Special feature:

Practitioners' tips
Establishing a freelance
 translation practice
< page 7
How best to give feedback
< pages 8–9 & 11
Translation revision clubs
< pages 10–11

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

Hayley Armstrong (Chair)

Elvira Bianchi

Lavinia Napaltjarri Heffernan

Jemma Ives

Sophia Ra

Cristina Savin

Tania Stuart

Vera Gu

Xiaoxing (Amy) Wang

Letter from the editors

Welcome to our first issue of 2024.

We would like to start by thanking J. Angelo Berbotto for his work over the last 1.5 years for his dynamic and insightful work serving as our National President. Thank you Angelo!

This issue includes:

- two book reviews: a gripping novel featuring an interpreter; and a survey of how 'the pandemic' transformed the T&I world, plus the progress being achieved around the world towards recognition of T&I as 'vital to civic, legal, economic and social life'

(pages 4 & 5)

- a special feature in which three translation practitioners give tips for their peers (pages 7–11)

- another fascinating interview with a literary translator (pages 12–13)

- a fourth 'AUSIT Stalwarts' interview: the Chair of ACT's Branch Committee, Dave Deck, interviewed by AUSIT's current National Treasurer, Han Xu (pages 14–17)

... and much more! And if you enjoy reading *In Touch*, don't forget to share either the whole magazine or your favourites articles (on AUSIT's blog) on social media!

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, a poem you've written that relates to your T&I experiences, 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

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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):

4 Dec: USU certifies its first medical interpreters *usustatesman.com*

8 Dec: Five of the best translated novels of 2023 *theguardian.com*

9 Dec: 'I cried, I danced to Springsteen': in Australia, a Nobel laureate's translator celebrates their win *theguardian.com*

31 Dec: 'A translated work gains as much as it loses': Writer and translator Damion Searls *theweek.in*

2 Jan: How Aztec Mexico was lost in translation: a wild novel revises the Spanish conquest *latimes.com*

Cover reproduced courtesy of Penguin Random House

9 Jan: Magistrates adjourn cases for lack of interpreters *thepoint.gm*

9 Jan: Duolingo cuts 10% of its contractor workforce as the company embraces AI *au.news.yahoo.com*

10 Jan: Man charged with attempted murder after court interpreter stabbed in Longueuil, Que. *cbc.ca/news*

14 Jan: Korean winner of US National Award explores the transparent and nonexistent *koreaherald.com*

21 Jan: Emily Wilson's fluent new translation of the Iliad honours the epic poem's power and beauty *the conversation.com*

25 Jan: Translator of Dr Seuss books becomes 'mother of school' *bluemountainsgazette.com.au*

27 Jan: Shelan is in demand as a free translator for Wagga's Yazidi community. It's a common story for young migrants *abc.net.au/news*

8 Feb: 27 Winners Revealed in EU Young Translator Contest *miragenews.com*

11 Feb: NAATI: The Guardians of Quality in Australia's Multilingual Landscape *bnnbreaking.com*

12 Feb: Ensuring Accuracy Down Under: The Importance of NAATI-Approved Translations *chiangraitimes.com*

12 Feb: Marlee Matlin slams CBS after network failed to show ASL performers at Super Bowl *nbcnews.com*

16 Feb: Washington State May Be First US State to Require Licenses for Translators, Interpreters *slator.com*

18 Feb: She's such a poet': The interpreters bringing the Eras Tour to the deaf *smh.com.au*

18 Feb: Four New Books in Translation Test the Bounds of Reality: A roundup of international fiction from Congo, Sweden, Bolivia and India *nytimes.com*

19 Feb: Tsitsi Dangarembga, the author of Nervous Conditions, a Zimbabwean classic. Thomas Lohnes/Getty Images; Nervous Conditions: on translating one of Zimbabwe's most famous novels into Shona *theconversation.com*

19 Feb: Penn State THON fuels life-saving medical interpreter program for cancer patients *local21news.com*

21 Feb: Asylum seekers must now provide their own interpreters. Advocates say that's impossible *kjzz.org*

25 Feb: Jennifer Croft, Imbi Neeme and Mykaela Saunders on translation, chewing and the Tweed *ABC Listen*

26 Feb: Rookie female interpreter provides voice for foreign baseball stars in Japan *japantimes.co.jp*

2 Mar: The Extinction of Irena Rey by Jennifer Croft review – eight translators lost in a forest *theguardian.com*

[look out for our review of this novel by award-winning translator Jennifer Croft in our July issue]

13 Mar: AI-narrated books are here: Are humans out of a job? *techxplore.com*

14 Mar: For the first time, Tasos Leivaditis' Night Visitor translated in full in English *sbs.com.au*

15 Mar: AI translation: how to train 'the horses of enlightenment' *theguardian.com*

20 Mar: Family not informed deaf relative was stabbed, hospitalized due to no ASL interpreter *kfor.com/news*
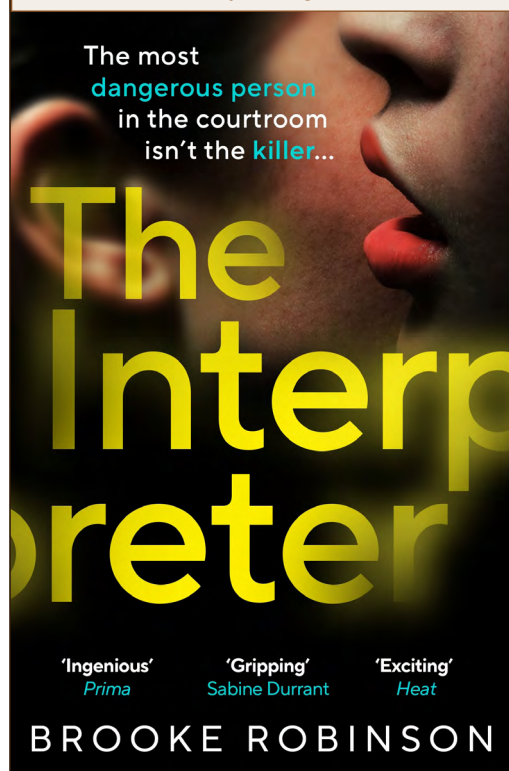
The Interpreter

by Brooke Robinson

reviewed by Daniel Collado Sanz

We may sometimes forget how important our role is for others: how we connect strangers ...

The *Interpreter* is a 336-page thriller that grabs you by the guts and never lets go.

As an interpreter myself, I can assure you that it paints an accurate picture of the hurdles we go through daily, and those details only add to how real it all feels. As I read I found myself repeatedly thinking, 'This could so easily happen to me!' and asking myself, 'Have I ever been in such a situation and not realised?'

Cover reproduced courtesy of Penguin Random House

The most **dangerous person** in the courtroom isn't the **killer**...

The Interpreter

'Ingenious' *Prima*   'Gripping' Sabine Durrant   'Exciting' *Heat*

B R O O K E   R O B I N S O N

Our main character, Revelle Lee – a London-based full-time 'terp' who is trusted and valued by her clients – is getting used to also being a full-time mum. When she becomes involved in a high-profile case she is tempted – despite years of practice and an immaculate record so far – to let her own morals (and an unknown party) influence her work.

We get to know about Revelle's past, one bite at a time, whilst watching as the consequences of her choices unravel in the present and endanger what she cherishes the most. Her struggles with the legal system, with her irregular sources of income, and with the misconceptions about her role that are held by almost every single person she encounters, all strike close to home – and those are only the problems that she is aware of.

In terms of ambience, the action takes place all over London. Having spent time working there myself, I especially enjoyed the star appearance by my favourite borough, Greenwich. Australian author Brooke Robinson does a great job of painting the city, recreating it as a background that pairs with the story as well as an Adelaide Hills chardonnay does with a serving of barramundi. As I read I was transported back to my own days in the historic city, and found myself longing to go for a wander past the Old Bailey, through Temple, or around the Royal Observatory.

We may sometimes forget how important our role is for others: how we connect strangers, and prevent language barriers from becoming wider barriers – walls that block access to health services, a fair trial, or even electricity and gas at home. Throughout the book, I feel, the author makes sure she conveys this one fact in particular. Revelle is shown to be a key worker for dozens of citizens, and we can see that her work matters, and her doing the best that she can makes a difference every time.

For this reason, I would strongly recommend that policymakers and other stakeholders who deal daily with interpreters and/or translators read this book, and (I hope) ponder: 'Should we really be cutting funds and lowering rates? Or should we instead be supporting these armies of one, so that they can focus more on the work and less on where the next paycheck will come from?'

Be ready to gasp, wow, and feel for Revelle. The interpreter in you will not be left indifferent.

You can read author Brooke Robinson's letter to readers of her debut novel The Interpreter **here***.*

Daniel Collado Sanz is a Madrid-based (formerly Sydney-based) Spanish–English T/I. He currently works freelance in T&I, and also as a Spanish content and localisation specialist with the tele- and cloud communications platform Sinch, and produces weekly articles for their blog. Daniel is also an avid reader, and has published a few short fiction stories under a pen name.

Educating Community Interpreters and Translators in Unprecedented Times

## edited by Miranda Lai, Oktay Eser and Ineke Crezee

reviewed by Dr Ron Witton

Cover reproduced courtesy of Palgrave Macmillan

There are 17 chapters in this very comprehensive survey of how the interpreting and translating world has been transformed by COVID, and the progress being made around the world towards having our profession recognised as vital to civil, legal, economic and social life.

The significant role being played by Australia is shown by not only the choice of RMIT
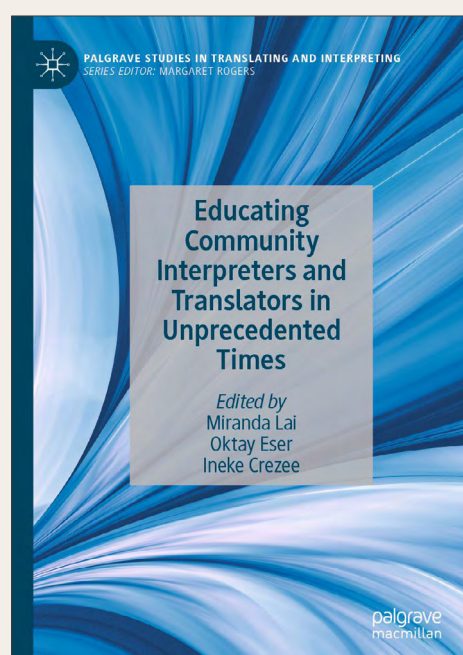
Miranda Lai reminds us of the pioneering role played by Australia in this area …

University's Miranda Lai as senior editor, but also the well-researched chapter 'Australia: Navigating the Pandemic and Exploring New Pedagogical Horizons', by Miranda's colleagues Erika González García, Caroline Norma and Olga García-Caro. All four Australian contributors have drawn on their wide experience of T&I in Australia, and much that is discussed here will be both familiar and of great interest to the readers of *In Touch*. However, the strength of the chapter lies in how it helps us see the wider picture of both the industry and the society in which we ply our trade.

For those of us who maintain an interest in what is happening in our clients' countries of origin, there are chapters on Argentina and Uruguay, Belgium, Canada, China, New Zealand, Palestine, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine and the USA, as well as other chapters focusing specifically on technology and government responses to our ever-changing society, including in this post-COVID era.

Of particular interest are Miranda Lai's introductory and concluding chapters. Her introductory 'Community Translation and Interpreting in Unprecedented Times' sets the scene: how COVID impacted both the world

and the T&I profession. As in most professions, both training and practice had to rely on the use of remote technology to ensure a supply of T/Is during the worldwide surge in the demand for communicators, who were needed to assist governments and institutions in addressing the plight of often isolated individuals.

The particular role of community T&I is addressed, as is its increasingly important role given the sharp rise in immigration worldwide, and close attention is paid to the maintenance of standards in this situation, and the central role played by credentialling.

Miranda reminds us of the pioneering role Australia played in this area, as the first country to set up a comprehensive credentialling system for community T/Is through the establishment of NAATI in 1977, and also rightly highlights the role AUSIT played in creating a professional organisation for practitioners which is, in many ways, a model for the world.

She then draws on the individual chapters to provide a global comparative analysis, the comprehensiveness of which results from having access to the analysis and experience of the 29(!) authors who have cooperated in producing this book.

5

AUSIT NEWS

The AUSIT Archive

AUSIT was officially formed in 1987 as a professional organisation for interpreters and translators working in Australia's multicultural society, and has since served as a model for similar bodies in other countries.

continued from previous page

Miranda's final chapter, 'Community Interpreting and Translation: Looking to the Future', draws on the wealth of information contained in the preceding 16 chapters to predict future developments in T&I. She addresses many of the problems still being faced in this (almost) post-COVID world, including 'Zoom fatigue' and the blurring of work boundaries, and their impact on our day-to-day workload. She stresses how our digital literacy has been challenged, and also the manner in which technology has challenged integrity in testing and performance measurement.

However, her assessment of our current world is not all doom and gloom – she sees a silver lining in areas such as flexibility and autonomy of learning, and the professional and individual benefits of tapping into expanded virtual networks.

This volume will do much to stimulate thought on the road ahead for individuals, institutions, and governments in maintaining T&I standards, and in promoting innovation in the coming years, and it rightly recognises Australia's significant role in this.

Dr Ron Witton gained his BA and MA in Indonesian and Malayan Studies from the University of Sydney and his PhD from Cornell University, USA. He is a foundation member of AUSIT, and currently practises as an Indonesian– and Malay–English translator and interpreter.

[image: iStock.com/FooTToo]

As AUSIT's rich history dates from the pre-digital era, and many of its foundation and early members are now reaching an advanced age, it's crucial that materials relevant to our history are gathered and archived as soon as possible.

AUSIT Fellows **Terry Chesher** and **Barbara McGilvray** have started the process of establishing an archive, by cataloguing a wealth of material collected over the years. They say that 'AUSIT has a remarkable story to tell, beginning more than three and a half decades ago, when the individual state T&I associations were brought together under one umbrella. It soon became a presence on the world stage, thanks largely to the seminal work of [another AUSIT Fellow] **Adolfo Gentile** behind the scenes [which you can read about in Ludmila Stern's recent interview with Adolfo in our **Winter 2023 issue** (page 13)]. Despite a few hiccups along the way our Institute has flourished, and continues to grow steadily in size and influence.'

After a callout last year, Monash University's **Intercultural Lab** agreed to host the **AUSIT Archive**. Do you have papers, photos, files or other material that document a part of AUSIT's history? Or do you know a retired member who has? The AUSIT National Council would love to hear from you.*

And calling graduate students: the AUSIT Archive would make a great PhD topic. If you're interested in pursuing a project to document and analyse AUSIT's history, contact the National Council.*

* You can contact the NC **here**.

Starting out: tips for establishing a freelance translation practice

Translator **Cathlin Barrett** received her NAATI certification in French>English translation last March, joined AUSIT in April, graduated from Macquarie University's Graduate Diploma of Translating and Interpreting course in May, and contacted *In Touch* with her idea for this article in June. Now busy setting herself up as a freelance translator, she's keen to help her peers by sharing what she has learned so far.

O ver the past few months, while establishing my business, I've often felt quite in the dark.

I think it's really important for graduates to have a clear plan for finding work, so I'd like to share the five things I've found most helpful in launching my career in freelance translation – my 'Top 5' tips:

1. Research rates and set yours ...

... *before* you finish your tertiary studies! Find out what the going rates are from your tutors and lecturers already working in the industry, then decide what you'll charge when you start out, so you're not stumped when applying to LSPs (they will all ask you for your rates).

2. Practise

Again while you're still studying: ask your tutors for practice in translating official documents. Let's face it, even if your ultimate aim is to be a literary, diplomatic or some other kind of translator, this kind of work is likely to be your bread and butter when you start out.

3. Start collecting templates

Still at college or uni: also ask your tutors if they have any templates you can use, as getting ahead with these will save you a lot of time and hassle.

4. Establish a network

Starting with your tutors and peers at college/uni: build up a network of freelance T&I professionals so you can share information – things like which LSPs are better to work for, and what you will charge for various services. Of course, joining AUSIT can play a large part in this process.

5. Start building your online profile

- Create a simple website to market yourself. There are many free or affordable site-building options that will allow you to update your site without IT skills. You can check out my site here.

- Make a simple logo for your business. The free online service Zarla worked well for me, or your site builder might include a free logo generator.

- Establish a profile on a professional network. I use LinkedIn (you can contact me **here**) and there are quite a few others you can choose from.

... getting ahead ... will save you a lot of time and hassle.

Those are my tips so far. To my peers: I wish you all the best in beginning your career in the T&I industry!

Cathlin Barrett fell in love with the French language at the age of 12. Since then it has been a huge influence in her life, and has been passed on to her two children, who are being raised bilingual in an all-Australian household. Cathlin has taught English as a second language in France, Canada and Burkina Faso, and French in Australia. She is fascinated by the transfer of words and meaning between languages, and says moving into the T&I industry – where she hopes to combine her experience in adult education and her translating skills – feels like a natural progression.

Please Handle With Care: some tips on giving feedback

Experienced translator, translation checker and proof-reader **Eirlys Chessa** recently emailed us this very handy set of tips 'to pass on … to my colleagues … and potentially also to clients and project/translation managers' about feedback and marking up text.

… the best tip I gained from the entire course was the use of 'perhaps consider …'

These are words from the heart, looking back and reflecting on more than 30 years' personal experience to try to condense my philosophy and modus operandi.

My apologies in advance for any omissions – others may have had entirely different experiences.

I attended an elective on proofreading and editing while studying towards my formal T&I qualification from RMIT just over 10 years ago, by which time I had already been checking other translators' work for more than 20 years. My first experience of translation checking in Australia was in the early 1990s, when working for TIS in Canberra, and later I checked translations as a freelancer for various companies.

I signed up for the elective because I wanted to gain a keener insight into the ethics of proofreading and how to go about the task in a respectful, non-judgemental, friendly and consistent manner. So here are my tips:

1. Feedback: 'perhaps' and 'consider'

Arguably, the best tip I gained from the entire course was the use of 'perhaps consider …' – a powerful yet gracious phrase which conveys validation of the writer's work and aims to make suggestions without imposing your views.

If we mark a word or phrase and want to suggest potential improvements, we can do so politely and tentatively (rather than categorically). In this way, it is clear to the receiving writer that they have been understood, and that these are options to consider and either accept or set aside (I do not favour the negative implications in the verb 'reject', even though it is commonly used in editing/reviewing software).

As writers (and as translators) we need to learn to accept feedback gracefully and provide it equally as gracefully. I believe this is both a skill and an art, as well as a lifelong attitude (I am still learning and love learning).

We also need to learn how to look out for feedback and/or consider providing feedback on feedback (even proofreaders and checkers need constructive feedback, and to know we are appreciated – it does wonders for our self-esteem!)

2. Comments versus corrections

When using editing software, and indeed when simply 'tracking changes', we have two main options: 'corrections' (which include deletions and insertions) and 'comments' (which are usually explanatory). My best advice, based on experience, is as follows:

Perhaps reserve corrections for where the text has typos, grammatical or linguistic errors, and/or obvious additions or omissions that substantially change the meaning of the text.

Try using comments only when suggesting the writer (or translator colleague) consider alternatives. As a first translator, you can also leave comments to explain your choices to your checker and/or save their time by providing links to available precedents.

Consider combining corrections and comments to correct and highlight apparent inconsistencies (between phrases/segments or across related projects).

Some software allows translators and proofreaders to communicate in writing (even anonymously) with each other and/or with the project manager via an online 'chat' function. If available, consider making use of it – if used well, it can save time spent writing emails or making phone calls. My father, who was a

librarian and amateur Latinist and historian, taught me the Latin proverb *Verba volant, scripta manent* (Spoken words fly away but written ones stay). It has coloured my outlook on life, and applies well here – it's always good to have a paper trail to help justify and explain choices to clients.

Take your time and try to resist the temptation to speed up the proofreading process by using 'search & replace' features. Being thorough shows respect for your own physical and mental health, for your colleague's work, and ultimately for your clients. Rather, if you think you need more time, let them know in advance. Your efforts will be the better for it, and your honesty and integrity will be all the more appreciated. No deadline makes it worth handing in work

… try to resist the temptation to speed up the … process by using 'search and replace' features.

that that is 'good enough' while knowing it will probably need further revision (which will in turn affect the return to the client and the related costs and stress for all parties). Please bear in mind that most of our work is read by members of the public and/or officials, some of whom may also be fluent in our language pairs.

3. Labelling and/or grading corrections

Often skipped, this is a crucial part of providing guidance and feedback. It also enables the project manager to better understand the reason for the corrections, to facilitate future decision making, and to provide feedback to the client, translator *and* checker.

If not already provided by your project manager or translation manager, you might consider suggesting that you all agree on a list of one-word comments or brief phrases to 'grade' errors and inconsistencies (and save everyone's time in the process), for example:

typo / tag error / grammar / mistranslation / omission / addition / register / non-idiomatic / consistency (with precedent or style guide, or within target text).

'Style' merits a particular mention. Please remember that style is individual, and is not 'wrong' unless you feel there is an error of consistency (for example, in contrast with precedents or the overall style of a publication) or of register (for example, colloquial versus formal or topic specific). In such cases, providing constructive feedback is an important part of the editing process.

We all have different learning and writing styles – some of us learn by reading, others by listening or by doing. If you believe the writing style could improve or is inappropriate to the topic,

you can always add a comment that includes an example or a link to an online precedent. This will show the original writer or translator that you respect their work (and learning style) and have also thoroughly researched the topic before making a style-based correction. In this context you can use phrases such as 'perhaps consider …' or 'with reference to segment X in this project'.

4. Getting software to work for you: accepting and rejecting, QA and tags

Knowing your software makes for a much more relaxed and holistic approach to your work: take the time to learn its features and use them both proactively and reactively. Do not be afraid to leave translator's notes (as comments, footnotes or even as a separate document or in the submission email), to seek clarifications, or to ask questions. Life is a learning process, and we humans often struggle to cope with the speed at which the latest

software is programmed to evolve and adapt.

Fact: we humans have feelings, computers do not. Some of us feel the need to be verbose and detailed (as you can see, I'm one of these! ☺), while computers don't need lengthy explanations, just simple instructions (if X, then go to Y), as they ultimately still operate via binary code (on/off, accept/reject). If we understand this, we can be more confident in both using the software and accepting/rejecting corrections and suggestions. We can also make informed decisions on where it is constructive to leave a lengthy comment, and where to be concise.

Quality assurance (QA) button: If you are proofreading with software that includes and detects 'tags' (elements inserted in documents or files to change how the content looks, or to perform actions), and you need to 'run a QA' on the project as part of the proofreading process, it can be helpful to know the effect of any tags used and why they may be present in a segment.

Some software will allow you to 'expand tags' to see the coding they contain. They may change font style, colour or size, insert a line break, activate a hyperlink, and so on. If you make changes to tags, or to text between tags, the target text may appear differently on the page compared with the source text.

For example, tags around the title of a piece of legislation may be there to change the font to italics. These titles need to remain as they are, we can't insert target language words within a source text title to make it flow or to explain it, as one translator had done in a text that I proofed. (AUSIT's best practice recommendation in a similar situation – see link in Tip #5 – is to precede with the translation of the title, then follow with the source text title, retaining its italics, between square brackets, or put it in a footnote. And if we want to avoid double brackets we can sometimes use commas or dashes within brackets, as I just did!)

If in doubt, ask your project manager or refer to the ***Australian Government Style Manual*** (again, see Tip #5) before making substantial changes to a text or translation. Individual clients and companies may also have their own style guides or sets of guidelines or preferences.

Translation revision clubs: what are they and how do members benefit?

In early 2022, while completing her master's in T&I, **Caroline Darke** was invited to join a translation revision club with three professional French>English freelance translators. She explains here what a revision club is, and how she feels she has benefited.

The concept of a translation revision club was the brainchild of three Spanish>English translators: Victoria Patience, Simon Berrill and Tim Gutteridge.*

It developed in 2016 out of a series of blog posts and comments discussing the conundrum of how translators could improve the quality of their work through peer revision in the face of time and budgetary constraints.

In its simplest form, a revision club is an arrangement whereby individual translators working in the same language pair and direction take turns reviewing each other's translations. The cycle finishes with a 'slam text': all club members translate it, then meet up to compare and discuss their translations and approaches to linguistic and cultural challenges.

It's important to note that a revision club is not a proofreading service. The purpose of the club is for members to improve their translation skills, and the texts used are either members' past translations or translations completed specifically for peer feedback, rather than 'live' translations.

… an arrangement whereby individual translators … take turns reviewing each other's translations.

And if you're wondering how a revision club differs from a translation masterclass [as described by Yveline Piller and J. Angelo Berbotto in the **Summer 2022–23** issue of *In Touch*, pages 18–19]:

- it's a much smaller group
- it's ongoing
- the group doesn't work together on the slam text to combine their ideas and make a final version
- the small group structure allows each person to select their own text for revision (as well as taking turns to choose the slam text), which can be beneficial if there's a particular translation issue you would like input on from others.

As a translation student, I was initially quite daunted – not only by the prospect of sending my own translations to professional translators to be reviewed, but also by that of providing feedback on their translations! However, the experience has been incredibly beneficial, as – in addition to valuable feedback – I've been exposed to alternative perspectives on common translation challenges. For example, a French sentence can often 'hold' more ideas within it than its English equivalent, and the translator must find a creative solution to convey the same information and meaning just as clearly and succinctly in English. What's more, as a novice translator I've found it quite helpful to see firsthand where, why and to what extent a more experienced practitioner might 'move away from' the source text.

Our revision club focuses on environmental, legal and business texts, but we sometimes tackle other texts – one example being the preface to a cookbook – to provide opportunities to stretch our translation muscles in other domains.

I joined the club as the fourth member (although

for much of last year we were three, while one member was on maternity leave). We've found that a club size of three to four members works well, as it provides diversity of experience and opinions without having to wait too long for your own translations to be reviewed.

Working online and meeting over Zoom means there is no restriction on geographical location. However, all our members are in similar time zones, and this does facilitate scheduling to discuss slam texts.

After completing my studies, I realised that clients are unlikely to provide feedback of the kind that my tutors and lecturers did, so our revision club provides much needed opportunities for feedback and ongoing skill development.

Revision clubs are also a great way to reduce the isolation inherent in freelance work and to foster positive industry relationships.

I've found participating in a revision club has improved my ability to critically read my own work, and hopefully allows me (and also, of course, my club colleagues) to produce better quality translations.

*French>English translator **Caroline Darke** completed a BA majoring in French and Spanish, followed by an accounting degree. After working in accounting and business then taking time out of the workforce to start a family, she returned to follow her passion for languages, completing the Master of Interpreting and Translation Studies (MITS) course at Monash University, Melbourne in 2022, and is now undertaking a PhD in the Translation Studies program there.*

* Tim Gutteridge started a Facebook group to help match translators up with peers who want to establish or join revision clubs. You can read a post by Tim and find the Facebook link **here***.*

A screenshot of Caroline's revision club, clockwise from top right: Caroline, Nicola Thayil and Monique McLellan
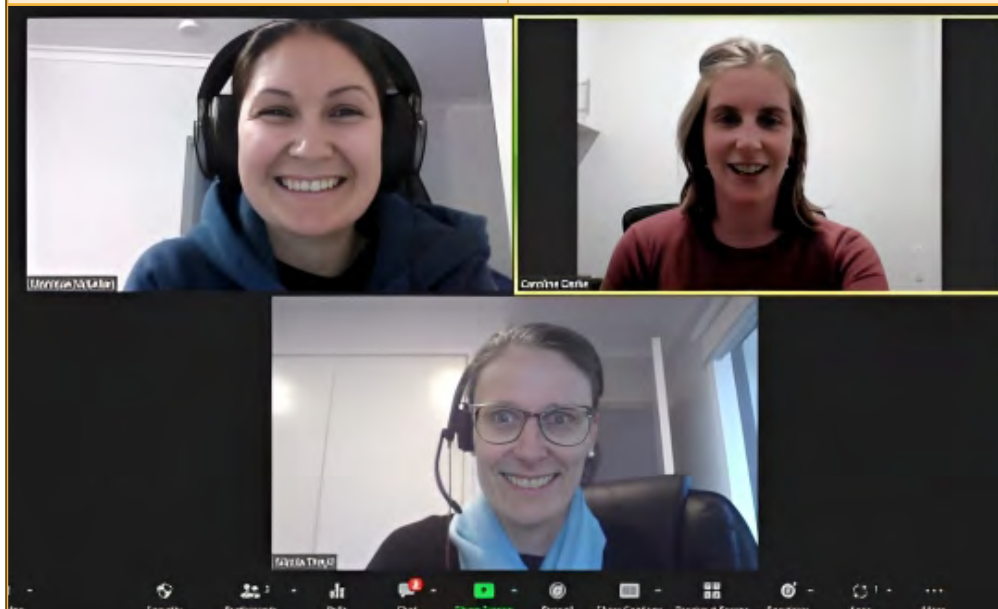
5. The *AUSIT Code of Ethics* and the *Australian Government Style Manual* (for Australian English)

Keep a copy of both of these close by, they are really helpful when you need formal guidance. The Style Manual also provides tips on proofreading and editing (and if you have similar style guides in your other language(s), by all means keep them on hand too). And for those who prefer the screen to flipping through pages, here are links to the online versions:

AUSIT Code of Ethics

Australian Government Style Manual

As mentioned in Tip #4, AUSIT provides 'best practice' guidelines for the translation of official and legal documents, which you can access **here**.*

Also online, you can subscribe to specialised dictionaries, glossaries, thesauri and style guides in English and other languages. Colleagues in your language pair and/or field may be able to help you decide which will work best for you.

I hope you have found at least some of this interesting, useful and/or helpful. ☺

All the best, Eirlys

Eirlys Chessa began providing T&I for business negotiations in Italy in 1980, migrated to Australia in 1988, obtained her first NAATI credential in 1990, and has worked in the industry ever since – from community interpreting and specialised translation to interpreter engagement (mentor, coach, quality control) and online game localisation/ transcreation (consultant, linguist, proofreader). Other fields she has worked in include legal and diplomatic (ACT Magistrates Court, Italian Embassy), military records and museum research. Eirlys is a founding member of TIA (our T&I division of the union Professionals Australia), served AUSIT briefly on its Ethics & Professional Practice Committee, and was the first chair of its Public Relations & Promotions Committee before resigning to look after her health and family.

* AUSIT's 'Best Practices for the Translation of Official and Legal Documents' guidelines are currently being revised.

Rising to a challenge: Stephen F Nagle on life as a translator of poetry
interviewed by Cristina Savin

When ex-medical translator **Stephen F Nagle** commented that a translation of a Rilke poem wasn't very good, he was challenged to improve on it. Taking up the challenge profoundly changed both his career and his life, as he tells fellow literary translator and *In Touch* Editorial Committee member **Cristina Savin**.

Stephen (top)
and Cristina

What attracts me to both poets is their use of … individual words … as poetic juggling balls.

Cristina Savin (CS): *How did you start as a literary translator, and what genre(s) do you translate?*

Stephen F. Nagle (SN): I worked for many years as a technical and medical translator in Germany before embarking on a corporate career here at home in Melbourne. I made friends with a literary publisher who mentioned to me how dearly she loved the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, which she read in translation as she had no German. I read the same translation and commented on how poorly executed I thought it was. She challenged me to do a better translation of Rilke's *First Elegy*, which is notoriously difficult. Anyway, my version must have been to her satisfaction, as that lady is now my wife.

CS: *How do you prepare for a literary translation? Do you use any particular strategies?*

SN: I've mainly translated the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke and Paul Celan, both of whom are modernist poets. To prepare, I first read widely and deeply on the historical period in which the authors wrote, and on the history of the writers who influenced them. In the case of Celan and Rilke, this means looking at the roots of modernism, which begins in the early 19th century with the French. I also familiarise myself with the poets' lives and the phases they were going through when they wrote each collection of their poetry. Especially important is reading their correspondence with lovers or close friends, as this can hint at their mood or disposition. Contemporaneous literary criticism will also provide invaluable insight into the artistic milieu in which the poets lived and the major influencers on their work. Reading various other translations is essential, but more important is using a top-grade dictionary which gives special regard to syntax, style and idiomatic usage. I use the 1972 revised edition of Wildhagen and Héraucourt's German–English dictionary.

CS: *You've lived in Germany and Switzerland and have chosen the poetry of Rilke and Celan. What distinctive aspects of their writing and literary styles have inspired you as a translator?*

SN: Both Rilke and Celan grew up speaking German in minority enclaves – Rilke in Prague and Celan in Czernowitz, Romania. German was the language of culture in both the Austro-Hungarian Empire of Rilke's youth, and the long-established Romanian Jewish community in which Celan grew up. It was not the language of the street. German then became a magnificent, almost exotic tool for both poets to use in expressing their poetic beings.

Rilke and Celan both wrote an idiosyncratic German, using an artistic flair and a freedom with the language which attracts me from a poetic point of view. Speaking German as a second language, I also enjoy the sound and the rhythm of German, and the ability of the poet to use declension of word endings to create rhyme, while simultaneously creating oblique word patterns without obscuring meaning.

Rilke wrote in perfect iambic metre and his uncanny ability to find words to rhyme, without losing gravitas, is one reason he was so popular during his own lifetime. His poetry was entertaining and heartfelt. It was also 'modern' and thus fashionable in the early 20th century. Celan created his own words – not by utilising the common practice of stringing words together in German, but by coining absurd or surreal words to create

striking images with which to illuminate his poetic dialogue.

What attracts me to both poets, then, is their use of language – of individual words – as poetic juggling balls. Rilke is like an impressionist painter, every word is like a brushstroke; Celan is much more like an abstract expressionist, leading the reader into undefined spaces through invented expressions that evoke raw emotions. So, to translate these poets one must take the freedom to seek expressions in English which reflect the avant-garde attitude each poet had to art in his own particular age.

I've translated some Rilke poems with rhyme; for others this is impossible: the translation doesn't sound like Rilke. Emulating his metre is also hard, but Rilke without metre is not right, so one needs to keep practising.

The most difficult thing about translating Celan is getting to the heart of the matter. His poetry is epochal in dealing with World War II, so sensitivities are high, and his erotic and love poetry is deep, sometimes dark. I think an 'anything goes' method of translating Celan is appropriate. To be faithful to him is to reproduce the depth of the wordplay surrounding the neologisms. The endeavour is to emulate his poetics, to treat poetry as the highest form of language. A difficult task, but a good reason to translate.

CS: *I'm curious about the most enriching experience you've had in translating poetry so far. And would you share with our readers the poem that has moved you the most?*

SN: The most enriching experience I've had in translating poetry is researching Paul Celan. When I first translated his poems, I read his speeches and correspondence and was astounded by the depth of his commitment to poetry and the painstaking effort he put into his art – these taught me a lesson in perseverance.

Celan lost both his parents to the Nazis in the most brutal way, in his early twenties. He was subjected to trumped-up charges of plagiarism by a bitter person, which he interpreted as a blatant form of anti-Semitism. He also suffered from bouts of mental illness. Yet throughout these traumas he read, and he read, and he

Song of the Woman to the Poet

Look, how everything unfolds – it's in our nature;
For we are nought if not such bliss divine.
What began in an animal as darkness and as blood,
Evolved in us into a soul, now crying out

continues, as a soul. And it cries out for you.
But you cannot perceive it more than merely
As if it were a landscape: soft and without greed.
And therefore we conclude, it is not you,

to whom it cries. But are you not the one, the man
in whom we lost ourselves, totally?
And do we grow wise, learn more in any other man?

We have been forsaken by the infinite
But you remain, you, mouth, exist so we can hear
Of ourselves, through you, through your existence.

Rainer Maria Rilke (SN's translation)

took notes. His library is archived at Marbach in Germany and contains almost 5,000 titles, many with extensive notations. His enormous breadth of knowledge across philosophy, religion and literature is really remarkable, and is distilled in his poetry, so researching, reading and translating Celan was a most enriching experience for me. And the poem that has moved me the most? That's Rilke's *Song of the Woman to the Poet*. [see above]

CS: *Translators are quite often invited to talk about their work as translators. I'd like to look at this differently and invite you to share with us a little bit about your <u>life</u> as a translator.*

SN: Anything to do with literature means reading widely and deeply, so my working life has always revolved around books. When I translated medical texts I collected specialist dictionaries, which I still have. Translating Rilke and Celan has meant hunting down collections of their poetry and biographical material. I'm a book collector and I like to have the physical books in my library, so my study is where I spend a lot of my life. The internet has changed the availability of material enormously, however, as one no longer needs to physically visit the university library to access journals – where a wealth of critical material on modernism and poetry is available – now that they are online. Needless to say, a

translator must have command of their own language, so reading English literature has been a constant in my life, as has reading widely in German over the past 40 years.

CS: *And two final questions. First, can you name up to three translators who have influenced you?*

SN: James McGowan's translations of Charles Baudelaire are exemplary – they are poems in their own right. Enid Rhodes Peschal's translations of Rimbaud are equally good. And Robert Fagles's translations of the Homeric epics are probably the epitome of English poetic translations, and a must read/study for any literary translator of poetry.

CS: *And last, what one piece of advice would you give to an aspiring literary translator?*

SN: Spend a few years concentrating on one or two authors, and always use dictionaries to double-check for alternatives to your first translation of a word where it is not obvious.

CS: *Stephen, thank you for your time today, and for sharing a little of your life as a translator with us.*

The AALITRA Review *recently published an article by Stephen Nagle on translating the work of Paul Celan. You can read it* **here**.

AUSIT stalwarts: Dave Deck

interviewed by Han Xu

Dave (left) and Han

In **Dave Deck**'s Member Profile in our December 2022 issue, he told us that he graduated with a degree in Indonesian and Malayan studies in the late 1960s, spent 24 years in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF, including teaching Indonesian at what is now the Defence Force School of Languages and gaining NAATI accreditation while there), worked as a NAATI examiner and taught T&I at RMIT, and is now semi-retired but still takes on community translations. AUSIT's current national treasurer, **Han Xu**, caught up with Dave via Zoom to ask more about his life in T&I.

Han: Let's start with your early life. What was the first language you learned, and when, and what led you to study Indonesian and Malay at university?

Dave: Well, in New South Wales high schools then, if you were in – I suppose you'd call it the academic stream, you did at least two languages, and I did three: French, Latin and German. At the end of high school one of my teachers said 'What are you going to do at university?' and I said 'Well, I've enjoyed doing languages, I've found it fairly easy, so I'll do them at university', and he said, 'Well, the languages you've done are all European, and Latin's dead, why not do an Asian language?'

My parents were involved with a missionary association that was active in Sarawak, and a Malay speaker from there came to visit. Knowing I liked languages, he taught me a few words in Malay. I liked the sound of it, so when the teacher said 'Why not do an Asian

'… the languages you've done are all European, and Latin's dead, why not do an Asian language?'

language?' I chose Indonesian and Malay.

Han: So you could learn the two at the same time, at university?

Dave: Yes, well, linguistically they're just dialects of the same language. If you can read Indonesian you can understand a lot of Malay, and vice versa. It's a more pronounced difference than, say, between Australian English and American English, but they're still mutually understandable, and at least 80 percent of the words mean exactly the same.

Han: And do the written forms use the same characters?

Dave: Yes, and back in 1972 the two countries agreed to standardise their spellings, which made life even easier.

Han: It sounds similar to Cantonese and Mandarin – both are Chinese, but they're like different dialects.

Moving on, did you spend most of your time with the RAAF in Australia or overseas?

Dave: Mostly in Australia. I had brief visits to Indonesia when I was teaching at the School of Languages, taking students over there for in-country training – I spent three months there in 1985 – but I was mostly in Australia. But the School has a policy that 50 percent or more of the staff have to be native speakers, so in the staffroom we spoke Indonesian all the time, and it was like being in Indonesia! Native speakers are sometimes surprised that I speak their language so fluently, and I say, 'Well, I've worked

with you guys, I just copied what you do!'

Han: What did you enjoy most during your time with the RAAF?

Dave: Well, I spent eight years at the School of Languages and another 16 in non-language roles, mostly education related. And about 18 months after leaving the RAAF, I returned to the School of Languages as a civilian and worked there for another 14 years. During that time I was made responsible for developing a language proficiency assessment policy for the Defence Force: writing an assessment manual and defining the various levels of language proficiency, which was very interesting, and had a lot of carry-over to my later role, teaching at RMIT.

Han: You've certainly played very diverse roles in the language industry. Which did you find the most interesting?

Dave: Well, being a T&I practitioner is interesting, but I found teaching other people how to *become* practitioners, as a trainer and assessor, *more* interesting. For instance, when I was a NAATI examiner in Melbourne I used to help run candidate preparation workshops too. I looked at the materials we had when I first started doing it and said 'It's all very theoretical', so I made them much more practical.

Later I taught at RMIT, the foundations of T&I and also advanced theories. I really enjoyed that because again, while still teaching the theory, I was able to bring a lot of practical experience into it. If you just teach it as theory, the students [here Dave mimes falling asleep and snoring] – they have to see the practical value of it. Every lecture I gave was full of practical examples, which I think they appreciated.

Han: Yes, I teach interpreting at Hong Kong Poly U, and when I talk about theory, the students turn to their phones and laptops, but when I bring in one of my own T&I experiences, their attention returns to me … without a practical story or interesting examples, students don't engage. They like teachers who have lots of experience, and share stories of what they're likely to encounter when *they* become practitioners.

Dave: Yes, I've enjoyed most of the roles I've had, but I found that one particularly valuable.

Han: What kind of T&I work did you take on when you returned to civilian life?

Dave: A wide variety, mostly via LSPs – I was accredited in both directions, English into Indonesian and vice versa, so for example if a school wanted to make its parent information brochure available to Indonesian parents, an agency would ask me to translate it. It could be almost anything – legal stuff, medical ... and it was the same with interpreting, mainly legal – police work and courts – plus work with social workers and doctors and in hospitals, and a little work in schools …

Han: You've worked in T&I in Australia for many years. What are the biggest changes you've seen in the industry over this time?

Dave: Well, community T&I has now been recognised for what it is, whereas some people used to take the attitude that you're just dabbling, you're not a serious interpreter; and if you're not translating two hundred thousand words a year, you're not a serious translator. In fact, I think Australia has been something of a world leader in community T&I, in that a lot of other countries are only now starting to appreciate that this is a very necessary part of the political scene, whereas in Australia it's been recognised for much longer. And with all the good work that Erika [Gonzalez, AUSIT's most recent past president] did during COVID, and the clinical guidelines that were put out a few years ago, we're at last reaching a stage where other professionals are recognising that we're an essential part of the system, just as much as they are.

Han: Yes, in an email this morning we were described as frontline workers. I like that! I've worked as a T&I practitioner in both China and Australia. The situation is very, very different there, and I agree that in Australia the professional status of practitioners has improved significantly over the past 20 or 30 years, not simply within ourselves in terms of professional competence, but also recognition from outside of T&I, as you said, from service users. I think that's a wonderful achievement.

Dave: Yes, and a lot of those changes have only occurred in the last five years.

Han: I agree. COVID actually provided an opportunity for T&I, maybe also for AUSIT, to make its voice heard, because people realised that quality community T&I is really important, with the vaccine rollout plan and so on.

Dave: Yes, and I think the community translation protocols that we've developed are very important. In the past if, for example, a government agency wanted a factsheet translated into 40, 50, 60 languages, they'd give it to an LSP to send out to translators, who would just translate it and send it back. There was never any, sort of 'Is it working? Are the community members understanding it?' It was confusions that occurred during COVID that suddenly alerted everybody to the fact that you can't just hand something to a translator and say 'Here, do that.' Even if they are a member of the target community, they have to consult with that community to work out the best way of getting the message across.

At RMIT we often got into that discussion. I'd give students texts to translate in tutorials, and some would say, 'For my community, this is

the wrong way to present it, you need a different approach' … which is, effectively, why we've now developed the community translation protocols. I think that's a major change.

Han: Now, can you briefly describe the character of the younger generation of T&I practitioners in Australia, as you've worked in education and have lots of experience nurturing them. Do you think they're different from your generation?

Dave: Well, I came into T&I through a completely different channel. Look, a lot of the people I taught at RMIT were younger, they were very keen, they wanted to learn. If presented with the theory in a practical way they engaged with it. I can't say I've been able to observe a lot of them outside that training environment, but I know most of them have gone on to work in T&I.

Han: When I was collecting data for my PhD, interviewing interpreters, one older practitioner said 'I do interpreting as a hobby.' The word 'hobby' makes it feel as if T&I isn't a proper profession, it's something you can do casually.

Dave: Well, I've never seen it that way, and I don't think most of the younger ones do either.

Han: Yes, I think that's a difference. Australia leads the world, in many ways, in T&I, but what challenges do you think the industry here faces?

Dave: Well, we've already touched on the fact that some people still seem to see T&I as an optional extra. I often get desperate calls, 'I've got to submit a visa application' (or whatever) 'tomorrow, and I've just realised I need my birth certificate translated.' Or someone emails me about a translation, I tell them what I charge, and I never hear from them again. I feel like saying, 'If your washing machine breaks down, a mechanic can charge $120 just to walk in the door, and you're complaining about paying $50? My skills are on a much higher level than washing machine repair.' And many lawyers and doctors say 'Why do you need an interpreter? I can talk to you, you seem to understand English!' Yes, but not legal English, not medical terminology. So this is still a challenge.

The Minister responsible for multicultural affairs in the previous federal government once spoke at RMIT, and made a point of saying how good it is that we provide X number of hours of English language teaching for migrants – in other words, if only they would learn English, we wouldn't have to spend money on interpreters – completely ignoring the fact that some people don't have a high level of language aptitude. Especially if they're older – older people can't learn languages as well, so they need interpreters.

Han: Yes, and apart from language aptitude, everyone has the right to speak the languages they feel comfortable with.

What are your thoughts on translation technology? Recently everyone's talking about ChatGPT. We gave ChatGPT two documents, one translated by machine translation [MT] and the other by a human translator, and Chat GPT said it couldn't tell which was which, and both were equally good.

Dave: Well, even though T&I technologies are getting better all the time, and heaps of money is being poured into improving them, I still think there's some truth in the statement, 'Computers won't replace translators, but translators who can use computers will replace translators who can't use computers.' I don't think there are going to be major job losses in the short term. There may be eventually, but machines don't have life experience while T/Is do, and that's the crucial difference. I can use context to know how to translate something. It's very difficult to teach context to a machine, because it hasn't experienced life. That would be my short answer.

Han: Yes. My husband teaches computer science, including machine learning. When ChatGPT first came out, we had a huge argument about whether machines would replace humans in the future. From his perspective machines are so good, once you give them enough data they'll know how to do anything, whereas my point of view is similar to yours: we need context, so the result of MT can't be used directly, it always needs postediting.

Dave: Let's take an example. I was interpreting for someone who had a noticeably low level of education, so I knew I had to lower the level of my Indonesian a bit to keep it simple enough for him to understand (even though theoretically I'm not supposed to do this). Only I, as a person, can assess the level of his language and gauge the level at which I should pitch *my* Indonesian.

Han: So I guess, as human T/Is, we're able to take into consideration a lot of factors which machines cannot.

Let's move on to AUSIT. When did you join?

Dave: In 1995. I was a loyal member and used to go along to annual general meetings, but I wasn't particularly active until about eight years ago, as I had too much else going on. Of course, a lot of that was before AUSIT was running PD on a large scale. It's changed a lot recently because people have to do PD for recertification. After I finished teaching at

[image: iStock.com/violetkaipa]

RMIT I thought 'What can I usefully spend my time on now?' I joined the Victorian Branch Committee, and was almost immediately asked to become the branch delegate, so suddenly I was on the National Council as well, which I hadn't planned on – but I threw myself into it.

Han: Yes, I guess the first step in becoming more active is to join your state branch committee. My experience was similar, I'd been a member for many years but hadn't been that active – I simply participated in PD and sometimes delivered it, but hadn't really engaged in AUSIT matters – until I joined the Queensland Branch Committee. I agree with the National Council that we should encourage more people to do so, as we need new blood.

Dave: Yes, when I was chair of the Victorian Branch Committee I was constantly inviting new people onto it.

Han: I guess it's sometimes hard to get people to join the committees, because attending the meetings *is* a commitment, but I hope more people will join in the future. Lots of older committee members have left this year in Queensland, but we do have a few new ones.

What do you think is the most interesting part of volunteering in AUSIT?

Dave: I think it's different for different people. From my point of view, I wouldn't say it was the most interesting part, but the motivation was giving back to the profession. I'd been doing that by teaching at RMIT, being a NAATI examiner, and running NAATI candidate preparation. Basically, by joining an AUSIT committee you're giving back to the profession, rather than just taking.

Han: I agree. And you've contributed greatly to improving AUSIT's Constitution in recent years.

Dave: Well, I'm not legally trained, but I understand legal concepts and how to express something in a legally sound way.

Han: We've already touched on my last question: how has AUSIT changed since you became a member?

Dave: Yes, and there's more I can say about that. For years many members – especially those with influence, on the National Council or whatever – saw AUSIT as being like the AIIC [International Association of Conference Interpreters]: to become a member other members had to sponsor you, and I recall, soon after I joined the National Council, people saying 'AUSIT should only be for the top 10 percent of the profession', but some of us disagreed. I used to encourage my students to join, and I recall one ringing me and saying 'I need an AUSIT member to vouch for me. Can you do it?' I said yes, but then thought, 'Why do you need to be vouched for? If you're happy to pay the money, why can't you just become a member?' There was that implication, again, that if you're doing community T&I you're just dabbling, you're only a real practitioner if you're working at conferences all year. I think we've moved away from that attitude.

Also, over the last few years there have been two major thrusts. One is professionalising practitioners, which is why we've been running PD and so forth, and why it's important to get as many people inside the tent as possible, because once they *are* inside they're more likely to professionalise themselves.

The other thrust is professionalising AUSIT itself, by engaging others to carry out admin and paying people to take on the roles of Communications Officer, Education Officer and so on. In the past we had to do everything on a shoestring budget. When we joined Zoom, for example, we bought the cheapest possible subscription, and it was really only COVID that made us realise it didn't do half the things we needed. We were always going 'Buy the cheapest one!' No, buy the one that's going to give us the services we need.

Han: Yes, we definitely need some professional services. Hiring experts in areas like admin and finance lets us focus on what *we're* good at.

What changes do you think we're likely to see in AUSIT in the future?

Dave: Well, the main change I foresee has already started: five, six years ago we were one of the few organisations offering PD, and of course charging for it – that was a third or more of our income. Now the LSPs are offering PD too, as they should have years ago, and of course they don't always charge for it because they can write it off as a tax deduction, so suddenly AUSIT has competition, which we'll have to adjust to.

I'm not sure how realistic it is to think we'll ever have 90 percent of the profession as AUSIT members. A few years ago, the liaison guy with the company we were using for admin said that for a professional organisation, AUSIT was actually doing really well in terms of the percentage of the profession that were members. Our membership was only a thousand or eleven hundred then, and now we're over two thousand. I'd *like* to see more people becoming members, but I think many take the view of 'What do I get out of it?'

Han: Yes, if people think we're selling something, they naturally ask 'What do I get?', but it's not about services or products you can buy, it's more about getting this community together to meet each other and also contribute.

Dave: Yes, I'll hold up this graphic that we were using a few years ago [see opposite page]. The fish that was in the glass has jumped out and into the bowl, to join its community.

As a profession we're more isolated than most. Lawyers, for example, tend to get to see what other lawyers are doing, teachers to see what other teachers are doing, and so on. In T&I, we don't usually see what our colleagues are doing. At social events, when T/Is are chatting to each other, someone will often say, 'I didn't realise we weren't supposed to do that! I thought we were allowed to', or 'Gosh, we can do that? Oh, that's good!' It's often by talking to colleagues that we learn more about our roles, and I see that as one of the most useful things that AUSIT can provide.

Han: I agree. That's also why AUSIT's Community Translation Protocols and similar documents for members in other areas are important and useful.

Well, we've gone through all my questions. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

Dave: I think we've done enough damage for one day!

Han: I really appreciate your time, Dave.

Dave: I'm happy to give it!

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.

Navigating cultural diversity in health care: the vital role of interpreting services

Stefania Zen is the Education and Engagement Manager for Transcultural & Language Services and Narrun Wilip-Giin Aboriginal Support Unit, both run by Northern Health, the local health authority in Melbourne's culturally diverse outer northern suburbs. Stefania regularly delivers cultural competence training to health professionals, and she explains to us what cultural competence is, why it is integral to delivering effective health care, and what role interpreters play in this.

I n a world marked by diversity, health care interpreters are invaluable allies of medical professionals, as they break down linguistic and cultural barriers to ensure equitable access to health care for all.

Their role in promoting cultural competence and patient-centred care cannot be overstated. However, with great responsibility comes great complexity, as interpreters navigate the ethical minefield of health care settings.

Within the health care context, cultural diversity encompasses a rich tapestry of languages, beliefs, customs and traditions. Yet amidst this diversity lies a challenge: ensuring equitable access to health care for all individuals, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

It is important to recognise that 'health equity' is not the same as 'health equality'. As my colleagues at North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network explain in their downloadable resource **Access and Equity Framework**, 'Health equality means each individual or

It is important to recognise that 'health equity' is not the same as 'health equality'.

group of people is given the same resources or opportunities, whereas health equity recognises that each individual has different needs and may require different resources and opportunities to reach their best health.'

Barriers such as language proficiency, cultural differences and limited understanding of health care systems can impede effective communication and hinder patient outcomes. Patients with limited English proficiency experience higher rates of unnecessary diagnostic testing, as well as medication incidents and errors, compared to those whose first language is English. They also end up staying in hospital longer, and are at higher risk of readmission. In short, their health outcomes are compromised by language barriers and communication breakdowns. And unfortunately, health care providers still often

ask family members to act as interpreters rather than calling on professional practitioners, even when the latter are available, highlighting the critical need for cultural competence in health care provision.

Cultural competence in health care means delivering effective, quality care to patients who have diverse beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviours. It is about recognising that we are all different, even within the same culture.

Cultural competence requires systems that can personalise health care according to the individual, and that understand the potential impacts that cultural differences can have on health care delivery and also its reception. For example, factors such as race, socioeconomic status and health literacy can influence how a patient perceives symptoms and health conditions, and when and how they seek care.

They can also influence the patient's expectations of care and their preferences regarding procedures and treatments, impact on their willingness to follow health professionals' recommendations and treatment plans, and affect who they believe should participate in making health care decisions.

By understanding and valuing cultural diversity in health care, providers can ensure that care is respectful, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and preferences of all patients, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

So, what does culturally competent care look like?

First and foremost, a commitment to equity for culturally and linguistically diverse patients needs to be an integral part of a health service's strategic documents and policies. These policies should clearly state that the service will aim to provide the same quality of care to each patient, regardless of what language they speak, where they come from, what religion they practise and so on. As engaging professional interpreters (rather than relying on family members or staff to interpret) is central to such provision, a commitment to do so must be clearly embedded in the policies.

Delivery of cultural awareness and safety training for all staff members is also key to building a culturally competent and safe environment. Health care providers should be aware of their own cultural biases, and sensitive to the fact that patients may come from diverse backgrounds. They should strive to understand and appreciate the cultural norms, practices and preferences of their patients. Providers should use clear and simple language, and they should be willing to listen actively and patiently. By asking patients directly about their needs, patient-centred and culturally

competent care can be achieved.

Engaging interpreters is the obvious way to support clear communications with patients who have limited English proficiency. To facilitate communication between healthcare providers and patients who speak different languages and/or come from different cultural backgrounds, the role of interpreters extends

... interpreters ... bridge the gaps between languages ...

far beyond mere 'translation'. They bridge the gaps between languages, ensuring accurate transmission of medical information while preserving cultural nuances and context. By facilitating effective communication, interpreters pave the way for patient-centred care, in which individuals feel heard, understood and respected in their unique cultural contexts.

Interpreting services should be seen not as additional to, but rather as an integral part of the multidisciplinary team looking after a patient.

The journey of health care interpreters is not without its challenges. Working in health care settings presents a range of difficulties, from navigating complex medical terminology to managing emotionally charged conversations. Interpreters often find themselves grappling with ethical dilemmas, as the principles of accuracy,

impartiality and confidentiality intersect with cultural sensitivity and patient autonomy.

Furthermore, interpreters may encounter challenges stemming from cultural differences and misunderstandings. Different cultures may have varying perceptions of illness, treatment modalities and the roles of health care providers, leading to potential miscommunication or discord. Interpreters must possess not only linguistic fluency but also cultural competence, allowing them to navigate these cultural subtleties with sensitivity and respect while maintaining the boundaries of their role.

Despite the challenges they face, interpreters remain steadfast in their commitment to fostering understanding, compassion and inclusivity in health care. By embracing cultural diversity and upholding ethical principles, interpreters pave the way towards a future in which health care knows no bounds, every voice is heard, and every patient's story is valued.

Stefania Zen holds a degree in T&I (English–Spanish) from Università Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy. She has worked as a freelance English–Italian T/I and as a cultural liaison officer, has been with Northern Health since 2008, and is responsible for the management of cultural competence education across all the authority's sites. Stefania is also involved in quality improvement and research activities. She has co-authored a research paper 'Does English proficiency improve health outcomes for patients undergoing stroke rehabilitation?' (2015) and contributed to the development of the Migrant and Refugee Health Partnership's Competency Standards Framework for Clinicians, titled 'Culturally Responsive Clinical Practice: Working with people from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds' (2019).

A day in the life of a community interpreter – or am I also a guide and an advocate?

Dorothy Prentice's professional lanyards identify her as an interpreter, but some interpreting assignments go beyond interlingual transfer. Here she describes a pair of assignments which highlight this particularly well.

Thursday morning, 8 am: I set off on the hour's journey (on public transport) from my home to the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH), to attend an assignment for a CALD client who is booked in to see a specialist.

9 am: I know this client, as I've interpreted for her several times, and I wait at a clinic on the first floor as arranged, but she doesn't turn up. I report to the hospital's language department, complete the slightly complicated sign-off procedure for the agency which booked me, and head for my next appointment, which is with a different agency.

9.45 am: I turn up at level 3 of the nearby Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (the Peter Mac), where the same client has an appointment for chemotherapy. (For non-Melburnians: these two health facilities face each other across a busy road and are linked by two bridges – one at second floor level, and another higher up; and with the road below currently obstructed by major roadworks, crossing as a pedestrian at ground level is a bit messy and tortuous.) I again wait.

The client doesn't speak my interpreting language, but her daughter does (more or less) …

10 am: The client arrives, accompanied as always by her daughter. The client doesn't speak my interpreting language but her daughter does (more or less), so at each appointment we have three-way conversations. I've made sure the daughter understands that it is important that all information to and from her mother is relayed fully and accurately, and I always explain to the

[image: iStock.com/danieldep]

health care professionals that, as an interpreter in the mother's language is not available, their side of the conversation is being interpreted by me, then by the daughter, and vice versa.

The daughter explains that they missed the RMH appointment and are now late for the Peter Mac one due to transport difficulties. They are newly arrived humanitarian refugees from Africa with no English, and haven't yet learned how to negotiate the rather complicated public transport system from their new home in Melbourne's outer suburbs to the two hospital clinics in question, so they rely on patient transport, which doesn't always run on time.

My client is told that she needs to attend the RMH appointment before she can have her chemotherapy, so I shepherd them down one floor in the Peter Mac, across the second floor bridge to the RMH, and down another floor to the clinic I first waited at. (The bridge is very quiet and I wonder if it's OK for the

public to use it, but no one questions us, and I attempt to look official as we traverse it, with my lanyard prominently displayed. Two lanyards from the two different agencies today would look even more impressive! I used to work in hospitals in the past in a medical capacity, so I remember how to look official.)

We wait for the specialist. Time elapses, as is usual in such places, and the end of my 90-minute assignment is drawing near. The clinic seems very busy.

10.25 am: I become proactive and approach the nurses' station to politely explain that this particular patient needs an interpreter, my time is ticking over, and she has yet to attend the Peter Mac for chemotherapy. The rather harried nurse helps, and my client is ushered into the consulting room to see both the specialist and a support worker. In addition to the medical consultation there is a discussion about transport, then two further appointments – one of which must happen before the other – are arranged, all by three-way communication.

11.10 am: We return to the Peter Mac – up one floor, across the bridge (lanyard again flaunted) and up another floor – and wait for the client to be called in for her chemotherapy.

11.25 am: My Peter Mac booking ended 10 minutes ago, but I accompany the client to the treatment area in case there are further questions from the medical staff. The nurse asks 'Won't you be staying for the chemo period?' and 'What if she has a reaction?' I explain that my time is up (to tell the truth I'm also quite exhausted), and that a phone interpreter can be called if needed.

11.35 am: I farewell my CALD clients and the nurse and hurry off to the interpreters' office, where this agency's more simple sign-off

procedure is completed, and I'm assured I'll be paid for the overtime (this isn't always the case).

11.45 am: I limp exhaustedly to the tram stop and head for home.

So, I functioned as an interpreter (albeit through an intermediary), but also acted as a guide so that the client could make it to both of her appointments, and as an advocate so that matters could be expedited within the time allotted for my assignment (or as near to it as possible).

I'd like to teach this vulnerable mother and daughter how to negotiate the public transport from their home to the hospitals, but it's not within the remit of my role, so I can only hope that their refugee caseworker will be able to help with this, as this lady has many more appointments ahead of her.

My story perhaps highlights some of the situations that we community interpreters can face when clients have pressing needs in addition to there being a language barrier, particularly when they are very new to Australia.

Dorothy Prentice grew up in Melbourne. She studied medicine, and after marrying and having children, went to Tanzania as a missionary. Dorothy learned and used Swahili there over a period of 20 years. On returning to Melbourne she embarked on a new career, and has worked as a Swahili–English interpreter since 2009.

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Working in the sporting arena: three quick questions for Margaux Bochent, a T&I project manager for major international sporting events

Margaux (left) and her colleague Laura Mesa on site at Roland Garros

In our **last issue** (pages 10–12), Jemma Ives and Nancy Guevara described creating live interlingual subtitles in real time for a major sporting event. We asked their manager on that project, **Margaux Bochent,** how she selects T/Is for such fast-paced work.

1. What qualities do you look for when you engage T/Is to work in these settings?

I would say that the most important qualities are flexibility, proactiveness and team spirit. Flexibility, because international sporting events are unpredictable: games can last longer than predicted, the people being interviewed aren't always who we expected, the spoken language can change without us being notified, clients often change plans at the last minute … so I need a team that understands this and is willing to adapt. Proactiveness, because even if I know how to organise and manage such events, the real experts are the linguists. I surround myself with talented practitioners so I can provide high-quality results to my clients, but also because I need their help to build the mission. They are the experts and I always seek their suggestions. And last but not least, team spirit – it's vital to the success of a project: if people appreciate each other and enjoy working together, they're more willing to help and support each other, so they succeed together.

2. What gives you peace of mind when hiring for such events?

I look for linguists with experience on similar missions: similar subject matter, so they're comfortable with the vocabulary that will be used, acronyms that may come up and so on … but above all, a similar 'live' format. Working live requires focus, control and stress management. Linguists will develop these skills with time and experience, but as a project manager I feel it's important to work with people who already have them. On top of that, I always make sure the linguists are comfortable with the technology. As my teams usually work remotely, it's crucial that each linguist is familiar with the tools we use, or at least willing to learn how to use them. And I like to get to know my linguists a little. This isn't easy, given that we're often in different countries and can't meet face to face, but I find a short Zoom session very useful if the schedule permits – not a job interview, more of a relaxed conversation that allows me to put a face and voice to a name, clarify anything that isn't clear, and give

more details about the mission. If the linguist has experience or is willing to do a short test, and I have a good feeling after the Zoom session, then I'm likely to hire them. And it's a big bonus when a linguist who I appreciate working with recommends a colleague: usually, I know I can trust them too.

3. As a project manager (PM), what do you do to support the T/Is you hire?

I like to make sure I give full instructions, on both the technical side (how to use each tool, a clear schedule …) and the linguistic (clients' preferences, tone to be used, typographical rules and so on). Once all instructions are written and shared with the team, I like to check they're clear for everyone, and I make sure everyone on my team knows that I'm always here to help and consult with them if they have any issues. I'd rather repeat one thing five times than have to repair an error someone made because they didn't want to bother me. I like to think that my availability is one of my biggest qualities as a PM.

Presenter at AUSIT's annual national conference

There are so many ways AUSIT members can contribute some of their time to the organisation. Here we ask five members how they feel presenting at the annual National Conference benefited AUSIT, themselves, and/or (if applicable) the organisation they work for.

Photos: (below, left->right) Elvira, Uldis, Sophia, Lavinia (presenting), and (right) Sam
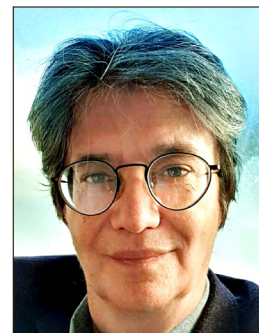
Elvira Bianchi: Italian–English practitioner & PhD candidate (presented: Sydney, 2023)

The conference was a first for me not only as a presenter, but as a participant also. Meeting so many colleagues and being able to share and compare ideas was a great experience, and I feel presenting intensified this, because I had the opportunity to discuss my research and found people who share common interests. Presenting my research *was* nerve wracking, but it was worth it: seeing other people's interest in what I was doing gave me motivation to keep going, and many useful tips and new perspectives came along with the newly forged friendships.

Uldis Ozolins: Latvian–English practitioner, academic, author & researcher (presented: 2014, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 & 2023)

My presentations are intended to keep colleagues informed of research and literature in T&I which addresses certain issues that bedevil the field: particularly wrong-headed views on ethics, pedagogy and service provision that are floated by parties with special interests (especially those trying to undermine our understanding of impartiality). Also, at the 2020 conference – during the pandemic – we were having to resort to Zoom to keep interpreting teaching afloat. My presentation that year examined what can and cannot be taught in interpreting classes by Zoom. Now that teaching in face-to-face mode is again possible and preferable, I'm distressed to see some colleagues still teaching in Zoom or hybrid mode. Perhaps another presentation is needed, to address this issue!

Sophia Ra: Korean–English T/I & subtitler; T&I lecturer (presented: 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2021)

My presentations were all based on my master's and PhD research, and presenting was a really good opportunity to gather some feedback for my research projects from the audience. Plus – luckily for me – during the very first AUSIT conference at which I presented, I met Jing Han, who was then the Head of the Subtitling Department at SBS TV, and I've been working as a contractor at SBS ever since.

Lavinia Heffernan: Project Officer, NAATI Indigenous Interpreting Project (IIP) (presented: Brisbane, 2022)

It was an opportunity to raise awareness about NAATI certification in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages within the wider T&I industry. Many people are surprised to find out that there are certified interpreters in 28 of our languages, and our mob feel empowered and connected, knowing that NAATI certification is not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but for all languages, it's a national standard. It's beneficial for NAATI, too, as our goal is to get as many people certified in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages as possible. The more people who know about the IIP, the more opportunities we might have to grow our work and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language interpreters.

Sam Berner: Arabic–English translator, mentor & AUSIT Fellow (presented: 2009, 2012, 2014 & '15, '17, '18 & '19, & 2022)

I consider presenting to be both a privilege and a service to my community. From the preparation stage – in itself an enriching endeavour that enhances my critical thinking, research and communication skills – to humbly standing in front of my peers, mentors and teachers to share what I've learned, the conferences offer a myriad of advantages for both myself and my fellow language industry professionals. They serve as dynamic platforms to not only showcase our expertise but also exchange invaluable insights – while also staying abreast of the latest industry developments, playing a part in the collective advancement of our profession by sharing knowledge, receiving feedback, and delving into emerging trends and technologies in T&I.

MEMBER PROFILES

NAME:	ALLISON SONNEVELD	LULU SHEN
Translator or interpreter (or both):	translator	translator
Language(s) and direction(s):	Indonesian>English	English>Chinese
Location:	Canberra, ACT	NSW
Practising as a T/I since:	2023	2009
Member of AUSIT since:	2016 (associate), 2021 (student), 2023 (ordinary)	2023
Main area(s) of practice:	identity documents and international engagement	CALD diverse media and communications

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).

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A1
I have a long-standing interest in the Indonesian language. It was the only language offered at my high school, and before I even got there my older sister taught me some. I ended up running with it through undergrad uni, then got to use my language skills to translate archival resources and conduct interviews for my international relations theses, for honours (on the Timor Gap) and PhD (on the Malacca Strait). I dabbled in T&I while working in international engagement for the Australian Government, including informal language support for Indonesian delegations visiting Australia, and support for Australian delegations' return visits. One of the best times I had was working at the G20 Summit when Australia hosted it in 2014. I got to see many world leaders, and randomly shook hands with Ban Ki-moon, who was UN Secretary-General at the time. I struggled to source NAATI-approved T&I training here in the ACT until 'the pandemic' moved education delivery online, and I was finally able to enrol in RMIT's coursework, then seek accreditation.

A2
Last year, through an international media company, I picked up some English transcription work for the international governing body for soccer, FIFA, and had the best time supporting the FIFA Women's World Cup, jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand. Following on from this, I was hired to provide both translation and subtitling services for the FIFA U-17 (under 17 boys') World Cup, which was hosted in Indonesia later in the year. As a soccer fan it's been very rewarding to be able to work in this space, doing things that I love.

A1
I've been fascinated by languages from a young age, when I would imitate characters from BBC dramas without understanding English. Upon arriving in Australia I realised that mastering English was the key to unlocking my future here, and this marked a turning point in my journey. I immersed myself in local culture, honed my language skills, and later graduated from Monash University with a master's in T&I (thanks to my supportive teachers and mentors). After achieving NAATI accreditation I started my career as a translator, working on diverse tasks – from movie subtitles and academic literature to localising websites. My focus gradually shifted to communications, as I found my strength lies in bridging the gaps between English-speaking and CALD communities. I didn't have to break down language barriers – rather, I built trust by providing CALD community members with a voice in their own language.

A2
Here's a glimpse into a challenging yet fascinating project I took on with the ABC's *Four Corners* program, serving as the lead translator for an investigative episode on James Packer's Crown Casino operations in China. Without giving too much away, the project demanded extensive research and a keen understanding of cultural nuances. What was initially expected to be a short-term commitment turned into nearly a year of work. I collaborated with the production team to piece together the key characters and events leading up to the arrest of Crown's employees in China. You can catch the episode online, titled 'Crown Confidential – Packer's Losing Hand'.