and Moreno Giovannoni, for my then three-plus decades of work with the T&I community
- being part of Moreno’s ‘kitchen cabinet’ when he was president; I recall on one memorable evening during an NAGM weekend in Perth helping Moreno cook a vast pot of pasta for the NC in Mary Gurgone’s kitchen.

Through AUSIT I’ve enjoyed meeting and working with many dedicated, passionate and talented colleagues, including (as well as those already mentioned) AUSIT’s inaugural president Luciano Ginori, a subsequent president Uli Priester (before he went back to Germany), and David Connor, our long-serving and long-suffering national treasurer (not to mention a national treasure) ... **Amale:** Well that’s all my questions Barbara. Thank you for your time today.

* We are planning to publish an interview with Adolfo in the August issue of *In Touch*.
** Listen to an SBS Italian interview with Barbara about her OAM [here](#).

If you know a longstanding AUSIT member and would like to interview them for this series, click [here](#) to get ‘in touch’ with one of our editors, Helen or Hayley, and we’ll take it from there.

Alison Rodriguez, President of FIT (Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs / International Federation of Translators)

interviewed by *In Touch's* Editorial Committee



In September 2022, Brisbane-based translation practitioner **Alison Rodriguez** was elected to the presidency of FIT, the ‘voice of associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists around the world’. AUSIT is one of 138 organisations across 56 countries that are members of FIT (and NAATI is an associate member). *In Touch's* Editorial Committee recently interviewed Alison about T&I, the aims of FIT and the benefits of membership.

What led you into the translation profession?

It may not have been the most straightforward path, but I think if you're a language person, and I am, you sense it from a very young age. You find yourself making connections, playing with words and meanings, having fun with language – and I guess an interest in *other* languages just stems from there.

I would say the interest in translation, for me, came from home. While we lived in a monolingual, fairly monocultural world, I heard different languages from extended family, and my father often used Māori (*te reo*) words. In this way I learned very early on that the word is not the object, that there are many words for any one object. So, I guess it was no surprise that I went on to study linguistics, art and cultural studies, along with translation.

I enjoyed learning languages at school; and later, when I spent a couple of years

‘If there is an extensive, universal, permanent profession, it is ours.’

travelling around Latin America, I ended up doing a lot of ad hoc interpreting for people at restaurants and bus stations and so on. Not only was it fun, but it felt very useful, so I went on to study linguistics and cultural studies, and took translation subjects in my final years.

One of my professors said ‘Oh, you’re actually quite good at this’, and I took that as a sign. It’s something I often say to younger people, because they’re told ‘Do what you love’. I would say okay, but consider doing something you’re also good at; joy will come with mastery.

We ask because we wonder if we’re going to run out of future T&I professionals ...

I hope not. FIT encourages professionals to talk to graduating students, to show them that there’s a career path into T&I. In 2015, I sat in on a presentation by LSPs (language service providers) who were lamenting the loss of graduates to other job streams, because they just couldn’t see that path. So, it’s important to encourage secondary students to study languages, and for graduates to see that there are still rewarding and worthwhile careers in T&I. Professional associations play an important role in offering support to new T/Is,



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helping them visualise that path through mentoring and CPD (continuing professional development).

There’s also the impact of translation technologies on the profession ...

Yes! Translators and interpreters have been asking themselves how technology will change their work for two decades, so we have a better grasp of the reality than many other professions. Our experience should be encouraging to those in related fields, as technology hasn’t taken over our jobs, although it has changed them.

The advent of neural machine translation (NMT) has streamlined our work; however, it’s a useful tool, not a solution for every situation. In time, people will realise that while it might work for Whatsapp messages and social media posts with a tolerable level of error, they probably *can’t* use it to translate their business contracts, novels or affidavits ... and if they do, they’ll only try it once before realising they need a professional. Fortunately, translators’ skills in the humanities, along with our general cultural and deep subject knowledge, allow us to mitigate risk and potential damage.

What is FIT’s main role?

As an international federation, FIT represents associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists on the international stage. We have consultative status with the UN, and work with international partners to increase visibility and amplify the voice of our members. The organisation has many moving parts, with committees working on audiovisual translation, translation in crisis settings, Indigenous languages, standards, literary translation and copyright, just to name a few. FIT also connects member associations to one

another and acts to build cooperation and understanding between its members. Our main strategic priorities are community, visibility and a sustainable future for the profession, and this involves supporting our various national associations.

We also hold events – our Legal Translation Forum will be held in Spiez, Switzerland in July this year. We’re hoping to hold our Presidents’ Forum again in 2023, so the heads of our member associations can meet and share experiences, challenges and best practice. The XXIII FIT World Congress will be in Costa Rica, in 2025. Our highest-profile event is International Translation Day each 30 September. We’ve been celebrating ITD since 1991, and each year Council chooses a theme and invites everyone to celebrate the day around it.

Have you chosen a theme for this year yet?

Yes, this year’s theme – ‘Translation unveils the many faces of humanity’ – highlights the many ways that translation unveils a world of human experience, allowing us a peek into cultures other than those we know and underlining our shared humanity.

As climate and geopolitical shocks resonate across the globe, we play a pivotal role in addressing threats to peace and security of people and the planet, and in diplomacy and multilateralism, sustainable development and humanitarian aid, human dignity and human rights.

In May 2017, Resolution A/RES/71/288 of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared 30 September as an international day, to honour the contribution of professional translators, interpreters and terminologists in connecting nations, and fostering peace and global

development. This year we join to celebrate the many human faces that become visible through translation.

As this is the 70th anniversary year of the founding of FIT by Pierre-François Caillé, we’re also taking the opportunity to celebrate the many faces that make up the history of our federation, including AUSIT’s own past president of FIT, Adolfo Gentile, who is now a FIT Honorary Advisor.

T/Is are rightly proud of our profession’s heritage. We’ve served throughout history to help people communicate across cultural barriers, and as a profession we look forward to continuing to play a crucial role in helping humanity meet challenges in all the ways that technology alone cannot. To quote Pierre-François Caillé, ‘If there is an extensive, universal, permanent profession, it is ours.’

Thank you for your time today, Alison, and good luck in the rest of your presidency.



LGBTIQA+ refugees and asylum seekers: some considerations for interpreters

Researcher: Elizabeth Schmidt
MRes supervisors: Kerry Robinson and Nichole Georgeou
Institution: Western Sydney University

Interactions with interpreters can make the difference between a refugee or asylum seeker getting what they need or falling through the cracks in a service institution, and systematic approaches to both supporting interpreters and holding them accountable are necessary to ensure positive outcomes.

My research examined policy-to-practice connections that impact LGBTIQA+ refugees and asylum seekers. To do so I conducted a policy review, and also interviewed service providers (case management, mental health, interpreting, legal, health, advocacy and community support). My aim was to identify challenges that members of this cohort face in navigating policy (and also identify how they cope with these challenges).

The importance of trust ... cannot be overstated.

Several participants in the research reported having observed negative interactions between interpreters and LGBTIQA+ clients. These include breaches of confidentiality, hostile non-verbal behaviour towards a client, refusing to use a client’s correct name or gender identity, and even intentionally changing what the client has said.

Although these behaviours clearly contravene AUSIT’s Code of Ethics, one interpreter participating in the study explained that when a colleague violates the Code, there are few consequences.

The importance of trust in working with LGBTIQA+ clients cannot be overstated. It can be very difficult to build trust with traumatised clients such as refugees and asylum seekers, and negative interactions with interpreters can erode trust in both interpreters and end service providers.

However, trust can often be established with

intentional practices for conveying safety. One guide for practitioners working with traumatised clients points out that according to polyvagal theory, trauma can change a person’s perception of others’ behaviour, making neutral behaviour appear hostile, as the traumatised person constantly tries to evaluate their own safety when interacting with the other.* In such circumstances, explicitly warm, welcoming communication is critical to ensuring a client feels safe.

The research found that some interpreters are putting these ideas into practice. Another participating interpreter described a commitment to making sure clients feel safe. She does so by not only interpreting accurately, but also conveying warmth in the way she speaks, and taking time – if she senses that a client is nervous – to explain that she will keep their information confidential. She said:

It’s important to make sure that I say exactly what they are saying and show the same emotions they are showing, for them to feel safe to talk and to get things out. Because when they get things out, it makes a big difference for them.

These tactics exemplify how even small changes can reduce both technical and emotional challenges in interpreting.

The research concludes that many of the challenges described relate to a lack of systematic guidance and accountability for service providers working with LGBTIQA+ refugees and asylum seekers. The successful tactics described were often choices made by individual interpreters, based on their own experiences and commitment to clients’ wellbeing, rather than outcomes of standardised training.

To institutionalise these practices it may be necessary to depart from contracted service models, which offer few opportunities for training or accountability. While this will be a slow process, it is possible to overcome many barriers with trauma-informed care and a commitment to making sure clients are fully supported, no matter who they are.

Some of this summary comes from Elizabeth’s research report ‘Making Space: Policy and Practice to Support LGBTQIA+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers’. You can read the full report [here](#).

* TIP Advisory Committee (2013). *Trauma-Informed Practice Guide*, BC Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Planning Council, Canada.

Tackling long sentence translation: a linguistic perspective

Researcher: Alisa Tian
MPhil supervisor: Mira Kim
Institution: School of Humanities & Languages, UNSW

Long sentences are often considered difficult to translate. However, the challenge often lies less in the length and more in how the clauses are connected – especially when the source and target languages typically use different ways to do so.

As a translator and educator I’ve often experienced this challenge, and also seen my students struggle in this area. This led me to explore new approaches, and I discovered the idea of logical meaning from systemic functional linguistics (SFL).

Logical meaning focuses on clausal connection at a sentence level. It looks at two aspects: ‘taxis’, which refers to the form of a clausal connection, and ‘logico-semantic relation’, which refers to its meaning. Taxis includes parataxis (phrases are associated but independent of each other) and hypotaxis (indicates the level of importance of each phrase), while logico-semantic relation is classified into three types: elaboration, extension and enhancement.

When translating from English to Chinese, it’s not as simple as ‘segmenting’ or ‘breaking up’ a sentence as is often suggested. Each translator must make a series of decisions in terms of logical meaning, taking into account factors such as the genre of the text, typological differences between the source and target languages, and also the translator’s own style.

During the study I integrated these concepts into classroom activities to help students improve their long sentence translation skills. Students were encouraged to first identify the logical meaning of a source text, then experiment with different ways of connecting clauses in the

target language. While it took some time for the ideas to become familiar, the students showed significant improvement in their awareness of clausal connections after a few weeks of practice.

I then compared the translations produced by the SFL-informed students with those completed by previous students who hadn’t been exposed to the theory. The results showed that the SFL-informed students made more translation shifts, produced higher quality translations, and also demonstrated greater confidence in their translation choices with theoretical support.

Reflection:
This research project was my first step transitioning from a practitioner/teacher to a researcher, and it wasn’t easy. In the former roles I was a player or a coach in the arena, solving problems on the spot. However, being a researcher requires more analytical skills, pulling me out of the arena and into the role of an observer. This shift in identity, surprisingly and fortunately, gave me different perspectives I’d previously been unaware of.
The research and my identity shift wouldn’t have been possible without my supervisor, colleague and mentor, Associate Professor Mira Kim. Mira encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone and supported me through the unknown. I’m grateful to have her supervision again for my PhD project, in which I aim to expand my master’s thesis to a broader scope.

Alisa was overall winner of the internationally prestigious CIUTI Prize 2022 (awarded for the most outstanding T&I-related master’s thesis) with this research. If you’d like to know more about the project, you can contact Alisa [here](#).



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Fast subtitles cause superficial reading: evidence from eye movements

Researchers: Sixin Liao, Lili Yu, Jan-Louis Kruger, Erik D Reichle
Institution: Dept of Linguistics & School of Psychological Sciences, Macquarie University

Recent research has revealed a negative impact of speed on the reading and comprehension of subtitles in video, with shallower processing of the subtitles and a decrease in comprehension.

While subtitle speed has long been considered as an important parameter in subtitling guidelines, little is known about how it might affect the reading and comprehension of subtitles in video.

To address this question and provide more empirical evidence for subtitling guidelines, we used state-of-the-art eye trackers in Macquarie University’s Multimodal Language Processing Lab to record viewers’ eye movements when watching video with subtitles at different speeds.

We asked our participants – 31 native English speakers – to watch 6 short documentary videos (each about 10 minutes) with subtitles presented at 3 speeds (calculated at characters per second, or cps): 12, 20 and 28 cps. A comprehension test was then used to assess their comprehension of the subtitle content.

We found that viewers’ comprehension decreases as subtitle speed increases, and more so at very high speeds. Eye-movement records also showed that the way viewers process the subtitles and the background video changes as subtitle speed increases. Specifically, viewers

read subtitles in a more superficial manner with increasing subtitle speeds, resulting in text-skimming behaviour with fewer, shorter fixations on the subtitle and more words being skipped. We also found that viewers are not able to read the whole subtitle at faster speeds (around 20% of the subtitle words were not read at 20 cps, and 25% at 28 cps). Fast subtitles also impair viewers’ ability to integrate the content from the background images and the subtitle to gain a comprehensive understanding of the whole video.

The study concluded that subtitle speed below 20 cps is preferable for documentary videos, although this recommended speed needs to be adjusted depending on video complexity and the reading proficiency of the viewers. It also suggests that people might be able to develop effective strategies to cope with fast subtitles with practice or training, which warrants further investigations.

This was one of several eye-tracking experiments Sixin conducted for her PhD research, each investigating the reading of subtitles in a different context (with different subtitle speeds, audio information and so on). Sixin was awarded First Laureate in the prestigious international CIUTI Award 2022 for her PhD thesis.

If you would like a list of references or further information about the research, click here to contact [Sixin Liao](#) or [Jan-Louis Kruger](#).

continued from page 9

What’s the new Digital ID card?

The Digital ID card has been created so you don’t have to carry a physical card with you any more. It has the same advantages of the digital stamp in that it’s automatically updated, rather than requiring you to wait for a physical card to be posted.

It has the added benefit of an embedded QR code that clients can use to verify your details: when scanned, this code returns your directory listing and whether the card is valid or not.

Is it for interpreters only?

The Digital ID card can be used by both translators and interpreters, and it’s accessible from your myNAATI account by clicking on ‘My Digital ID card’. It can be accessed by logging onto myNAATI from a smartphone, or saved as a screenshot for quick access. At this time we’re unable to have it added to a Google or Apple wallet due to their system requirements, but this may become possible in the future.

Michael Nemarich is the Deputy CEO and Manager, National Operations at NAATI. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business as well as a grad. cert. in international and community development and a diploma of human resources, and is currently studying for his master’s in not-for-profit (NFP) management. Michael has worked for 17 years in social enterprise and NFP management, specialising in businesses that use commercial activities to fund their benevolent goals. Living in and working with Indigenous communities where English is a second language embedded his appreciation of the critical role played by T&I in connecting cultures, communities, and businesses and helping them achieve desired outcomes.

If you have queries or comments about the digital ID and stamp, you can contact NAATI [here](#).

Branch Membership Liaison Officer

In this series on the roles – both voluntary and remunerated – fulfilled by AUSIT members, we’ve covered six roles to date. Haven’t found one that you think would suit you yet? Don’t worry, there are plenty more to go. In this issue we ask **Reza Shariflou**, an education consultant with Educonnect and the New South Wales Branch’s Membership Liaison Officer, about the role.

Hours/week: 3 to 5	Voluntary? Yes	AUSIT member for: 5.5 years	Time in this role: 3 years
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Other AUSIT roles: NSW Conference Organising Committee member since late 2022 / organised an online networking event for NSW members in 2021



Q1. What does the role of branch membership liaison officer involve?

The Membership Liaison Officer (MLO) is the contact point between the Branch Committee, the members and the public. The main duties in this role are checking the AUSIT NSW email account (ideally every week), responding to enquiries and/or referring them to the most appropriate committee member(s), and sending welcoming messages to newly joined members on a fortnightly or monthly basis. The other tasks of the MLO are preparing a monthly membership report and presenting it to the Committee, attending and contributing to the Committee’s monthly meetings, and importantly, also taking on other activities as needed – for example, helping out with the National Conference when it comes to your state.

Q2. What led you to take on the role?

I’m passionate about enhancing the T&I profession, and the Branch Committee is a good way to get involved and contribute. I

enjoy interacting and networking, and the MLO position is where I can be of the most use. It is also a good place to learn about and keep up to date with the industry, and to gain professional development.

Q3. What skills or qualities do you need in this role?

You need to be passionate, and able to spare a bit of time to attend monthly meetings and perform the duties. As the MLO role involves preparing membership reports and corresponding with others, it helps to have basic knowledge in Excel, Word and email communications. Other than this there’s no major hurdle, as you will get an introduction to the role from the previous MLO, you learn as you go, and there’s no harm in asking questions to avoid trial and error in isolation!

Q4. What other AUSIT office-bearers and members do you collaborate with, and why?

The beauty of being on a branch committee is that there are no restrictions on working with other team members! Generally speaking, this

is a collaborative group and I contribute wherever I can. Some activities, like networking events, require many hands, and everyone in the group is welcome to help. For example, during the COVID-19 restrictions – with the help of a few other committee members – I organised the first ever online networking event for NSW members. It was a good experience for all of us, and it kept us connected with members. The MLO interacts frequently with the branch committee chair in order to convey messages between the members and the committee, and also to get guidance regarding correspondence. The MLO also interacts with the national admin team when preparing membership reports.

Q5. What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about taking on the role of MLO?

AUSIT is an inclusive organisation that connects our great community of diverse languages and cultures. The T&I industry needs AUSIT members’ support, and the branch committees welcome all members’ input. Bring your motivation to support the industry!

MEMBER PROFILES



NAME:

Translator or interpreter (or both):

Language(s) and direction(s):

Location:

Practising as a T/I since:

Member of AUSIT since:

Main area(s) of practice:

VICTOR XU

both

Mandarin < > English

Canberra, ACT

2006

2016

legal and commercial

MARIANA FIGUEIREDO CORDEIRO DA SILVA

translator

Portuguese < > English

Hobart, Tasmania

December 2022

December 2022

official documents

Q&A

Q1

How did you come to be a translator and/or interpreter?

Q2

Tell us about a project you have worked on that was especially interesting or challenging (within the bounds of confidentiality of course).

A1

I came to Australia to represent investors in a hotel project in Melbourne. Communication is critical in managing relationships with stakeholders. My job was to convey the intentions of the headquarters in China to local management here: conferencing, telephoning and creating all kinds of bilingual documents. I enjoy eliminating communication barriers and rendering information accurately from one language to another, to help stakeholders understand each other and communicate accurately and appropriately, so to develop my abilities further I became an interpreter. This role has opened up a range of opportunities for me. I travel more and interact with a wider variety of individuals, including businessmen, politicians, celebrities and international leaders.

A2

This experience didn't challenge my interpreting skills so much as my ability to deal with a novel situation: an urgent request to 'rescue' an event. The keynote speaker's English accent was so heavy, the interpreter couldn't understand him and had pulled out. The convener announced the refreshments break early, and luckily I was only 20 minutes away. I too found the speaker's accent challenging, but while the group enjoyed canapés we chatted about his topic. I listened actively, and also asked him to share his Powerpoint slides and to explain what he would say at the start, and with these cues plus the text on the slides I was able to accurately render what he was saying. After a fruitful Q&A the speaker and I earned applause, and the delegation told the organiser the conference was excellent. I do feel, though, that if the first interpreter had been briefed well, I might not have been needed.

A1

Back in my native Brazil, I worked for a scientific journal focused on law and public policies, the *Law Journal of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil*. When I was first in this job, one of my tasks was to translate abstracts from Portuguese into English. I then started translating full articles from English into Portuguese, so we could reach a wider audience through the translated publications. After moving to Australia, I decided to enrol in a Diploma of Interpreting course, followed by an Advanced Diploma of Translating in order to qualify as a T&I professional here. The next step was to sit NAATI's certification test, which gave me the credentials and the confidence I needed – in addition to the skills I'd learned – to start offering my translating services here in Tasmania, where I've been working as a translator from Portuguese to English since December 2022.

A2

I've only just become professionally qualified as a translator, but as I mentioned above, I did work in this role in Brazil. The most challenging project for me there was the first article I fully translated for the Law Journal. It was a long text – maybe 8,000 words – and it was written in very specialised legal language. I was also working to a very short deadline, and I had other administrative and proof-reading tasks to perform at the same time, so it was difficult to find the time and focus to fully dedicate myself to that translation. This was how I realised that translation needs just that: time and focus – it was a great learning experience and also opened many doors for me.

