Special feature

Literary translation, part 4:

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.

< Editorial Committee

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Letter from the editors

Welcome to our penultimate issue of 2023,
which includes:

• a much-needed examination of ChatGPT and
its implications for the translation industry

• a look at the changing role of translators
working in subtitling

• a third 'AUSIT Stalwarts' interview (pages
12–15): an early member who got into
translation as a young mother, and never
looked back

• the fourth part in a special on literary

translation, with some useful advice for
litarary translators (pages 16–17) and the
story of a translator who has successfully
challenged both the unacknowledged, unpaid
use of her work, and also the response she
received when she raised the issue with the
major cultural institution in question
(pages 18–21)

• the cream of the year's graduating students
from our Educational Affiliate institutions
(page 5)

... and, as always, a great deal more.

Happy reading!

Hayley and Helen

Contributions welcome

Do you have a T&I-related experience, idea or
tip you'd like to share with your peers, a book
you'd like to review, or ... whatever it is, get 'in
touch' and we'll take it from there:

• take a look at our Submission Guidelines *

• email any questions to the editors or an
Editorial Committee member *

• check the submission date for the next issue *

• go for it!   * this page, first column

**Member organisation Fédération Internationale des
Traducteurs International Federation of Translators**

AUSIT

Contents

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):

1 Jul: Controversy over poems at British Museum shows urgent need for more recognition for translators *theconversation.com*
[see also 13 Jul & our report, pages 18–21]

3 Jul: Ezidi refugees in Armidale say gap in language translation service impacts health care *ABC News*

11 Jul: 'Translators' Doc Director Aims to Show Young Translators With "Voice and Hope" *The Hollywood Reporter*
[see also Tania Pineda-Stuart's review, page 9]

13 Jul: A Chinese-Language Translator Has Threatened to Sue the British Museum After It Removed Her Work From an Exhibition *artnet.com*

13 Jul: 'Indonesia Out of Exile' shines light on literary masterpiece *asia.nikkei.com*

22 Jul: Australian translator Linda Jaivin: Why Tang poetry runs deep *cgtn.com*

23 Jul: Ever Wondered How Translation First Appeared? *moroccoworldnews.com*

25 Jul: Justice, but not in my language (1) *abc.net.au*

25 Jul: First languages court between a dock and a hard place *The West Australian*

28 Jul: Research Reveals Translation Flaws in Nursing Practice Tool *miragenews.com*

29 Jul: 'It's exciting, it's powerful': how translated fiction captured a new generation of readers *theguardian.com*

1 Aug: Justice, but not in my language (2) *abc.net.au*

11 Aug: Indigenous language interpreters unite to fill gaps *michiganadvance.com*

14 Aug: Refugee mother says giving birth in Wollongong Hospital one of most traumatic experiences of her life *ABC News*

15 Aug: Asylum Seekers Need More Access to Translation Services for Indigenous, Marginalized Languages *Teen Vogue*

16 Aug: Translator builds bridges between cultures *China Daily Global*

22 Aug: Court interpreters need support to improve access to justice for non-English speakers *lcanews.com*

3 Sep: How AI is gaining ground in simultaneous interpretation *El Pais*

4 Sep: Edith Grossman, Who Elevated the Art of Translation, Dies at 87 *The New York Times*

[Image: kellywritershouse, **CC BY 2.0**, via Wikimedia Commons]

4 Sep: Turkey's President Erdogan 'declares war' with Russia thanks to an interpreter's blunder in front of a surprised Vladimir Putin *SBS News*

7 Sep: Pilbara man wins appeal against assault conviction after Karratha magistrate denied him interpreter *ABC News*

7 Sep: Lost in AI translation: growing reliance on language apps jeopardizes some asylum applications *The Guardian*

10 Sep: Ryan didn't have the words to describe his identity. Now he feels more complete *SBS News*
[see also research summary, page 21]

12 Sep: Netizens Are Furious About A Book's Korean Translation Changing A Character's Weight From 70 Kg To 48 Kg *koreaboo.com*

13 Sep: The 2023 National Book Awards Longlist: Translated Literature *The New Yorker*

19 Sep: Translation of Legal Documents by Experienced Human Translators Now Essential *digitaljournal.com*

25 Sep: Interpreting or translating? How to get a job in the EU as a language lover *The Brussels Times*

AUSIT

36th National Conference

Building Bridges · Strengthening Alliances

23–25 NOVEMBER 2023

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY

Our conference couldn't go ahead without the involvement of our many sponsors, so we decided to ask our five top sponsors this question:

'Why did your organisation/institution decide to be a major sponsor of the 36th AUSIT National Conference?'

Ruby Sponsor

Multicultural NSW — NSW GOVERNMENT

Breda Diamond, Director Language Services, Multicultural NSW: *'At Multicultural NSW we are committed to the growth and sustainability of the language services industry. Based on the ongoing work we do with AUSIT, it was natural for us to support this signature industry event. Building the capability of language services professionals is a priority for us, and the interpreters and translators in our team are the first to benefit from this. We are proud to partner with AUSIT to continue building a strong, sustainable industry.*

Emerald Sponsor

Proudly funded by NSW GOVERNMENT

Liz Junck, Director, Community Care & Priority Populations, Health & Social Policy, NSW Ministry of Health: *'NSW Health is committed to ensuring people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have equitable access to healthcare services that are culturally responsive, safe and high quality. NSW Health's Multicultural Health Communication Service and Health Care Interpreter Services provide valuable interpreting and translating services to deliver on this priority. NSW Health recognises and values the important role AUSIT plays in advancing professional interpreting and translating services, and is delighted to sponsor the AUSIT National Conference 2023.'*

Platinum Sponsors

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Mark Painting, CEO, NAATI: *'NAATI is a longstanding and proud sponsor of the annual AUSIT National Conference. We are committed to the ongoing professionalisation of the translating and interpreting sector, and encourage all T&I practitioners to become active members of AUSIT. The AUSIT National Conference is the biggest event on Australia's T&I calendar and an excellent opportunity to gather, learn and engage with the profession in a positive and supportive environment.'*

TIS — TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICE — 50 YEARS CONNECTING THE WORLD'S LANGUAGES

Elizabeth Robertson, Director, TIS National: *'TIS National acknowledges the incredible work of interpreters in enabling access and equity in our communities through language as we celebrate 50 years of telephone interpreting in 2023. We look forward to robust discussions on key topics, challenges, and engaging with industry to gain valuable feedback. Together, we can develop initiatives and build a sustainable future for our industry.'*

Venue Sponsor

UNSW SYDNEY

Prof. Sandra Hale, School of Humanities and Languages, UNSW: *'UNSW is a world leader in T&I education and research. We're strongly engaged with the profession, and as AUSIT's first educational affiliate, we encourage both students and staff to join AUSIT and participate actively. Many staff, alumni and students have held AUSIT leadership positions, including the current national and immediate past presidents. We're delighted to support this year's conference by welcoming delegates from around the nation to UNSW.'*

2023's excellent students

Every year, AUSIT asks each of our **Educational Affiliate** institutions to nominate up to four graduating students – based on academic merit – to receive AUSIT Student Excellence Awards (SEAs). Congratulations to this year's 31 recipients (see below), who will each receive a certificate and be entitled to register in two half-day AUSIT webinars free of charge. Here four winners share the most valuable lessons they learned as students.


Junyu (Ryan) Liao (top left): '*I've learned about the ethical principles and their interconnectedness, which has equipped me with the ability to make quick and accurate decisions in interpreting tasks. This knowledge has not only guided me but has also significantly boosted my confidence in pursuing a career as an interpreter in the future.*'

Alice Joo (top right): '*I developed a profound appreciation for the remarkable versatility of human translators. Their expertise as skilled communicators, meticulous researchers, and adept writers commands profound respect. As indispensable professionals, translators establish connections and foster understanding that technology alone cannot replicate.*'

Leisa Maia (left): '*As a mature-aged master's student I learnt that there's always more you can learn about your field of expertise, there are new ways to grow, new challenges to surpass, new discoveries to make, and great satisfaction to be achieved from stepping out of your comfort zone.*'
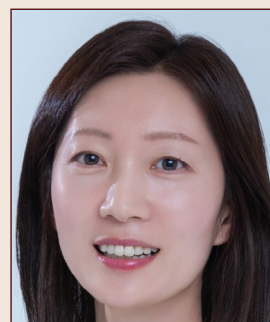
Seong Eun (Charis) Lee (right): '*I've learned that translation's charm lies in the absence of a definitive answer, making the pursuit of the optimal solution truly enjoyable. I'm thankful to my teachers for illuminating translation as a profound and interdisciplinary art form.*'

AUSIT Student Excellence Awards 2023			
Branch & Institution		**Nominees and their courses**	
NSW	University of New South Wales	**Zijian (Fred) Wang** Master of Interpreting	**Pilar Ratto** Master of Translation
	Macquarie University	**Seong Eun Lee, Qian Hui Wan** Master of T&I Studies (Advanced)	**Qian (Iris) Wang** Master of Conference Interpreting
	TAFE NSW	**Hyoun Sil (Celine) Im, Ying (Florence) Mu** Diploma of Interpreting (LOTE–English)	
	Western Sydney University	**Ke-Jung Chang, Ping-Jou Yu, Chi-Sheng Yi** Master of I&T	**Alice Joo** Graduate Diploma of Translation
VIC/TAS	Monash University	**Laura Anne Fritch, Keith Kit Toh Wong, Sz-Han Huang, Hirari (Hillary) Oyoshi** Master of I&T Studies	
	RMIT University	**Leisa Maia, Jessie Ng** Master of T&I	**Hong Hanh Do, Dima Mahmoud Zakzouk** Diploma of Interpreting
QLD	University of Queensland	**Yuanqiu (Rachel) Zhang, Xiaoyun Zhu, Sham Pui (Suky) Ling** Master of Arts in Chinese T&I (MACTI)	
WA	University of Western Australia	**Celeste Xie, Tori Leonhard** (Japanese) and **Amy Harris** (Italian) Master of Translation Studies	
	Babel International College	**Zijun (Zoe) Zhou, Junyu (Ryan) Liao** Diploma of Interpreting	**Xiaowei (Rina) Zhang, Ying Xuan (Shannen) Low** Advanced Diploma of Translating
SA/NT	University of Adelaide	**Chang Yuan, Jiangchao (Daniel) Qian** Master of Arts (Interpreting, Translation & Transcultural Communication)	

ChatGPT and translators: neither doomsday nor a panacea
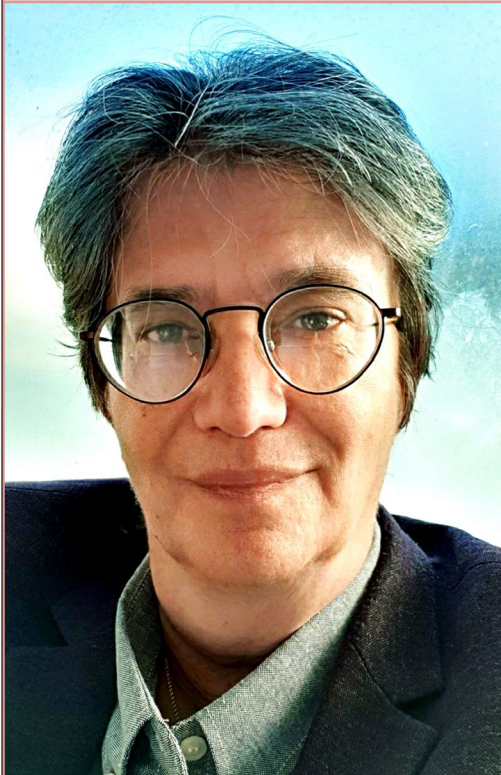
There's a lot being said about ChatGPT, and AUSIT Senior Member **Sam Berner** has – not surprisingly – found it hard to condense all she's learned about the 'chatbot' into a few pages of *In Touch* – but she's made a good start, and this will doubtless not be the last article we publish on this trending topic.

ChatGPT will ... teach your kids ... walk the dog ... [and] eventually replace humans on earth.

There is a wealth of information about this new world that needs to be discussed and pondered upon, so with my characteristic optimism I set out to research the topic and write this article ...

... only to discover it to be a much harder task than I'd predicted. I explored both the free version, ChatGPT-3, and the paid ChatGPT-4 extensively; attended AI (artificial intelligence) webinars; read articles and books on the **chatbot**'s technology and ethics; and interviewed GenZ users applying ChatGPT in various fields. As I type my final draft, OpenAI (the company that created ChatGPT) has just announced a new version of the software,[1] one predicted to have an even bigger impact on language services (including T&I) – so by the time you read this article, parts of it may already be outdated.

What *is* CHATGPT?

It could be assumed that writing objectively about a scientifically constrained subject is quite straightforward – unfortunately, this is not always the case. Whenever a lot of money and a potential watershed in everyday activity coincide, hype is generated. AI in general has been on the receiving end of dystopic hype for decades, from Lem's 1961 novel *Solaris* to the 1999 and 2004 films *The Matrix* and *I, Robot*. With the advent of ChatGPT, the hype has become more polarised: marketeers, tech-evangelists and software geeks on one end, and doomsayers from all fields on the other. ChatGPT will set your dinner menu, tell you how best to work, write your essays for you, teach your kids, and walk the dog. It will also steal your job, further embolden power grabbers, speed up climate change, and eventually replicate in unpredictable ways and replace humans on earth.

The actual facts are slightly more nuanced. It's true that ChatGPT can streamline workflow, produce excellent graphics for your presentation, and tailor a recipe to what you have in the fridge (within the obvious limits). It's also true that it's causing major environmental damage (one of the 'most significant concerns' being 'the amount of energy required to train and operate AI algorithms')[2] and that it will eventually replace many jobs.[3] However, each of these statements can be qualified further. So let me first explain what ChatGPT is, and how it functions. Let me quote ChatGPT introducing itself:

Imagine your brain is like a super library filled with billions of books. When someone asks you a question, you quickly skim through these books and come up with an answer. ChatGPT-4 is like a digital version of this. It's been trained on a huge amount of text, like reading billions of books. When you ask it a question, it quickly checks its 'knowledge' and gives you an answer, trying its best to sound like a human. In essence, it's a big computer program that's really good at understanding and generating text based on what it's learned!

To be able to perform this tailored knowledge transfer, ChatGPT was trained on a mixture of licensed and publicly available data, as well as data created by human trainers. This data wasn't

just randomly scraped from the internet without any filtering. The aim was to train the model on a diverse range of information, to make it as knowledgeable and general purpose as possible, but there were certainly considerations about data quality and representation. The data was multilingual, so ChatGPT can understand and generate text in a variety of languages, and it can handle conversations in many of the world's *major* languages. It can perform translations between multiple languages, however by its own admission it is:

… more of a generalist in many tasks, including translation, rather than a specialist in any single one. If you need a quick translation or an understanding of text in another language, it can help, but for critical or nuanced translations, dedicated translation services might be more reliable.

– proof that it wasn't created to take away our jobs and destroy our profession (assuming we're included in 'dedicated translation services').

How Can ChatGPT help translators?

- When compared to neural machine translation (NMT) applications – designed to translate text as accurately as possible, but often falling short on cultural nuances or idiomatic expressions – ChatGPT can sometimes provide more context or nuance in the target text, because it's been trained on diverse content.

- It also allows users to ask questions about the translated text and request clarifications.

- Because it has a 'randomness' factor built in to make it more 'human-like', users can ask

it to retranslate the text in various ways.

- It can paraphrase, gist, shorten a text, ensure inclusive language, find resources (paid version with access to the internet only), fix grammar and syntax, and provide synonyms or related vocabulary, as well as information about cultural nuances, idioms, or historical contexts that might be relevant to the translation. ChatGPT might be aware of new slang, idioms, or language trends that a translator hasn't yet encountered.

- The paid version with internet access is quite good for researching the subject matter of a text.

Therefore, while ChatGPT is a powerful tool, human intuition, cultural understanding, and expertise remain crucial in translation work. ChatGPT, in the words of a presenter at one of the webinars I attended, is like 'a young, smart and eager assistant that doesn't have the practical experience'.

ChatGPT's flaws

- For technical reasons the chatbot occasionally 'hallucinates' – that is, it provides factually incorrect answers (including creating references that are almost always nonexistent) when it isn't accessing the internet.[4] This is the main flaw.

- It struggles with texts that are context-heavy, nuanced, or specialised – for example, in medical, legal or literary fields.

- The current (as I write) ChatGPT training dataset was compiled in 2021, so it is unaware of anything beyond then.

What It Takes

To be able to utilise ChatGPT for your optimal benefit in translation, you will need to:

- be a good translator *without* any tools – this is the baseline – and learn how to use the chatbot as a complementary tool (as with any AI) – this involves understanding when to trust the bot's translation, and when to rely on your own professional expertise

- have some basic technical proficiency which, with ChatGPT, is mainly about writing excellent 'prompts' (the questions/directions you type into ChatGPT in order to obtain

an answer from it, or have it perform a task), as the style of your prompts may affect the quality of the resulting translation outputs[5] – this isn't hard to learn, and there's a lot of help online

- be open to learning, change and continual evolution

- understand that while ChatGPT 'performs competitively with commercial translation products on high-resource European languages', it 'lags behind significantly on low-resource or distant languages'[6] – and know the way around this: have the text translated into the low-resource language *via* a high-resource language (ChatGPT can do this simultaneously)

- (if you are serious about utilisation) invest in the ChatGPT-4 version, and in a few plugins that assist its performance – even with this paid version, the bot sometimes times out, and has a limit on the number of interactions per hour

- be very clear about your professional ethical standards, because you will need to recognise the ethical implications of AI translations. Our AUSIT Code of Conduct needs to be updated to cover the new tools.

This last point warrants expansion. Here are a few ethical issues to look out for:

- As ChatGPT learns from vast amounts of data, it might perpetuate or amplify any bias contained in that data. Be prepared to identify and address any biases in output.

- It is, needless to say, unethical to misrepresent ChatGPT or NMT translations as human, so be transparent.

- Be mindful of confidentiality and privacy concerns. ChatGPT learns from every line you type, and that data becomes part of what stays on its servers.

- Watch for the occasional inappropriate or offensive 'hallucination' – you are ultimately responsible for the final product, so maintain due diligence and quality assurance.

- Ensure that you are using the technology responsibly and in a way that aligns with the broader values and needs of your audience.

7

POEM

AI … becomes an essential tool for translators, heightening their marketability.

continued from previous page

What Does the Future Portend?

AI is reshaping translation, offering both opportunities and challenges. While it won't replace human translators yet, those who effectively harness tools such as ChatGPT to handle routine tasks can focus on cultural nuances and intricate elements of translation. This synergy boosts their efficiency and accuracy and accelerates outcomes, especially for bulky projects and/or tight timelines. AI thus becomes an essential tool for translators, heightening their marketability.

However, collaboration with ChatGPT presents ethical dilemmas, including job displacement, bias, and data privacy concerns. The line between human and AI-generated text is blurring, affecting professions such as writing, translation, and even engineering and medicine. Overreliance on AI might standardise language, but on the other hand ChatGPT is being utilised in the preservation of endangered languages.

Concerns arise about intellectual property, data access and age verification. Despite OpenAI's CEO emphasising AI's risks, legal battles have emerged. And while training AI is costly, some firms are threatening ChatGPT's viability by profiting from its API (application programming interface) without compensating OpenAI.

What the future holds for ChatGPT is anyone's guess. It is not the only such application, nor the last. AI, in short, is here to stay.

Sam Berner has four decades of experience working as a legal translator, both in Australia and overseas. Prior to settling in Australia, she worked for UNICEF and UNHCR. She is a past AUSIT National President, and has served on various AUSIT committees since 2003. Sam's research interests lie in intersectionality of ethics, technology, language politics and translation. Earlier this year, she was one of the first AUSIT members to be granted senior membership.

[1] Mehta T (2023, June 25). **GPT-5: Everything We Know So Far About OpenAI's Next Chat-GPT Release**. *SlashGear.*

[2] Li R (2023, May 8). **The Environmental Impact of AI. Global Research and Consulting Group Insights**.

[3] Blake A (2023, March 30). **ChatGPT could threaten 300 million jobs around the world**. *Digital Trends.*

[4] Marr B (2023, March 22). **ChatGPT: What Are Hallucinations And Why Are They A Problem For AI Systems**. *bernardmarr.com*

[5] Jiao W, Wang W, Huang J, Wang X & Tu, Z (2023). **Is ChatGPT a Good Translator? Yes With GPT-4 As The Engine (Version 3)**. *arXiv.*

[6] As above

[7] Hines K (2023, April 11). **ChatGPT And Generative AI Tools Face Legal Woes Worldwide**. *Search Engine Journal.*

… and who are you?

… and who are you?

I am the Interpreter
*who **speaks** your words in another language*
but …

*I am **not** your **Spokesperson.***

And words you hear from me
*may sound like **advice***
but …

*I am **not** your **Adviser.***

*I am **assisting** you in communication*
but …

*I am **not** your **Assistant**.*

*I am **helpful** to you*
but …

*I am **not** your **Helper**.*

*I am **friendly***

yet …

*I am **not** your **Friend**.*

Then … who **are** you?!

*I am an **Echo** of your words in another language …*
Now you hear me,
Now you d' …

by Andrew Kozlowski

Andrew Kozlowski *is a freelance professional interpreter (Polish–English).*

This poem concluded Andrew's presentation 'Ecosystems in interpreting: evolve, habituate, flourish' at the AUSIT National Conference 2019 (Hobart, Tasmania, 18–19 October).

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Translators

directed by **Rudy Valdez (2023)**
presented by **U.S. Bank**
reviewed by **Tania Pineda-Stuart**

Poster reproduced courtesy
of Park Pictures and U.S. Bank

Simple details and characters make a story. The ordinary and the mundane are what make up life and flesh out the reality behind a narrative.

Translators is a short (just under 20 minutes) yet intimate documentary currently streaming online for free. It takes us behind the scenes in the lives of three Latin–American children – ranging in age from 11 to 16 – and their families, who are navigating life as immigrants in the United States.

As is usually the case with immigrant children, they learn the language more quickly than their parents, and as a result become the linguistic bastions and lifelines for families which their parents are working hard to support financially. More than 11 million children in the US currently share the responsibility of interpreting and translating for their parents, and at times also for their wider communities.

With a simple visual style, this slow-paced short film gives you a glimpse into uneventful, mainly happy and at times poignant moments in the daily lives of three real families. Snippets of their lives are depicted through happy scenes with an underlying subliminal poignancy, in which children are being children. Their roles then shift into positions of power, as intermediaries exchanging and managing information that they may themselves lack the maturity to understand or the linguistic proficiency to accurately convey, yet which sometimes has a big impact on their whole families, and at times directly on themselves.

We get to hear the children talk, sharing their vulnerabilities, dreams and fears as they straddle the adult and child worlds in their role as their families' 'translators'.

'… it's hard … sometimes I don't know the word.'

As an interpreter (which is the role the children mainly perform, along with the sight translation that community interpreting also demands at times), you will relate to the challenges they face and empathise with the lack of any support structure or ethical framework within which they work – competency, impartiality and conflict of interest are never questioned.

As a human (and for many of you as a parent and/or someone whose childhood was free of such responsibilities), you will be moved by the children's innocence and willing acceptance of their position. All three instinctively abide by an internal emotional code of ethics in which their cooperation is the ultimate proof of gratitude and solidarity to parents who have sacrificed all to give them a better life – at the cost of the 'right' to a carefree childhood.

The film is presented by U.S. Bank, regarded as relatively ethical in the world of finance, and one would hope change in some form will arise from shedding a light on the issue of unpaid pseudo-interpreters and families who deserve to be better connected – for the sake of the many families involved, and particularly that of the children, who admit that it's not always easy – as Densel (Guatemalan, 13 years old) says: 'it's hard … sometimes I don't know the word.'

Translators won the Best Documentary Short award at Tribeca X 2023 film festival. You can watch it **here**, and read a Hollywood Reporter review of the film **here**.

Tania Pineda-Stuart is a Melbourne-based Spanish–English T/I. She serves on In Touch's Editorial Committee, and has also volunteered for: the Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre (CELAS, now called UNITED); La Mirada Film Festival; Melbourne Writers Festival; Falls Music Festival; Music Together Program; and the Embassy of Honduras in San Francisco.

THE UNTOLD STORY OF CHILDREN
WHO GIVE A VOICE TO GENERATIONS

TRANSLATORS

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TRIBECA FESTIVAL 2023

LA HISTORIA AÚN NO CONTADA DE
LOS NIÑOS QUE DAN VOZ A UNA GENERACIÓN

TRADUCTORES

PROUDLY PRESENTED BY U.S. BANK

A DOCUMENTARY SHORT DIRECTED BY
RUDY VALDEZ

TRANSLATORSFILM.COM   TRADUCTORESFILM.COM

The pros and cons of machine translation in subtitling: my quality-checking experience

Chinese–English T/I **Alisa Tian** works in subtitle translation for two of Australia's most influential current affairs programs: *Insight* and *Dateline,* both on SBS TV. Here she shares some insights of her own – into the use of machine translation (MT) in this context.

Both of the shows I work on strive to inform and inspire audiences by bringing together different voices and dialogues to cover diverse topics, from sociopolitical issues to everyday lived experiences.

I started working on *Insight* as a Chinese translator about six years ago, then in 2020 my role shifted to quality checker for the program's machine-generated Chinese subtitles. Since the start of this year I've also been working on *Dateline*, and this has afforded me new insights into the process.

While there are mixed feelings towards MT in the T&I industry, considerable benefits are gained by using translation technologies in my line of work.

One of their most outstanding advantages is technical reliability. For example, correct translation of numbers and dates helps reduce my mental workload, so I can focus on the areas of the translation where more human input is needed.

The key lies in understanding [MT's] capabilities and limits and leveraging its strengths …

Another obvious benefit is speed. This becomes evident when dealing with massive volumes of content and/or tight deadlines – for instance with *Insight* and *Dateline,* which are each broadcast weekly to audiences in several different languages. The fast turnover time allows us to churn out translated content swiftly, so the multicultural communities of Australia can be included in the dynamic and fast-paced broadcasting environment.

However, while it's a powerful tool, MT is not without limitations. 'Unnatural expressions' is a broad term, so I'd like to share some specific problems with examples. But before I delve into details, it's important to know that the limitations depend largely on the genre of a program. For example, the machine-generated subtitles for *Dateline* need far fewer human

corrections than those for *Insight,* since the former program's language is highly scripted whereas the latter's is composed largely of natural and unscripted oral communication. Here are the most common problems I've observed.

One significant feature I've noticed is that MT often produces inappropriately formal language in instances of oral discourse. When translating casual, conversational language, the software sometimes outputs written-like sentences that feel out of place. This doesn't usually require correction, but can create confusion – for example, when a teenager speaks like a professor.

My second observation is that MT tends to normalise different speakers' language styles, smoothing over the idiosyncrasies and distinct

linguistic characteristics that give each speaker a unique voice. Discourse markers (like 'now' and 'so'), hedges ('kind of', 'sort of'), and fillers ('you know') are often omitted or mistranslated. As a result, it can be challenging for the audience to get to know different individuals, as speaking style is one of the cues usually used.

Thirdly, when dealing with culture-specific ideas unfamiliar to the target audience – like metaphors and jokes – MT often falters. It struggles to find equivalent expressions, occasionally resulting in translations that may feel strange or incoherent to viewers. For example, 'the apple of my eye' is equivalent to 'the pearl in my hand' in Chinese, while 'a few bad apples' would be best translated as 'a few rat poos'. When MT cannot identify the cultural equivalence, human intervention is needed.

Lastly, issues can arise where two languages have very different grammar rules. In my working languages of English and Chinese, I frequently encounter incorrect rendering of verb tenses by MT. English is tense specific, which means that tense is usually indicated by morphological changes to the verb – for example 'go' / 'went' / 'going'. In contrast, Chinese is not tense specific, so to indicate tense a time indicator such as 'already', 'yesterday' or 'just now' is needed. When checking English-to-Chinese MT I often need to manually insert time indicators to make sure that my audience can tell whether an event has already occurred.
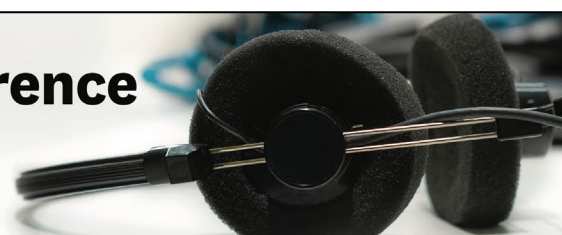
After weighing up these advantages and shortcomings, I see MT as an ally rather than an adversary. The key lies in understanding its capabilities and limits, and leveraging its strengths while being aware of the pitfalls. With the assistance of technology, humans can work faster and produce more subtitles that reach more people; but the human values of comprehension, empathy and contextual knowledge are still essential in producing subtitles that touch viewers' hearts.

Alisa Tian has been a T&I practitioner (Chinese–English) since 2006 and has been teaching in the field since 2010. Her areas of specialty include legal T&I, news translation and subtitling, and she has worked on more than 300 episodes of TV programs at SBS. Alisa is also an associate lecturer and PhD candidate at UNSW, and has a passion for bringing theory to practice in the classroom.

AUSIT stalwarts: Ludmila Stern

interviewed by Sophia Ra

For the third in our series of interviews with long-standing AUSIT members who have contributed to the organisation and/or the T&I profession in Australia over many years, *In Touch* Editorial Committee member **Sophia Ra** interviews **Professor Ludmila Stern.**

Ludmila (left) and Sophia

Professor Ludmila Stern founded the Master of T&I program at UNSW (where Sophia now tutors, having completed her PhD there in early 2022).

Sophia: Ludmila, thank you for your time today.

Ludmila: It's my pleasure! Thank you for inviting me.

Sophia: It's funny … I've known you a long time, but I've never asked you about your career path, how you started as an interpreter, so when I heard about these interviews, I thought it would be really interesting to interview you.

Ludmila: So would you like me to answer questions, or just speak in a free narrative?

Sophia: I've prepared some questions, but maybe you can start by telling me about your early life?

Ludmila: OK, so, I was born in Moscow, which was the Soviet Union in those days. I'm actually a first generation Russian because my maternal grandparents – who were Communists before the Second World War – migrated from France to the USSR for political reasons. They were Polish Jews, but they'd studied medicine in France – both were medical doctors – and having joined the Communist Party, they moved to the Soviet Union in 1935 or '36, when my mother was a little girl. So it's thanks

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to them that I learned French – French is my first foreign language. Russian, understandably, is my native tongue, my first language.

So, French was spoken by my grandparents in the family, but I also studied it formally at the university. My English comes from high school, but it wasn't a very interactive English – it was really meant for reading and writing, and when I came to Australia in 1979, I discovered that English is nothing like what I'd been studying for years in the Soviet Union. So, I would say my main languages are still: Russian first, English second now – or they are somewhere on par – and French is my third language now.

As I said, I studied languages both informally, but also formally. I'd started a tertiary degree in the Soviet Union, in French and German, and when I came to Australia in 1979 I enrolled at the University of New South Wales (where I've now been teaching all my adult life!) to study Russian and French literature and language, and (briefly) German; and my first degree was a double honours degree in French and

Russian, completed with first class honours.

Sophia: So, how did the interpreting come in?

Ludmila: My late mother-in-law, Gerda Stern, was a Polish interpreter, and she's the one who encouraged me – while I was still at university – to try my natural skills at interpreting. Actually, initially, she said 'translation'. You know, in Russian we have one word for both translation and interpreting, so I understood it as translation.

So I thought, 'I'll sit at home with my baby – who was just born – and do translation.' She started taking me to various agencies and introducing me. She took me to what was then the Ethnic Affairs Commission (nowadays it's Multicultural New South Wales), and I did some tests there – I had to do quite a challenging dialogue and speech interpreting test that they administered themselves, and I also started sitting for various NAATI exams.

So, this was my introduction to the field, and I discovered there was more demand for

interpreting than translation. Today it will sound probably totally outrageous, but there I was, untrained, unbriefed, had no idea what was going on, and I was sent to a medical interview, and then to a legal consultation, and I had nothing except the address where it was taking place. I don't know what I was doing – probably I *was* interpreting, and somehow I knew that I had to interpret in the first person. But that was in the days before the AUSIT Code of Ethics was developed, so I had no idea about professional conduct.

And like many interpreters in those days who were bilingual, who were untrained, not briefed by anyone, not mentored, I kind of just drifted. I probably learned quite a lot from my mother-in-law and *her* experience as a Polish interpreter in different settings, including in court, but she was also untrained. So our conduct was pretty much intuitive rather than informed by the Code of Ethics or other guidelines.

Eventually I started working in courts as well, and then more things happened ... I started working as a conference interpreter too, and as a subtitler at SBS. Hmm. Yeah, and my academic career started in 1989, and from then on I tried to combine both, so interpreting became also part of my research.

Sophia: That's all really interesting. I never knew you had this background, with full-on language influences by your grandparents and your mother-in-law … So English wasn't your focus when you were in Moscow.

Ludmila: No, no.

Sophia: It's similar in Korea – we learn writing and reading, but not really communication.

Ludmila: Exactly, exactly.

Sophia: Can I ask why you came to Australia?

Ludmila: Well, coming from a family of political migrants who were terribly disappointed in the Soviet system, and who suffered under it – you know, my grandfather was one of the many victims of Stalin's repressions, he was arrested in 1937, but eventually released – my family were … maybe not full-blown dissidents, but there was a spirit of disapproval of the system. It was very clear that my family disapproved of the Soviet regime and its ideology and policies.

Another reason was the state's antisemitism – as a Jew I had limited opportunities in the Soviet Union. So this combination of reasons

eventually led me to migrating and finding myself in Australia.

Although my in-laws were Polish migrants, my husband is Australian born and the family spoke English at home. At first we lived with them. So clearly I had to start speaking English pretty much straight away, and then I was studying at the university. I was also teaching Russian at Moriah College, which is a Jewish high school. That's how English became my working language, and with time it replaced French.

Sophia: So you started working as an interpreter back then without any NAATI accreditation …

Ludmila: … but I soon *got* NAATI accreditation. Around 1985 to '87 I passed what was known as Level 3 Russian-to-English and English-to-Russian translation (both directions), and later on Level 3 interpreting, which allowed me to interpret in court – until then I could interpret in health care settings, in legal non-court ... My current certification as a conference interpreter into Russian came many years later.

Sophia: And it was before the Code of Ethics?

Ludmila: Yes, if I'm not mistaken, the AUSIT Code of Ethics was written in 1995 …

Sophia: All right, so you worked with Multicultural NSW and other agencies … how did you come to focus on legal interpreting?

Ludmila: I think the turning point was in the mid/late 1980s, early '90s, when I was

employed as a Russian translator and interpreter by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, in an organisation called – cryptically – a 'Special Investigations Unit'. The unit was conducting investigations to support the Australian War Crimes Prosecutions. They were prosecuting alleged perpetrators of Nazi crimes on the territory of the former Soviet Union during the Second World War, so they needed interpreters in Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian, Croatian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Yiddish, German of course ...

I translated witness statements. I also travelled to the Soviet Union to interview witnesses and participate in official negotiations with the then Soviet Prosecutor General's office and other officials. That was my official role.

When the proceedings began, in South Australia in 1990 or '91, it was clear that something was going very wrong during the actual hearings. Communication with the witnesses, who were brought from the USSR mainly, wasn't going well: there was a sense that witnesses and lawyers spoke at cross purposes. These were supposed to be very persuasive witnesses who'd been very cooperative during the investigation stage, but once they found themselves in the Australian court, suddenly they were uncooperative, they were contradicting themselves. They were obviously very unhappy with the way they were interviewed and cross-examined in court,

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there was a sense that these carefully constructed cases were falling apart.

So the DPP of South Australia asked me to analyse the court transcripts and try to understand what had gone wrong … Why had these witnesses suddenly become so uncooperative and lost their credibility? Why were they giving such odd responses? … so I started looking at the English transcripts again.

In those days they didn't record the original, so I couldn't actually compare the transcripts with the Russian or Ukrainian originals to check their accuracy, but it was obvious that something was going seriously wrong. There *were* some instances of misinterpretation, but not significant inaccuracy of content. What

was very interesting was that clearly the witnesses often didn't understand the strategic intention of the questions, whether it was because the questions were interpreted very literally, or the witnesses couldn't understand the intention, because they came from a very different legal system, a very different cultural background – they were mostly rural witnesses – so they could not respond to the questions, even those that were asked by the prosecution (they were all witnesses for the prosecution).

I was asked to analyse the transcript and write a report on the causes of miscommunication between the lawyers and the Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking witnesses, and I think *that's* what *really* triggered my research into court interpreting, you know.

So, what had gone wrong? Was it that the interpreters were unsuitable, or untrained, or incompetent? Or was it something else? Was it

also that the two sides followed what's called different cultural scripts, whereby they didn't quite know what the other party was talking about, and as a result of that witnesses' responses and demeanour were misinterpreted … their level of intelligence, their reliability as witnesses were misinterpreted, you know …

Since then there have been studies about this, including one about bilingual courtrooms by Susan Berk-Seligson, about Aboriginal witnesses and the law by Diana Eades, and others about the lack of equivalence between different vocabularies and systems, by the Polish–Australian linguist Anna Wierzbicka.

Later on I went to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, where my colleagues from the Australian War Crimes Prosecutions Unit were now working – and I started investigating interpreting in international courts and tribunals, trying to understand the

I don't remember when [I joined AUSIT] … in my mind I've always been a member!

secrets of their success, and comparing interpreting practices at the international courts with those at domestic ones. So that's what really triggered my interest in court interpreting as a research area.

Sophia: That's really interesting, it's not just translation – because you didn't have the original speech there was nothing to compare, so you put on a different hat and analysed the transcripts ... analysed, sort of, between the lines.

Ludmila: Correct, I just tried to figure out what could have been said in the original – why such and such a response was given. Yeah.

Sophia: Hmm. So, you had all these experiences as an interpreter and translator, then moved on to your research, especially in court interpreting, then became an educator at university. Right?

Ludmila: Actually, I have to step back, because initially, I was employed in the *Russian* Department at UNSW. My PhD had nothing to do with T&I, it was more in cultural history … cultural diplomacy of the Stalinist Soviet Union. My PhD and publications were about how the Soviet Union influenced Western intelligentsia – writers, journalists, scientists and so on. That's where I started, but because I kept working as an interpreter, I was also researching in the field of interpreting.

So for the first 15 or 16 years at UNSW I was teaching Russian and Russian Studies, and researching literary and historical topics of French–Soviet or Soviet–Western interaction, but I kept working as a T/I … for example, in SBS's subtitling unit, and as an interpreter during the Sydney Olympics in 2000 … and as I was combining both, I thought it would be a good idea to found a program to help students of language studies pursue a profession. Until then UNSW didn't have any T&I subjects.

So, in the first instance, I introduced an interpreting subject at undergraduate level with different languages, and it was successful … I could see that students of languages were really interested in exploring what interpreting is like. We had French, Russian, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian, that was the start. Then in 2005 I suggested to the

University that we develop our own graduate program in T&I, partly because of student demand. Students were saying, you know, 'Why do we have to go to another university? Why can't we continue here?' So I explored how other universities, nationally and internationally, offer T&I, and with the blessing of the faculty, I developed and introduced a master's program in T&I.

Initially, I was the only staff member, and also the convener. We had language tutors, and gradually the program grew, the student numbers grew, and so we created new positions, and Mira Kim joined us … I think, before that Sean Cheng did … then we invited Sandra Hale to come from Western Sydney University. So that's how the program developed. We didn't expect that we'd mostly have international students!

Sophia: Hmm, okay, I knew you were a founding member of UNSW's Master of T&I program, but I didn't know all these stories.

Ludmila: Yeah, that's right. So, for a few years I was the only one, teaching all the courses alone, and we had tutors who were T&I practitioners, and it's only later, 2009, 2010, I think Sandra came in 2011, and that's when we really built up this – you know – lovely team of colleagues.

Sophia: So then, you were wearing all these different hats: interpreter, translator, educator …

Ludmila: Too many hats!

Sophia: But I think it's good, because you can connect everything: practice, research, training, everything, so you can see the links, right?

Ludmila: Yes, that's right.

Sophia: And you witness your students actually becoming interpreter practitioners, working actively and going back to the community and even volunteering for AUSIT, now!

Ludmila: Absolutely. They're working in domestic and international settings. Definitely.

Sophia: Ludmila, you're a really good narrator, you've answered all my questions before I asked them! I have two more: when did you join AUSIT, and what have you done as a member?

Ludmila: Look, I don't remember when … in my mind I've always been a member! You might

be able to check and refresh my memory. But again, I joined because I was encouraged by my late mother-in-law, who felt that a professional association was a good thing, a useful thing.

Sophia: Yes. Was your mother-in-law an AUSIT member too?

Ludmila: She was, yes.

I wasn't a very active member at the beginning, but I met lovely enthusiastic people at AUSIT events … people like Barbara McGilvray and Terry Chesher, and other great colleagues. And I did give a few presentations based on my research into international courts and tribunals and working conditions there, a long time ago. In the past couple of years I've given a few presentations, too, about the Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals (RNS), and the responsibilities of judicial officers.

I'm also involved with the regular research seminars we run at UNSW, which are open to all AUSIT members, with NAATI certification points for attendance; and in 2021 *In Touch* published my interview of two colleagues, Cintia Lee and Sylvia Martinez, about their successful advocacy around working conditions for court interpreters.

Then last year, together with Despina – who was then a Vice President of AUSIT – we represented AUSIT at the FIT Congress in Cuba, and gave presentations. That was a very memorable event, and since then I was successfully nominated to the FIT Standing Committee for Legal Translation. One activity I've initiated and am leading is adapting the RNS to legal systems in other countries that have associations and are FIT members – so hopefully something good will come of it, and Australia will again be an international leader in the T&I industry.

Sophia: Well, we've covered so much in this interview! So thank you very much again.

Ludmila: It's my pleasure, Sophia! I hope AUSIT continues going from strength to strength. It's been very fortunate with its recent and current presidents and committees, and so many volunteers giving their time to improve the professional lives of translators and interpreters with interesting, valuable PD sessions and other events.

If you know a longstanding AUSIT member and would like to interview them for this series, get 'in touch' with our editors or an Editorial Committee member (see page 2) and we'll take it from there.

Some Advice for Literary Translators

During this year's London Book Fair (18–20 April), *Publishers Weekly* published some advice for aspiring literary translators from experienced US-based practitioner **Samantha Schnee**. *In Touch* has added notes to adapt her advice for Australian translators.

photographer: Anita Staff

… residencies and retreats offer an opportunity to work undistractedly on a longer work …

I completed my first translation 20 years ago. It was an excerpt from a novel about which I had been asked to complete a reader report for a trade publisher.

I loved the novel and my reader report was enthusiastic, but the requesting editor wasn't confident enough to make an offer without knowing what the author's voice was like, so she commissioned a sample. I selected a chapter and completed the translation, which was a hit. In the end though, the editor just couldn't get comfortable enough to buy the novel for their list.

In the two decades since then, the landscape of publishing – including translated literature – has changed dramatically. What seemed like a closed, New York/London-based club of literary tastemakers when I arrived on the scene in 1995 has been blown open by phenomena of the information age – including online media, digital and self-publishing, and the subsequent erosion of old power structures by social movements such as MeToo and Black Lives Matter. Just compare an issue of the *New York Times Book Review* from 2002 to one from

today; not only are the authors much more diverse, the reviewers and the staff are, too.

What does this mean for literature in translation? Today translators are accorded more status than they ever have been in the modern era. Movements such as #NameTheTranslator – one means of recognising the translator's creative role – have received widespread support, including from bestselling authors. And, with a few unfortunate exceptions, almost all publishers now allow translators to retain the copyright in their work, an equally important means of recognising the translator's role as writer (or re-writer).

However, though working conditions have improved, today's translator is almost certain to perform multiple roles far beyond the old-fashioned job of rendering a work into another language. These include:

• scouting (whether formally or informally) for the best new writing by reading widely in their language to discover new voices that will travel to Anglophone markets;

• agenting, often unpaid, the works they would like to translate by meeting with editors and introducing their authors' oeuvres to publishing's tastemakers;

• publicising, also unpaid, these authors' works by placing them in literary magazines,

sharing them at public readings, and even setting up events for book tours once a book has been published.

This kind of multitasking is necessitated not only by the market but also by the nature of the independent publishers that have been and continue to be the main champions of literature in translation.

To that end, let me offer a few suggestions to make things a little easier for translators:

1. The American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) holds biannual **Pitch Sessions**, in which translators meet editors online and have eight minutes to make an elevator pitch on behalf of a book. A few years ago, I was randomly matched with an editor at an indie publisher whom I had never met before; she loved the two-page sample I showed her and a few months later she had signed the novel. And if at first you don't succeed, don't give up. Last year I met with an editor and pitched him an author who seemed like a great match, but the book wasn't right. This year there is another novel that looks like it might be a better fit. NB translators: As with trade publishing, the number of literary journals that have published translations in the past few decades has increased dramatically. Placing an excerpt, a poem or a story in these

journals can boost an author's chances of being picked up for publication – and this is just as true for Anglophone writers as Hispanophone; lit journals can be a sort of literary bellwether. NB editors: If you're interested in learning more about the landscape of translated literature, sign up for the ALTA pitch sessions; they're free and this is a great place to start.

You can view ALTA's recording of Katie Whittemore's presentation **How to Pitch to Publishers** *for free, and writer and translator Anton Hur has put together a short* **Pitch Guide for Translators**.

2. Attend book fairs and festivals. Many book fairs offer fellowships for translators. Attending such events presents an opportunity to develop relationships not only with editors but also with agents. Agents need samples for book fairs and, in particular, those based outside the US often don't know the indie publishers and literary magazines that will be most receptive to their authors; translators can play a critical role as facilitator here. Book fairs also offer an opportunity to meet with foreign rights agents of international publishers, who also need English-language samples to share the books they have published at home with editors in other countries, because English is the lingua franca of the industry, as with the rest of the business world.

NB: I like to band together with a few other translators to buy a table in the rights centre so that we have a relatively quiet place to hold meetings; book fairs can be exhausting. And try to go to as many of the after-hours gatherings as possible, because in these more relaxed atmospheres equally important connections are made.

3. Join the Authors Guild (USA) or the Society of Authors (UK). Both organisations review contracts and make specific suggestions on how to negotiate in order to improve the terms of your publication agreement so that it best reflects the terms of the agreement with the author.

Members of the equivalent body here, the **Australian Society of Authors,** *have access to* **Authors Legal** *– a heavily subsidised legal service offering contract reviews – plus an Advice Service, PD sessions on translation, and New to View, a monthly e-newsletter via which they can promote their latest work.*

AALITRA *(The Australian Association for Literary Translation) promotes interest in all aspects of literary translation, hosts lectures and events, holds conferences, distributes news and publishes* **The AALITRA Review**.

It's also worth joining **The Copyright Agency**, *a not-for-profit that champions the rights of creators and distributes fair payments. Membership is free.*

4. Apply for translation residencies and grants such as the **PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grants**. Residencies and retreats offer the opportunity to concentrate on a longer work without distractions – and some, such as **Art Omi's Translation Lab**, even allow you to work together with an author on polishing a translation. And grants like the Heim don't just offer money, they offer an endorsement (much like publication in a literary journal) that catches the attention of editors actively interested in acquiring translated literature for their lists.

The Australia Council's **Translation Fund for Literature** *invites Australian publishers to apply for funding to support the translation of Australian works, and also non-English language works, providing the translator is Australian.*

The UK's **National Centre for Writing (NCW) residency program** *offers both on-site and virtual residencies that are open to all. NCW also offers* **Emerging Translator Mentorships**, *as do* **ALTA** *and the* **Asia-Europe Foundation**.

Check out the **Literary residencies: open calls for writers and translators** *Facebook group, too. It's dedicated to sharing information on 'interesting proposals of travels, creative spaces or houses for work and institutions offering such programs'.*

Awards in Australia include the:

- **Australian Academy of the Humanities Medal for Excellence in Translation** *(biennial, applications open February 2024)*
- **NSW Premier's Translation Prize** *(biennial)*
- **AALITRA Translation Awards** *(biennial, different focus language each time)*
- **AUSIT Excellence Awards** *(awarded sporadically, categories include: outstanding contributions in the fields of translation and interpreting, outstanding leadership in the T&I profession and outstanding contribution to T&I in languages of limited diffusion). Submissions are currently open for the* **AUSIT Excellence Awards 2023** *(nominations close 1 November).*

Samantha Schnee is the founding editor of **Words Without Borders**, *a magazine seeking to foster international exchange through 'translation, publication, and promotion of the world's best writing and authors who are not easily accessible to English-speaking readers.' Her translation of Carmen Boullosa's* Texas: The Great Theft *was shortlisted for the PEN America Translation Prize. Samantha is a trustee of English PEN, chaired its Writers in Translation committee from 2014 to 2017, and currently serves as secretary of the American Literary Translators Association. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, she lives in Houston, Texas. You can find a fuller biography* **here**.

Samantha's article was first published by Publishers Weekly *on 20 April 2023. This lightly edited and annotated version appears here with the publication's permission.*

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One translator upholds the rights of all by successfully taking on 'the Establishment'

Over recent months, award-winning Chinese–Canadian writer, poet, editor and translator **Yilin Wang** has successfully taken on the British Museum over both its unapproved use of her work and its subsequent failure to negotiate an appropriate solution to the situation. Faced with a battle she had not initiated, Yilin felt compelled to meet it head on in order to ensure the same doesn't happen to other translators in the future.

photographer: Joy M. Kaegi Maurer

… if [the British Museum] is not held accountable, then this is a cycle that stands to be repeated.

Yilin Wang specialises in translating Chinese speculative fiction and poetry, with a strong interest in modern and contemporary poetry in particular.

She has been translating the poetry of Chinese feminist poet and political activist Qiu Jin (1875–1907) since 2021, and in a recent interview she explained to *Modern Poetry in Translation* Editor Khairani Barokka why she considers Qiu Jin's work to be important.*

Qiu Jin was one of China's first modern feminist poets. While she is now very well-known as a revolutionary figure in a Chinese context, her feminist activism and poetry are still often overlooked and sidelined in comparison to her political activities. While there are various

academic translations of her work and wonderful research being done on her by scholars I admire such as Hu Ying, I approach her poetry as a queer and feminist poet from the Chinese diaspora, with a focus on the poetics of her work.

As Yilin explained to Barokka, in mid-June she heard that one of the British Museum's current exhibitions, 'China's Hidden Century' – based on research funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council to the tune of £719,000 (over AU$1.4M) – featured Qiu Jin's poetry. Checking it out online, she 'found my own translations staring back at me.' Investigating further, Yilin found her work in use in multiple formats in connection with the exhibition – including in a giant projection, on

signage and in digital, print and app-based audio guides – and also in the catalogue, where she is credited in some instances but not all.

When Yilin called out the copyright infringement via social media, the institution's initial response was that they had forgotten to include her name in their list of translators. They offered to do so and to send Yilin a permission form (while also emphasising that many contributors donated their work for free) – but before she had a chance to respond, they emailed again to inform her that they had removed her translations from the exhibition. (Yilin later confirmed that not only the translations but also the Chinese originals were removed.)

The Museum went on to tell media sources that the translator had demanded her work be removed from the exhibition. However, Yilin's request was that the translations be removed 'unless the museum makes a proper offer to compensate me'. As she says, 'it is clear to any reasonable person what I was asking for.' And with the exhibition continuing until 8 October, the institution had plenty of time to negotiate a reasonable deal with Yilin and reinstate the translations.

At this stage – either ignoring or in ignorance of the #NameTheTranslator campaign – the Museum refused to give Yilin any credit (retroactive or otherwise) for the use of her work in the exhibition.
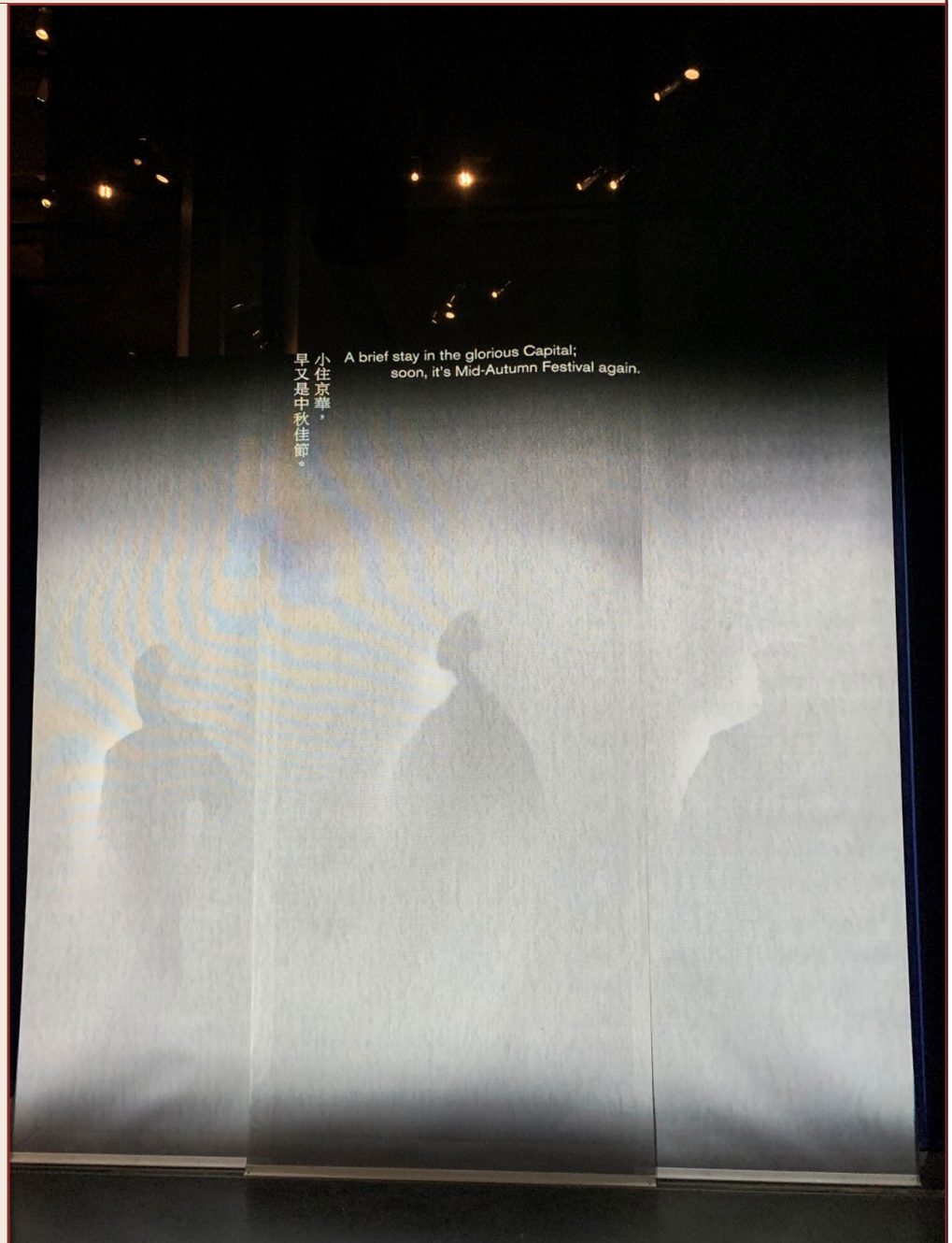
As the stoush gathered momentum in the public eye, with commentators pointing out parallels with the institution's history of stealing from other cultures, the Museum issued an apology to Yilin, followed by a public statement which declared that acknowledgment of her work had been 'inadvertently omitted' due to an 'unintentional human error'. However, the passive voice utilised didn't sit well with the translator. Combined with the lack of any explanation as to what had actually happened or assurance that it wouldn't happen again, she was left feeling that the apology was insincere and dismissive, and the institution's overall response devoid of any indication that they accepted responsibility for their mistakes.

The institution went on to offer Yilin £150 for the translations in the catalogue, and later a further £450 to cover the initial use of her work elsewhere in the exhibit (stating that these sums, which total approx. AU$1145, were benchmarked to 'industry rates').

However, although Yilin continued to make it clear that an acceptable settlement would include not only 'an appropriate credit and a modest payment' but also 'reinstatement of my work for the rest of the exhibition's run', the institution refused to do the latter.

By early July, with the Museum thus unwilling to settle the matter to her satisfaction, Yilin saw no alternative but to resort to legal action. Launching a crowdfunding campaign titled 'Hold the British Museum accountable for copyright infringement'* to cover the anticipated legal costs, she describes the removal of the material and subsequent refusal to reinstate it as

… the worst possible outcome – the public are now not only being denied the chance to see my translations, and to know who wrote them, but also the chance to read Qiu Jin's words … The result is that two female writers of color have both had their work erased. We are not disposable.

Yilin explains that the case matters to her

*… not only because I believe both my work and Qiu Jin's work should receive the credit and respect they deserve, but because **it affects the copyright and moral rights of all translators, writers, and creatives**.*

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The British Museum has not issued an appropriate apology or taken proper responsibility for its actions, so if it is not held accountable, then this is a cycle that stands to be repeated.

If I am successful, I will use a small portion of any sums I recover to pay myself a modest amount for the use of my translations and the time it has taken to fight my case, and will donate all the rest (at least 50%) to a literary magazine or organization to fund a mentorship program or contest to support translators of color translating Chinese poetry.

I see fighting this case as a part of my long-term and ongoing advocacy and activism work in support of writers and translators of color.

In a Tweet a few days later Yilin condemns the Museum's communications with her as condescending and lacking in good faith, warning the institution that she would 'fight them to the bitter end' and ending with the following invocation:

May Qiu Jin's ghost haunt you all forever.

(In a subsequent Tweet she explains the context: a famous Chinese saying 不做亏心事，不怕鬼敲门, which translates as 'If you haven't done anything wrong, you won't be afraid of a ghost knocking on your door.')

The crowdfunding campaign soon raised enough funds to at least seed a legal challenge, and Yilin was able to take on a London-based lawyer who engaged a team of specialists experienced in intellectual property and moral rights claims in the art and cultural property context.

Shortly after Yilin obtained legal representation, the British Museum's then Director Hartwig Fischer (he has since resigned) reached out to her to propose a settlement, the terms of which essentially matched her demands, and on 7 August Yilin released a statement announcing the settlement and its details.*

In it she comments that, to her surprise, the Museum has no policy in place to address the clearance of translations, but in light of recent events has committed to creating one by the end of the year.

> *Let this be a lesson ... that permission must be obtained for the use of copyrighted translations ...*

Yilin wraps up her statement by thanking

... my lawyers ... [and] everyone who has spread the word on social media, wrote letters, drafted and shared a petition, donated to the fundraiser, and reported on this incident in newspapers, podcasts, or other formats [and] all the friends who supported me behind the scenes, and especially to all the organizers in ace and aro [asexual and aromantic], queer, feminist, academic, speculative fiction writing, and translation communities who stepped up. I could not have done this without you.

She goes on to say that the incident

... has showed me the power of the collective in holding institutions accountable. Let this be a lesson for the British Museum and other museums, organizations, and publications that permission must be obtained for the use of copyrighted translations, and that it's important to always #NameTheTranslator and pay them professional fees for their work ...

... and ends thus:

I am excited to finally be able to return to working on The Lantern and the Night Moths, *a book of poetry translations that I was in the middle of translating when I discovered the British Museum's use of my translations of Qiu Jin's poetry in their exhibit. I look forward to sharing more of Qiu Jin's verses with you all in the future.*

Yilin is following through on her intention to donate at least 50% of her settlement funds to 'a cause to support translators of Sinophone poetry', and the Museum has agreed to make an additional payment to her – matching their licence fee payment – to facilitate this. She is donating the funds to *Modern Poetry in Translation* magazine, to run two translation workshops (MPT Labs)*that will be both taught by and for 'BIPOC or racialized translators', one of which will focus specifically on Sinophone poetry 'in honor of Qiu Jin.'

* You can read Khairani Barokka's full interview with Yilin Wang **here**, *access the crowdfunding site* **here**, *read Yilin's statement in full* **here**, *and find out more about the MPT Labs* **here**.

Yilin Wang *translates literature across several genres from – and occasionally into – Mandarin Chinese. Her translations have been published widely, including in* POETRY, Guernica, Room, Asymptote *and* LA Review of Books' *'China Channel.' She has an MFA in creative writing from the University of British Columbia and is a graduate of the Clarion West Writers Workshop (2020–21); has been awarded the Foster Poetry Prize and been a finalist in / longlisted for various other literary awards and contests; and is a co-editor-in-chief of the cozy speculative fiction magazine* Tales & Feathers. *For a fuller biography visit Yilin's website* **here**.

Yilin's upcoming book **The Lantern and the Night Moths** *includes translations of Qiu Jin's poetry and an essay on translating her work. It will be released in April 2024 by Invisible Publishing.* In Touch *is pleased to announce that Yilin Wang has agreed to be interviewed about the British Museum incident in the broader context of her work as a translator. Look out for the interview in our next (December) issue.*

Developing inclusive LGBTIQA+ terminology resources for T&I

Researchers: Miranda Lai, Erika Gonzalez Garcia and Jacqueline Skewes

Institution: RMIT University, funded by the City of Melbourne

A screenshot from the website

From late 2021 to mid-2023, RMIT worked on a project to develop LGBTIQA+ terminology resources for translators, interpreters and other users and make them accessible online.
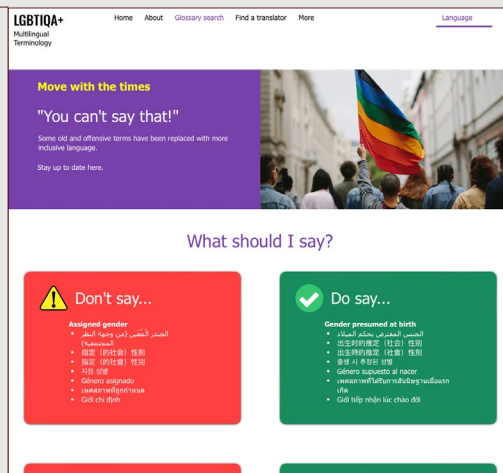
The goal was to facilitate use of respectful and inclusive language by T/Is when translating and interpreting for LGBTIQA+ members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We were greatly supported in our endeavours, with funding provided by the City of Melbourne and knowledge by our project partner, Budi Sudarto from the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council (AGMC). Budi provided training and facilitated the focus groups, and anyone who has met them knows what a pleasure it is to learn from them.

After much discussion, seven languages were chosen for resource development: Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese. We also explored including Indonesian, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish, but were unable to find enough participants to proceed past the first stage.

The project involved:

- language-specific focus groups with LGBTIQA+ members of CALD communities (Mar–Nov 2022)
- language-specific workshops with T&I practitioners (Nov 2022–Mar 2023)
- 1:1 interviews with T&I practitioners (Mar–May 2023)
- user test of the final online repository of terminology (August 2023)
- launch of website (September 2023).

The resources we've developed can also be used by LOTE-speaking members of ethnic communities to further their understanding of LGBTIQA+ terminology and facilitate understanding and inclusivity – thus catering for monolingual, bilingual and multilingual cohorts of community users!

You can access the brand spanking new multilingual LGBTIQA+ website **here**.

You can read more about the project **here**, *and to find out more you can contact Jacqueline Skewes* **here**. *You can also find ABC and SBS News articles about the project* **here** *and* **here**.

Teaching translators: three quick questions for Anna Gadd, coordinator of a master's program in translation

The University of Western Australia's Master of Translation Studies program is offered in 10 languages. We asked the program's coordinator, **Anna Gadd,** a few questions about the translators who are employed to teach on the program.
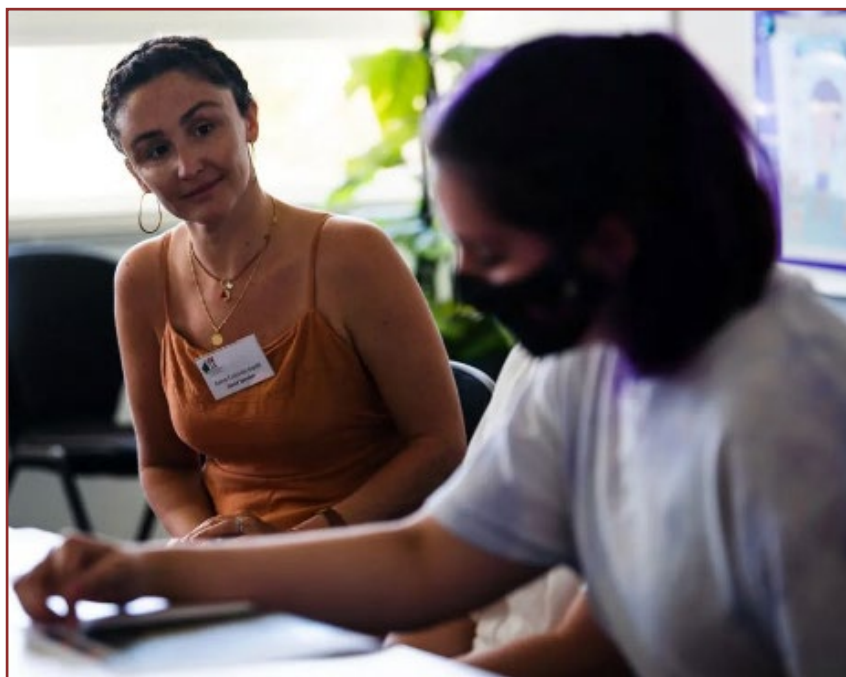
Anna at work at UWA

1. What qualities turn a translator into a good teacher of translation?

Teaching is about being able to transfer knowledge to others, to 'translate' in the Latin sense of the word (*transfero*: take across, transfer), so being a good translator doesn't automatically mean you are also a good teacher – some great translators lack the ability to pass their knowledge on to students. A great translation *teacher* is someone who can draw from their ample experience and give to their students everything they've learned, in terms of both knowledge and 'tricks of the trade', allowing their students to absorb all this and become potentially even better than themselves. The wisdom of a great translation teacher is often useful to students of all languages, not just their specific language specialisation(s). They have an ability to give to others which is different from translation per se, and this is a skill that not everyone has.

2. Do you look for translators who have worked in specific areas of translation, or who have broader experience?

We value a broad experience in our translation teachers. I, for one, am someone who is constantly looking for different fields to apply my translation/interpreting skills in, so that I can in turn give more to my students – and naturally, I look for the same in my colleagues: years of experience in many different fields, both here and abroad, of course qualifications (they need to be certified by NAATI and/or hold similar degrees or certificates in their LOTE (language other than English).

3. How do you adapt the program to equip your graduates for the fast-paced changes in working with technology such as AI and machine translation?

Offering courses that are up to date and relevant is a priority, and this is why I frequently attend conferences on translation and interpreting – to keep up to speed with the latest developments in the T&I industry. In order to transfer new knowledge to my students, I also organise seminars with masters of my discipline. We offer a unit called 'Technology for the Translator'. This is our most up-to-date unit on technology applied to translation, and it does include AI despite its very recent diffusion. Up until a few years ago, UWA was the only university offering a course of this type, and we hosted lecturers from other Australian universities to observe the unit and then offer it in their own institutions.

Editorial Committee member, *In Touch* magazine

As the aim of this series is to look at the wide variety of roles that are taken on by AUSIT members, we've decided that it's time we looked at ourselves! So, in this issue we talk to **Nicola Thayil,** a longstanding member of the Editorial Committee that assists the editors in selection and production of material for the magazine.

Hours/issue: 2 to 3	Voluntary? Yes	AUSIT member for: 10 years	Time in this role: 3 years

Other AUSIT roles: VIC Branch Committee member 2013–16 / VIC mini-Conference Organising Committee 2016 / Communications, Promotions and Public Relations Committee Chair 2016 / PD presenter 2017: Business skills for translators / moderator for PD panel session: Topics in Translation 2015 / participant in AUSIT mentoring program, 2021–23 (mentee #3 this year)
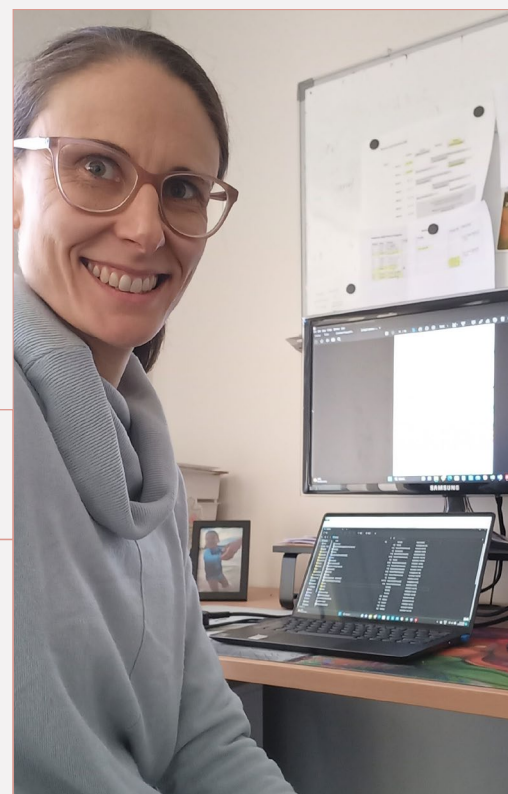
Q1. What does the role of Editorial Committee member involve?

There are currently 11 T&I practitioners and/or academics on the Editorial Committee in addition to the Chair, covering various spoken languages (including Aboriginal languages) and Auslan, and working across a range of fields. We attend quarterly meetings online to discuss ideas for topics, articles, interviews and other content to be included in *In Touch*, and support the editors (Hayley and Helen) by helping to compile this content. This mostly involves contacting potential contributors, conducting interviews and occasionally writing articles, as I'll mention later.

Q2. Why did you take it on?

I was invited to join the committee by Hayley's predecessor Melissa, after I'd contributed several articles and also helped with proofreading, and I decided to do so in order to support AUSIT's work in raising the profile of our profession and showcasing my talented colleagues. It was a way I could keep contributing to AUSIT without being on a branch committee, which I'd already done for a few years.

Q3. What skills or qualities are needed in this role?

Similar skills to those required to be a translator! Curiosity and attention to detail are important, as well as being able to research topics and being willing to contact people who might like to contribute. Also the ability to work remotely within a team.

Q4. Is the work steady throughout the year, or does it fluctuate?

Some periods of the year are busier than others, mainly a couple of months before an issue is due to be released, sourcing contributors that we'd like to include (especially for regular pages such as this one!), and there is always background work related to collating ideas. If no other AUSIT member comes forward or can be found to write about a topic we want to cover, and one of the committee members has the relevant experience, we sometimes draft an article or put ourselves forward to interview – over the last few years I've been interviewed about the AUSIT mentoring program (along with one of my mentees), put together an article about how I've been getting involved in environmental translation, and now this interview. For these issues, of course, I spend a few more hours.

Q5. What advice would you give to someone thinking about taking on this role?

It's a great way to meet colleagues and stay on top of what's happening in the T&I world, and for me it also provides an enjoyable way of giving back to the profession with a more flexible time commitment than some of the other roles.

MEMBER PROFILES

NAME:	YOU (CLAUDIA) ZHOU	ALBA BARRIENTOS
Translator or interpreter (or both):	both	translator
Language(s) and direction(s):	Mandarin–English (interpreter) & Chinese>English (translator)	Spanish<>English
Location:	Hobart, TAS	Adelaide, SA
Practising as a T/I since:	2021	December 2007
Member of AUSIT since:	2022	December 2020
Main area(s) of practice:	medical, legal, community services (interpreting) & business, marketing, academic research (translating)	legal

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).

YOU (CLAUDIA) ZHOU

A1
After I started learning English at the age of nine, people often told me that I had a talent for languages. Over time I came to appreciate the beauty of different languages, and began to develop a strong interest in this area. I became especially interested in translating and interpreting after reading an autobiography of a Chinese translator. After completing a degree in event management and working in this area for a year, I realised that if I didn't give myself a chance to step into the T&I industry, I would probably regret it in the future. So I made the decision to go back to study, and after graduating I slowly began to find opportunities in the T&I industry. I'm really grateful to all the tutors, mentors and industry leaders I met back then, who taught me the power of languages and the important roles we play in becoming linguistic and cultural bridges.

A2
I'm currently translating a thesis for a postgraduate research project in law, on the differences and relationship between 'arbitration' and 'mediation'. I'm finding it interesting and challenging at the same time. I have experience of interpreting in court and tribunal settings, and can sort of understand the nature of arbitration and mediation, but it's really amazing and surprising to see such in-depth analysis of these two processes and their relationship, and I'm finding it extremely difficult when it comes to word choices and register. This project is on a tight schedule, and maintaining the translation quality while also meeting the deadline is a big challenge.

ALBA BARRIENTOS

A1
I have a knack for words and languages. I was an English teacher in my country of origin, and am an avid reader. Ever since I can remember, people have asked for my help in translating what they have to say into English, putting their thoughts on paper, or editing their writing – friends, neighbours, co-workers, flatmates, siblings, acquaintances … so becoming a translator was a natural progression. And I really enjoy it. It makes me feel like I am a channel of communication across cultures.

A2
I once performed pro bono translation and interpreting work for a Hare Krishna spiritual master or guru in Caracas, Venezuela. On one occasion, every Spanish-speaking devotee wrote him a poem to be included in a book that would be published to celebrate his birthday. The guru didn't speak Spanish, and it was my job to translate his devotees' poems into English. Most of them came from a low socioeconomic background, with little or no formal education. The poems were rustic, and at times very difficult to understand in Spanish, let alone translate into English. I had to sit down with each person and ask questions about what they wished to convey, and then translate their answers into a lovely heartfelt offering. Some would struggle to put a few broken words on paper, and tell me with all sincerity that they trusted me to write something beautiful on their behalf. I was very touched. It was a rewarding experience, a work of trust and collaboration.