

AUSIT

Volume 34 < Number 2 > WINTER 2026

IN TOUCH

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS



AUSIT's 39th National Conference
Adelaide, SA, 18–20 November
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Interpreting for authors
Three quick questions: supplying
interpreters for a writers' festival
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AI-powered T&I
The effects across industries
< pages 8–9

Translation slam
The reflections of a participant
< pages 11 & 13

Plus more ...
... including an AUSIT role that
will soon be vacant; assistive
technology for interpreters in
courts and tribunals; and two more
members, profiled

< In Touch

Winter 2026

Volume 34 number 2

The submission deadline for the Spring 2026 issue is 1 August
Read our Submission Guidelines [here](#)

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Cover image

Japanese-English interpreter Emily Fukuda Molinaro (right) interprets an interview of Japanese author Mieko Kawakami (centre) by Michaela Kalowski at UNSW Centre for Ideas, shortly after MWF 2026 – see our Three Quick Questions interview with Chris Poole, page 18. Photographer: Maria Boyadgis.

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

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

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

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Letter from the editors

It has been an honour to serve as T&I Editor of this publication. This issue is my final one, and as I step away from the role, I do so with deep gratitude for the many contributors, readers and colleagues who have helped maintain *In Touch* as a space for thoughtful exchange across the T&I professions.

I would like to thank the Editorial Committee for its ideas, encouragement, and willingness to collaborate. My deepest thanks go to my co-editor, Helen Sturgess, whose tireless dedication, thoughtful judgment and generosity have been the driving force behind every issue. It has been a genuine pleasure and privilege to support her

and to work alongside someone so committed to the publication and our profession.

If you're interested in becoming the next T&I Editor, my AUSIT Roles interview (p 19) gives an overview of the role and what it involves.

I look forward to watching *In Touch* enter its next chapter, with plans to refresh its format and presentation. It is an exciting opportunity to build on the magazine's strong foundations while exploring new ways to engage and inspire our readership.

Finally, thank you to AUSIT for entrusting me with this role. It has been a rewarding experience, and I leave it with gratitude and every confidence in the publication's future.

Hayley Armstrong

Are you attending the National Conference?



The SA/NT Branch is hosting the
AUSIT National Conference 2026 (Adelaide, 18–20 November),
and we need volunteers to assist in all areas.

Whatever your skillset and however much time you have available, your contribution will be invaluable. To register your interest or find out more about the roles available, fill in this **EOI form**.

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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* was published)

8 Apr: 2026 World Cup: 48 Teams, Dozens of Languages, One Tournament
breakingthelines.com

8 Apr: In a high stakes environment, AI is failing asylum seekers
lowyinstitute.org

17 Apr: Could these AI tools help Deaf Americans? Local experts have concerns
nbcboston.com/news

19 Apr: Once upon a Time, I Was Mari Töröksik's Interpreter — A Conversation with Julio Schmidt
hungarianconservative.com

21 Apr: Stand with Meenu Batra: A Call to Action for Language Professionals
atanet.org

25 Apr: Proud interpreter remembers friends lost in combat
dandenong.starcommunity.com.au

29 Apr: Mother Tongues: How Family History Plays a Part in Language and Translation
lithub.com

30 Apr: Interpreter shortages leaving non-English speakers at risk in court, advocates say
abc.net.au/news

2 May: Translators gear up for slam event at MWF
abc.net.au/listen

3 May: How algorithms wreaked havoc with these workers' schedules and cut their pay
wuft.org

8 May: These Wireless Rings Can Translate Sign Language Into Text Without Cameras or Gloves
zmescience.com

8 May: 'Being human helps': despite rise of AI is there still hope for Europe's translators?
theguardian.com/technology

9 May: Filipino woman detained for two years due to translation error
asahi.com

9 May: AI will make language barriers disappear – and diminish our understanding of other cultures
theguardian.com/world

10 May: Wordly passes 1 billion minutes of AI live translation
meetings-conventions-asia.com

11 May: Meet the interpreters who help make film press tours global
latimes.com/

12 May: Government fails to provide adequate interpreter for deaf Ukrainian asylum seeker
daylightsandiego.org/

15 May: Beyond translation: a patient-centered research agenda for artificial intelligence interpreter services in healthcare
nature.com

15 May: New study examines AI medical interpreter use for surgical care
digitaljournal.com

19 May: If This Be Magic by Daniel Hahn review – how on earth do you translate Shakespeare?
theguardian.com/books

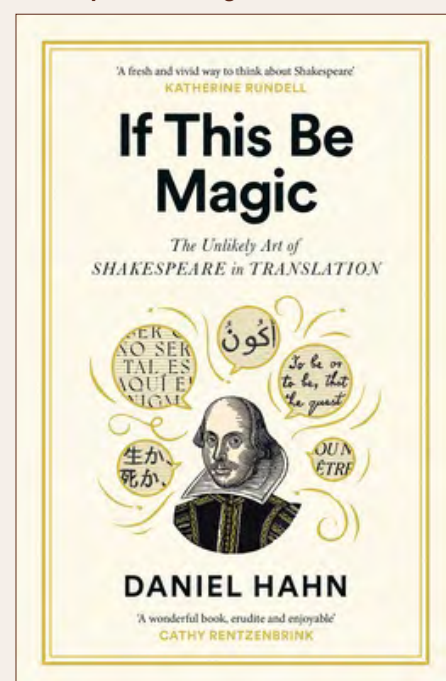


Image: the cover of translator Daniel Hahn's book

19 May: Sally Rooney to publish Hebrew translation of novel with BDS-aligned Israeli publisher
timesofisrael.com

20 May: *Taiwan Travelogue* wins 2026 International Booker – a deftly translated tale of food, love and history
theconversation.com (see review, p. 10)

20 May: Arafat sermon to be translated into 35 languages
arabnews.com

30 May: Chinese dissident says he was berated by 'pro-regime' interpreter for UK police
theguardian.com/uk-news

6 Jun: ICC in search of Tagalog, Cebuano translators for Duterte trial
globalnation.inquirer.net/

17 Jun: Aboriginal interpreters 'overlooked' by WA Police years after wrongful Josh Warneke murder conviction
www.abc.net.au/news/



Accompanied by the AUSIT Conference Dinner and Awards Evening,
the Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture and the
National Annual General Meeting

The SA Branch have the pleasure of inviting you to the
AUSIT National Conference 2026. This year's theme is:

**Quality translating and interpreting: a shared responsibility
- revisiting the theme amidst the new challenges of our time**

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KEYNOTES and JBML

PROFESSOR ANTHONY PYM – an internationally recognised scholar in translation and intercultural studies, translation theory, translator ethics, intercultural communication and risk management in translation and the applications of artificial intelligence – will give this year's **INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE** address, speaking on the topic *Why we sell trustworthiness ... and will continue to do so*.

DR PADMANESAN NARASIMHAN, PROFESSOR SANDRA HALE, SAM HOBALLAH and DIPANKAR SRIRAG (University of NSW) will present on the topic *Sharing the Responsibility for the Ethical and Effective use of Artificial Intelligence in Providing Access to non-English Speakers to Health Services in Emergency Departments – the TRIBOT project*.

More details of speakers and their topics are being uploaded each week [here](#).

JILL BLEWETT MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Conference Organising Committee is working on securing a standout speaker – TBC.

NETWORKING & SOCIAL

The size of Adelaide makes walking a great way to get about, and depending on where you stay, you may be able to walk between your accommodation and this year's venues. The **Welcome Reception** – a chance to network, catch up with old friends and make new ones over drinks and canapés – will take place at the **Malt Shovel Taphouse**. On the banks of the River Torrens in the Adelaide Festival Centre, the Taphouse combines stunning views with a relaxed ambience and (for beer lovers) a flavoursome selection of craft beverages. The **Conference Dinner** will take place under the stunning raked wooden ceiling of the National Wine Centre's grand event space, the cathedral-like **Hickinbotham Hall** (named after a family that has played a significant role in the Australian wine industry). As always, this highlight of the Australian T&I community's social calendar promises a full and fun evening of eating and drinking, entertainment and awards, chatting and dancing to satisfy all tastes.

REGISTRATION, etc.

**** You're not too late to be an Early Bird – substantial discounts apply until 31 August ****
You'll find the latest information on registration, the program, accommodation and more [here](#).

VISITING ADELAIDE

Once in Adelaide, why not stay on and explore South Australia's capital ... with the help of the Organising Committee's top local tips:

- **Adelaide** is the perfect size for a **walking tour**. Book an organised tour, guide yourself with the help of one of the city's walking trails online, or pick up a hard copy map from the Visitor Information Centre.
- **Tandanya** – Australia's leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural venue – promotes reconciliation and understanding via exhibitions and performances featuring arts, participation and interaction.
- Located right in the heart of the CBD, **Adelaide Central Market** is a must, as it's ranked the third best food market in the world and the best undercover market in the Southern Hemisphere!
- Take a free heritage tram ride to **Glenelg**. Just 20 minutes from the CBD, this laid-back beachside suburb combines wide sandy beaches with bustling shopping and dining strips and quality family entertainment.
- Set in the Adelaide Hills, heritage-listed **Hahndorf** is Australia's oldest surviving German settlement. It has many interesting shops and eateries – think pretzels, bratwurst and steins of ice-cold beer ...
- If you're bringing the family with you, take a trip to **Cleland Wildlife Park** – again the Hills – where you can come across kangaroos roaming free, feed emus, and even encounter a koala or two.

The Organising Committee came up with so many tips this year we couldn't fit them all in, so we're creating a page on the website – look out for it, and enjoy Adelaide!

[Hallett Cove Badlands](#) [photo by Imants Berkis]



Adelaide Arcade
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Vale Graciela Chiriaco-Vicente, 1954-2026



In late May, AUSIT’s SA/NT Branch lost a long-term member who will be greatly missed by family, friends and colleagues, **Graciela Chiriaco-Vicente**. Her colleagues and friends **Magdalena Rowan** and **Gabriela Callaghan** have worked with Graciela’s beloved daughter Tracy to put together this tribute.

She would set up a classroom in the family garage to help students with their English ...

This is our farewell to a dear friend and colleague, Graciela Chiriaco-Vicente, whose kindness, generosity and warmth left a lasting mark on everyone fortunate enough to know her.

Graciela – a NAATI-certified Spanish–English interpreter and translator – loved her work, and was highly regarded and sought after for her professionalism, empathy, care and humanitarian approach.

Graciela was born and grew up in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She was the middle sister of three, with Betty being the eldest and Adriana the youngest. When Graciela started university

she initially intended to study law, but due to a romantic interest ended up enrolling in biology – another passion of hers. While studying she also worked as a bilingual teacher and was very popular with her students. She would tutor from home, setting up a classroom in the family garage to help students with their English lessons, but would have to put everything away when her father arrived home in the evening, so he could park his car.

Graciela migrated to Australia in May 1982 – right in the middle of the Falklands war – to be with her future husband. She initially arrived in Melbourne and worked in childcare for a while before being employed by TIS at their call centre. She qualified as an accredited interpreter and translator in 1987.

Graciela’s daughter, Tracy, was born in 1987 and the family moved to Adelaide in 1990, where Graciela completed a bachelor of arts via distance education through the University of Tasmania, while also still working as an interpreter and translator.

Graciela then went on to work for various agencies, as well as establishing her own private T&I business. She also completed a master’s in translation at a later stage for her own professional satisfaction and development.

Later, when Graciela was on her own with Tracy, she supplemented her income by working in admin at a glass factory, to ensure her daughter had everything she needed. Graciela was very much appreciated there – so much so that every time she said she needed to

Graciela with Tracy (right),
and in Rundle Mall, Adelaide (below)



leave, as she was too busy with her T&I business, her employer begged her not to – and being Graciela she didn't want to let them down, so she stayed on longer!

Graciela was also a good and fiercely loyal friend, she welcomed people with an open heart, she was pragmatic, she shared her knowledge freely, and she always found time to support those around her – including her beloved dog Charlie and her friends' pets, which she occasionally looked after. Tracy was the centre of Graciela's life, and they had a fabulous mother-daughter relationship.

As a friend, Graciela will be remembered for her passionate attitude to life and her love for learning – and also for her infamous temper.

She was always a bit of a rebel, and was never afraid to speak her mind – to anyone, and about anything she cared for.

Graciela's presence enriched our lives, and she will be missed deeply by her family, her friends, her colleagues, and the many people whose lives she touched through her work and her generosity of spirit. May you rest in peace, our friend.

The rise of AI-powered translation and interpreting across industries



With AI use increasing at an exponential rate in practically all fields, AUSIT National President **Carl Gene Fordham** surveys recent media articles on the topic to find out how this major technological shift is affecting translation and interpreting across industries.

... the \$15.8 billion interpreting market is undergoing genuine disruption ...

AI-powered translation is reshaping communication across industries at a speed and on a scale that was unimaginable just a few years ago.

In May this year, cloud-based AI translation and captioning platform Wordly announced that it had reached the milestone of over one billion minutes of AI-generated translation across 120 countries.¹ This achievement signals that the \$15.8 billion interpreting market is undergoing genuine disruption, with multilingual support now accessible to event organisers who could never have afforded human interpreters at scale.

Yet the promise of AI translation is most compellingly tested not in conference halls, but in settings where the stakes are far higher. In surgical wards at institutions like Brigham and Women’s Hospital (Boston, USA), for example, researchers have found that patients want AI and human interpreting to coexist rather than

compete – leaning on technology for speed and convenience in routine exchanges, while turning to human interpreters when empathy and cultural nuance are indispensable to their care.²

As I write this article, a similar tension is set to play out on the world’s biggest sporting stage: the 2026 FIFA World Cup, in which 48 teams, three host nations and over 104 matches will create a linguistic challenge that the international football association’s ageing communications infrastructure is ill equipped to handle. From multilingual dressing rooms to error-prone press conference interpreting – the kind that once sent Chelsea’s transfer news into chaos over a confusion between ‘midfield’ and ‘defence’ – the tournament lays bare just how far the sport has fallen behind.³

Taken together, these three arenas tell a consistent story: AI translation is not a wholesale replacement for human interpreters, but it is fast becoming an indispensable layer in

any serious language access strategy, expanding what is possible – while the most complex, emotionally charged and high-stakes conversations continue to remind us why the human element still matters.

AI is increasingly being applied to high-stakes T&I contexts, yet its adoption raises profound questions about accuracy, cultural understanding and human dignity. In asylum systems, for example, the Lowy Institute has found that AI’s pattern recognition is a poor substitute for human understanding, and as a result AI translation tools risk misrepresenting the nuanced personal testimonies of some of the world’s most vulnerable people, with potentially life-altering consequences for those who lack the means to challenge technological errors.⁴

In the realm of human interpreting more broadly, the rise of real-time AI voice interpreting threatens to render obsolete a



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centuries-old tradition that fostered not just communication but genuine cross-cultural curiosity and understanding – reducing language to mere functional code.⁵

Meanwhile, AI tools designed to translate American Sign Language, while positioned as accessibility solutions, have been criticised for missing critical linguistic features such as facial expression, raising serious doubts about whether they serve the Deaf community's needs or simply create the appearance of inclusion.⁶

Yves Valerus, a Haitian Creole–English interpreter and single mother of three based in Brooklyn, New York, saw her income drop by nearly 20% after her employer introduced new scheduling software that fragmented her previously stable hours – forcing her to make difficult choices such as prioritising her internet bill over utilities and travelling further to find groceries on sale. In response, Valerus and colleagues are attempting to unionise with the Communications Workers of America, with an additional concern being

their employer's announcement that it is exploring use of AI to handle basic interpreting work.

The situation these employees find themselves in illustrates the broader trend of algorithmic scheduling – technology designed to minimise labour costs – which has spread across industries over the past decade, leaving hourly workers with erratic and unpredictable hours. Labour organisers are now drawing on that experience to warn that generative AI in the workplace poses similar risks, and that workers must have a voice in how new technologies are introduced.⁷

Carl Gene Fordham is a NAATI-certified translator (Chinese>English) and interpreter (Mandarin>English) based in Melbourne. He currently serves as AUSIT's National President.

1. <https://www.meetings-conventions-asia.com/News/Technology/Wordly-passes-1-billion-minutes-of-AI-live-translation>
2. <https://www.digitaljournal.com/article/new-study-examines-ai-medical-interpreter-use-for-surgical-care/>
3. <https://breakingthelines.com/@btl/2026-world-cup-48-teams-dozens-of-languages-one-tournament>
4. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/high-stakes-environment-ai-failing-asylum-seekers>
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2026/may/09/ai-interpretation-diego-marani>
6. <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/ai-deaf-americans-asl-interpreter/3935273/>
7. https://www.wufl.org/2026-05-03/how-algorithms-wreaked-havoc-with-these-workers-schedules-and-cut-their-pay?_amp=true

Taiwan Travelogue (2024)

by Yáng Shuāng-zǐ

translated by Lin King

reviewed by Marta Menendez

Cover reproduced courtesy of Scribe Publishing



The winner of this year's International Booker Prize – the world's most prestigious prize for a single book, translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland – is the first work translated from Taiwanese Mandarin to achieve this honour.

First published in 2020, *Taiwan Travelogue* won Taiwan's highest literary honour, the Golden Tripod, in its original Taiwanese Mandarin in 2021, while Lin King's English translation also won the USA's National Book Award for Literature in Translation in 2024 and the Asia Society's inaugural Baifang Schell Book Prize in 2025. It has been published or is forthcoming in numerous languages, including

This novel is almost a case study in layered mediation ...

Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Ukrainian, Italian, German, Dutch, Danish and Greek. *Taiwan Travelogue* offers a warm yet incisive look at 1930s Taiwan under Japanese colonial rule, using everyday experiences – especially food, travel and conversation – to reveal deeper cultural tensions and connections. At its heart, the novel shows how culture becomes a meeting point between two women – Aoyama, a Japanese writer, and Chizuru, her Taiwanese interpreter – as their relationship unfolds across multiple languages and unequal colonial power structures. Their shared meals and journeys highlight both the beauty of Taiwanese local life and the unequal power structures shaping their relationship. This makes translation not just a background element but the novel's central mechanism.

The novel repeatedly stages interactions in which Japanese is the dominant colonial language and Taiwan's languages sit beneath it. Chizuru's multilingualism – Japanese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, even some French – becomes a symbol of both her skill and her constrained position. Translating this dynamic into English requires that the sense of hierarchy is preserved without the target reader being overtly alerted to the power differences.

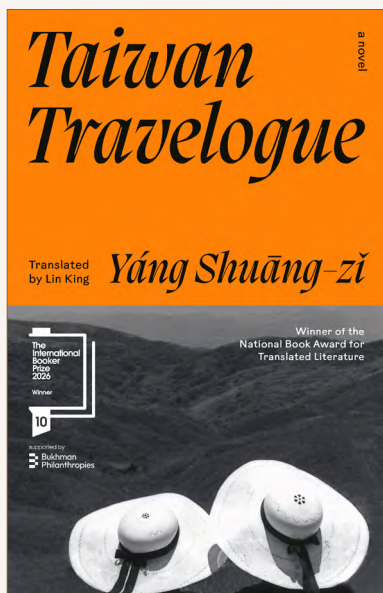
Throughout the novel, Chizuru is described as wearing a 'mask' – she is professional, polite,

withholding. This resonates strongly with the traditional invisibility of the translator: both interpreter and translator are omnipresent, yet rarely acknowledged. The English translation must maintain the opacity of Chizuru's mask while also letting readers feel the emotional tension beneath it.

This novel is almost a case study in layered mediation: colonial language hierarchies (Japanese over Taiwanese), the asymmetry between metropolitan author and colonised interpreter, and the later Anglophone translation that re-narrates this history for a global readership.

Taiwan Travelogue's vivid descriptions, emotional tone and cultural depth make it a truly memorable read. The characters feel real and the elegant, immersive writing captures the textures of colonial-era Taiwan with remarkable sensitivity. The relationship between the protagonists is handled with subtlety and emotional intelligence, and the novel's exploration of food, language and power dynamics is both compelling and thought provoking. All in all, *Taiwan Travelogue* is a fascinating and beautifully written story.

Marta Menendez was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and came to Australia in 1984. She graduated from Western Sydney University as a certified interpreter and translator in 1999, and since then has completed two master's degrees at Western Sydney University, one in social policy and the other in interpreting and translation. Marta works as a freelance interpreter and translator (Spanish–English), and from 2003 to 2025 she was engaged by Western Sydney University as a tutor in interpreting and translation.



Writers and rewriters: AALITRA's third translation slam

Our December (Summer) 2023 issue featured an article by Elaine Lewis, a member of the Australian Association for Literary Translation (AALITRA), about Australia's first ever 'translation slam,' which she had recently co-organised.* Since then, AALITRA has organised two more translation slams, during Melbourne Writers Festival 2025 and 2026. AALITRA member **Laura Hasegawa** moderated this year's slam, and reflects here on what such events do for translators.



* You can read Elaine's article [here](#).

Image: Laura (left) onstage at Melbourne Writers Festival 2026, moderating the translation slam between Matt Alt (centre) and Haydn Trowell

May 2026. Two translators, an author and a moderator – all on the same stage, in the magnificent State Library of Victoria.

I had the pleasure of moderating the event. In the lead-up, I was asked many times what exactly a 'translation slam' was. My elevator pitch was as follows:

Two translators are given the same source text, and each produce a translation. The similarities and differences between the two unique translations are then discussed on stage, and in the process, the subtle art of translation is showcased.

Since the event, however, I've added an extra sentence to my pitch:

It's also an opportunity for translators to step into the spotlight.

Between the reach of MWF and the grandeur of the State Library, I couldn't help but be struck by the increasing visibility translators were being given by this event. The Melbourne Writers Festival has long celebrated writers, both local and international, but the names of

translators have rarely made headlines on their own. That's slowly changing. Across the world, translators' names are increasingly appearing on the covers of the books they translate. The International Booker Prize has recognised both author and translator equally since 2016. And in recent years in Australia, translators have started sharing the same spotlight writers have long enjoyed. Sydney Writers Festival 2024 saw sessions like 'Found in Translation,' in which

translators Jennifer Croft, Daniel Hahn and Stephanie Smee spoke about their work bringing writers such as Nobel laureates Olga Tokarczuk and José Saramago to English-speaking readers, followed by the 2025 and 2026 Translation Slams at MWF.

This year's MWF Translation Slam brought together author Hiroko Yoda, Tokyo-based writer and translator Matt Alt and Australian translator Haydn Trowell. The Japanese source text, written by Yoda, was a genre-defying short story: part parody, part ghost story, and written in the form of a screenplay.

One of the central challenges of the translation was how the humour of a parody survives when the very thing it's parodying becomes obscure in translation. This conundrum extended across multiple levels. First, the text was a parody of *Rashōmon*, a story in which different witnesses give conflicting testimonies of the same event. Second, the text is littered with references to Japanese pop culture. And third, the text features



continued on page 13, column 3

Assistive technology for court interpreters

In his April/May President's Newsletter, AUSIT National President **Carl Gene Fordham** gave feedback on a campaign initiated by the AUSIT Advocacy Committee against the increasing use of telephone interpreting in courts and tribunals. Carl pointed out that interpreters working on site with non-English-speaking litigants in Australia can use two distinct types of equipment to aid their work: hearing loop receivers and simultaneous interpreting (SI) equipment.



Below: an example of a hearing loop receiver (brand name obscured)

A hearing (or induction) loop receiver is a small handheld or wearable device that picks up the electromagnetic signal broadcast by a courtroom's hearing loop system, which is primarily designed to assist people with hearing impairments.

When used by an interpreter, it allows them to clearly receive amplified audio of courtroom proceedings, particularly the judge, counsel and witnesses speaking into their microphones. This reduces interference from background noise and improves audibility.

The interpreter listens through an earpiece or headphones that they have connected to the receiver, then renders the spoken content into

the target language for the litigant, typically in a soft voice (known as whispered interpreting or chuchotage).

The AUSIT Advocacy Committee and Communications Officer recently worked together to produce an information sheet titled Hearing Loop Receivers for use in Court. You can find a link to this info sheet, along with other useful resources, on the AUSIT website's **Guidelines and Resources for Practitioners** page.

Simultaneous interpreting (SI) equipment, by contrast, is a dedicated system comprising a transmitter, an interpreter microphone, and wireless receiver units with earphones.

The interpreter delivers the interpretation in real time into the microphone as proceedings



unfold, and the transmission is broadcast wirelessly to the non-English-speaker's receiver unit, allowing them to hear the interpretation in their language through their own earpiece without it disrupting the courtroom.

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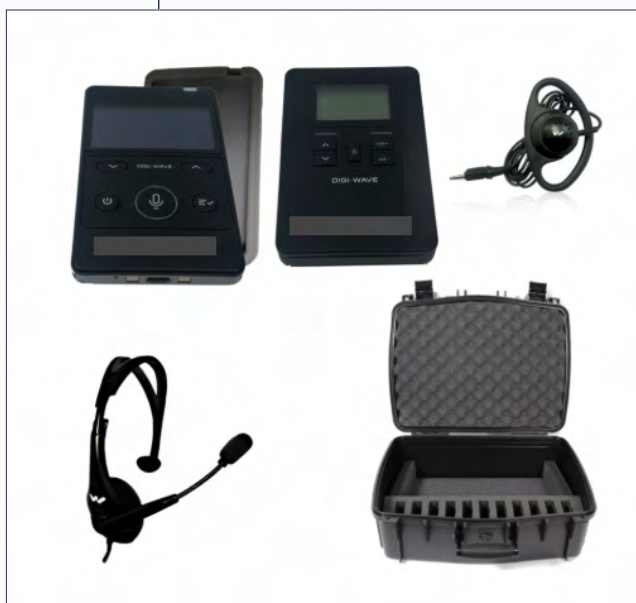
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info@bic.wa.edu.au

In criminal trials, the use of SI equipment is particularly useful in setting up a physical distance between the interpreter and the non-English-speaking defendant. This can prevent risks to physical and psychosocial safety. The illustration in an **ABC news article** covering a trial in which a man was jailed for fatally amputating another man's foot makes it clear that the Bislama interpreter – who interpreted emotionally charged messages, including a tearful apology at the end of the trial – had to sit directly next to the defendant in the dock. I cannot help but comment that the use of SI equipment in cases like this would allow the interpreter to remain more physiologically detached from what I imagine would have been a highly distressing situation.

In Queensland, simultaneous interpreting (SI) equipment is readily available at state courts in Brisbane, and can be booked for use at state courts outside the capital. I am not aware of it being used in the federal courts. In New South Wales, SI equipment can be borrowed from Multicultural NSW. I am not aware of SI equipment being available outside QLD and NSW. Some colleagues have purchased their own SI equipment to use on the job. Members are encouraged to write to courts in their local jurisdiction to request access to SI



Above: an example of simultaneous interpreting equipment (brand name obscured)

equipment if it is not available to them. I also encourage you to pass on the message to colleagues about this equipment, as many still do not know that it exists and how useful it is. It is especially useful in mitigating interpreter fatigue – and also strain in both the throat and the lower back – from carrying out sustained chuchotage while sitting close to the non-English-speaking defendant.

Carl Gene Fordham is a NAATI-certified translator (Chinese>English) and interpreter (Mandarin–English) based in Melbourne. He currently serves as AUSIT's National President.

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characters known as *yōkai* – variously translated as spirits, demons, monsters, goblins or ghosts.

At each layer, the parody operates on the assumption that the reader has the cultural context to understand what is being referenced and how it is being subverted or iterated upon. This was something that the author, too, was very much aware of, having worked on several books on *yōkai* for English-speaking readers. However, that difficulty became the Slam's greatest asset, giving both translators the chance to show – in detail – how they worked through it.

There are dozens – if not hundreds – of metaphors used to describe the work of literary translators. One of the simplest, I think, is that literary translation involves being a brilliant reader in the source language, and an excellent writer in the target language. Considered this way, it only makes sense for writers and translators (or 'rewriters,' if you will) to be equally recognised for their writing prowess.

At the end of the event, AALITRA handed out flyers to promote the organisation. Nothing unusual, except for the hook, which read: 'You have a favourite author. Who's your favourite translator?' It is my hope that the more we do events like this, the more people will be able to answer that question.

Laura Hasegawa is an emerging Japanese>English translator currently completing her PhD in translation studies with a focus on the polysemic concept of voice in translation. She received an AUSIT Student Excellence Award in 2023 while researching the translation of Japanese onomatopoeia for her master's in T&I, and published her reflections on the topic in the Winter 2023 issue of In Touch.

AUSIT stalwarts: Márta Bárány

interviewed by Cristina Savin



Hungarian–English interpreter **Márta Bárány** was influential in the creation of both TIS and NAATI, and was AUSIT’s sixth national president (1997–99). In our last issue we announced that Márta had been awarded the NSW Premier’s Interpreters and Translators Medal 2026, and at 93, has no plans to retire soon. French– and Romanian–English freelance translator and editor **Cristina Savin**, a member of the *In Touch* Editorial Committee, recently caught up with Márta online to interview her.

Above: Márta (top) and Cristina; below: Márta at the age of six

Cristina: Thank you Márta for agreeing to talk to me. Our profession is complex and has been tested over and over again during the past few decades, with more challenges to come.

There’s are so many complexities I’d like to unpack today, but considering your enormous contribution, I prefer to focus on leadership and strategy, while also touching on your work as a language professional and intercultural communicator. You were born in Hungary and came to Australia after the Second World War. Would you like to share with us some of the early memories that shaped your love for languages and led to you becoming a T&I professional?

Márta: In Hungary the education system was that you had to learn

So instead of assimilation we started to work on integration ... that is when multiculturalism started ...



languages, Hungarian is such a unique language. German was a second language we learned in school, and later we learned Latin which is the mother of many languages. When I went to a Hungarian school in Germany, I learned Hungarian, German, English, Latin and French. It seemed to come easy to me. I was very interested in history and geography but languages came easy to me. That’s how my passion for languages evolved. When I came to Australia I was

able to speak a certain amount of English, but most of the migrants who came here in the ’40s and ’50s did not speak English at all. I wasn’t very fluent in English back then, but I knew the grammar and the basics, and due to my ability to pick up languages easily I built on that foundation and in a couple of years I was fluent in English. People came to me for help when they needed to be understood, so it just evolved naturally. **Cristina:** Do you work with languages other than Hungarian? **Márta:** I used to, but not any more. At one time I worked with German because I lived in Germany for six years and I learned German perfectly, even the dialects, the Bayrischer and

Below: Márta in festive Hungarian costume; right: (second from the left) with TIS colleagues at a Christmas get-together



the Schwäbischer. But now I don't speak German with anyone so I'm a bit rusty, and also I'm not NAATI certified in German.

Cristina: You've made a significant contribution to multiculturalism in Australia; you also contributed to the establishment of the Telephone Interpreting Service [TIS, now TIS National] and later to the creation of NAATI. Looking back ... what were the most challenging moments?

Márta: After the Second World War when we came to Australia as migrants, the Australian Government looked at us as a bit of second class, we were not English. Ok we were white, that was important, but second class. Australia needed factory workers very badly, so back in the late '40s and early '50s many university-trained labourers worked at BHP, for example. My father was one of them.

In those days we were told we could come here

but we had to assimilate and this is something we did not want to do. You had to become white Anglo-Celtic Protestant. I'm white, I'm Protestant but I will never ever be Anglo-Celtic or -Saxon, I'm Hungarian and that's not going to change.

So instead of assimilation we started to work on integration. And that is when multiculturalism started – integrate people, don't try to assimilate various European people into being English. So we started to push integration through, and that's what I started working on in the beginning, and then it evolved. Multiculturalism needed interpreters, so people could express themselves in their own language. Then the Hungarian Revolution came in 1956, and a lot of Hungarian refugees came to Sydney. With other Hungarians we started Caritas for those people who needed accommodation and other assistance, and because I was able to speak English fluently there was a need for interpreters.

And that's how my interpreting really started, by volunteering and working for the Hungarian Ladies Auxiliary. I became their social worker and did this work voluntarily, I did not get paid. That's how I started as an interpreter. There was no community interpreting in Australia. Also at the time, the local Members of

Parliament became quite close with members of their party and the community they represented, they came and talked to us quite freely. Politics was one way open to us to join the Australian society. Billy McMahon was the member for Strathfield when I lived in Burwood back then, so I started to push for an interpreting service through that channel.

Then I joined the Ethnic Communities Council when it was established, and through this we worked on the implementation of TIS. If I remember correctly, TIS was established in 1972. The need to have interpreters became evident, but there was no foundation to make it into a profession, so a testing authority became necessary, and that's how NAATI came into being. A few of us recognised the importance of testing and accreditation for interpreters, but after NAATI, we also needed an organisation to represent professionals, so we started to work on AUSIT.

Then I was elected as the first NSW Branch Secretary of AUSIT. At the time I was working in TIS, when TIS was established I first worked as an outside interpreter, a casual but then I became permanent.

When I reached the age of 65 I had to retire, and I became a freelance professional. By that time my name was quite well known in the

continued overleaf

INTERVIEW SERIES: AUSIT STALWARTS

(continued)

Below: Márta as the AUSIT National President, at the AUSIT National Conference 1999 in Sydney

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profession, so I was able to work for all the services at the time.

Cristina: Clearly you enjoyed it so much, but I imagine those were rather stormy waters, working with politicians, the community, the government, so you must have learned a lot. What were some of the most valuable lessons?

Márta: Yes, we knew that an interpreter was not just a person who spoke two languages. There were people who came to me and asked to become an interpreter because they could speak two languages. I turned them down and explained that to be an interpreter you needed the qualifications, otherwise you would not be taken seriously. We worked to create a meaningful qualification for interpreters. And this is what AUSIT tried to do, make the interpreter a professional, in the same way a doctor or an engineer is a professional.

Cristina: And our profession should be legislated, if we want to be taken seriously and respected and recognised. I think if we want to be taken seriously in the same way as doctors and engineers, like you said, there should be some form of legislation to recognise us.

Márta: That's correct, I agree with you wholeheartedly. And that was in the mind of those people, likeminded people in NAATI and AUSIT. I was the National President of AUSIT for two years and the Secretary and President of the NSW Branch, and I've always worked toward the goal of making interpreting and translating into a recognised profession. That's my main aim.

Cristina: From what you've described so far, it's no wonder you've received a number of awards – the Medal of the Order of Australia in June 1995 in recognition of service to the Hungarian community. You are also the recipient of the British Empire Medal, and I'd like to know more about it. Have you received any other awards?

Márta: First I received the British Empire Medal, because back in the 1970s Australia did

Cross – Hungary's highest award – from the Hungarian Government for my work with the Hungarian community.

Cristina: What role would you say all these awards played in your work as a leader in the T&I profession?

Márta: I suppose when I put down my name followed by OAM, BEM, Gold Cross – it gives something extra, it shows that I can be trusted as a person.

Cristina: I think you're making a very important point, because we as professionals strive as much as we can to get recognition, to elevate the profession and the status of translators and interpreters.

Márta: Exactly, that's how I look at them as well. People come to me for recommendations and my awards carry a lot of weight.

We worked to create a meaningful qualification for interpreters. And this is what AUSIT tried to do ...



not have its own awards, I think after the Whitlam government the Australian award system came into being. Back then it was the British Empire Awards that Australia used and that's how I got mine and it was for services to the Hungarian community, and Caritas, but also it was something to do with working in the Australian community.

Cristina: So it was about creating a bridge, a more recognised connection between the two countries, cultures and identities?

Márta: Yes, it had to do with integration. I was starting to become more integrated. I was Hungarian, but also integrated in the Australian community. The Hungarian Government, the Embassy and the Consulate in Sydney knew me, and I received the Gold

Cristina: In addition to being a T&I professional, you served as an Ethnic Affairs Commissioner for three years in the 1980s, where you helped shape the foundations of multicultural policy in New South Wales.

This must have been an enormous task – one that required diplomacy and a strategic approach to align government policy with the needs of both the T&I profession and the community. How did you manage to find that balance and influence both?

Márta: At the time the Macedonian question came up, the Greek Macedonian. The second thing was the Bosnian language. There was no such thing as the Bosnian language, in Bosnia there was either Croatian or Serbian. I did have a Serbian colleague and a Croatian colleague in

Márta (right) with the then NSW Governor, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair and his wife, and Márta's husband Tony (left), at Government House in 1995, after receiving her OAM



the Ethnic Affairs Commission and they tried to stop having Bosnian language recognised, but the Australian Government wanted Bosnian language recognised. The same happened with Macedonian language – recognition.

I enjoyed going out to various communities. I went to the Sri Lankan community and I said I was Hungarian, and they said we were related because we had Sanskrit language in common, they looked at me as a relative. I went to the Ethiopian community – that was interesting, they have a different concept of time, they are very relaxed, you say 8 am and they show up at 9 am.

Cristina: That's interesting, Indonesians have something similar, called *jam karet* – it literally means 'rubber time' – a relaxed, flexible attitude to time and punctuality. Cultural differences!

Márta: I went to the Arabic community as well, and I very much enjoyed that because I learned new things about various people, and in my mind that was multiculturalism. I was able to meet these people as friends.

Cristina: It sounds like you took the initiative to go out to communities, which provided an avenue for diplomacy and a way to make it more strategic for governments to gain a better understanding of different ethnic groups and be more flexible and inclusive in their multicultural policies, in understanding the needs of the communities throughout Australia and those of the T&I profession.

Márta: Yes, that's right. I also want to mention that during my time as the Ethnic Affairs Commissioner, the Commission decided to set the fees for translators and interpreters. I was closely involved in the negotiation process together with the NSW Public Service Association and we were able to set very good terms and conditions. However, since then other services, especially the private ones, have lowered their fees, which prompted Multicultural Affairs to lower their fees as well.

Cristina: Let's talk a little about your work as an interpreter ... what was the most interesting project you've ever done? And the hardest?

Márta: I talked about this the other week, I

was interviewed on the SBS Insight program, they are going to show it in August. I told them about a case, I was working in TIS late at night and a call came from a small hospital in Western Australia. A woman was giving birth and I had to interpret everything the doctor told her to do. She had the baby but the nicest part was that I had to tell the father 'You have a lovely boy'.

Cristina: How lovely! The doctor delivered the baby, and you delivered the news to the father.

Márta: The hardest assignment was when I had to tell someone about a death. I worked for an English company, it was a night call because of the time difference. At the time there were many Hungarians working in the UK, when the UK was part of the European Union. There were Hungarian bus drivers working in the UK and I had to tell a father who worked as a bus driver in Glasgow that his son was dead, he was knifed to death at the local bus stop. That was hard.

Another was when I had to tell a Hungarian truck driver in the UK that he caused an accident and the other driver involved had died. He was being arrested for negligence and he was heartbroken. Yes, those were the hardest, telling people about someone dying. Another memorable task was with an assisted suicide situation, the person wanted to die when the Hungarian national anthem was being played. And she got the injection.

Cristina: This is heartbreaking but I guess you have to respect one's wishes ...

Márta: Yes, you do.

Cristina: Over the last few decades in the T&I profession, you have witnessed major changes. How do you see our profession shift and hopefully grow in the next five to ten years?

Márta: I don't see any signs of it getting better. As a NAATI examiner I feel we are stuck at a certain level, we plateaued. The problem is that there are a lot of rare languages and even dialects where you cannot find a professional, a certified interpreter. As you know, our interpreting services are predominantly community oriented and we need to serve all community groups, including those who speak rare languages and dialects. But there are no formal university courses to train interpreters in those languages, so the community relies on people who are not trained professionals. And because of this we cannot have a fully qualified profession, which is holding us back from becoming a fully recognised profession. This situation pulls the whole profession down. I feel this is a problem and I have no solution to this.

Cristina: I want to say a huge 'Thank you!' This has been so amazing and I'm so grateful to you for sharing all this with me, it's a treasure trove of knowledge – getting a glimpse into your contribution as a T&I professional and the way you've helped shape multiculturalism in Australia.

Do you know a longstanding member who has made significant contributions to AUSIT and/or the T&I profession? Would you like to interview them for this series? Just get 'in touch' with one of our editors or an Editorial Committee member (see page 2), and we'll take it from there.

Interpreting for authors: three quick questions for Chris Poole on selecting interpreters for a literary festival

Chris Poole – AUSIT Past President (2005–06) and Director of Chris Poole Translations – has interpreted at, or sourced an interpreter for, the Melbourne Writers Festival for the last three years. We asked Chris to tell us about the unique challenges and rewards of this specialised literary interpreting work.

Chris (left) onstage at MWF 2026, interpreting a discussion between Japanese author Genki Kawamura (centre) and Malaysian-Australian author, artist, rapper and poet Omar Musa



1. What qualities/skills do you look for when choosing interpreters to work at the MWF?

An important quality is the emotional vibe you bring to the stage. It's essential that you're relaxed and obviously in love with your work so that you can reproduce all the pragmatic features of the speech. That really helps set the tone of the event. You don't want to come across as stiff or nervous, or just robotically neutral. That creates a very unnatural feel. To achieve this, it's important that the interpreter works for me full time – I wouldn't try to do this with a casual. A person who already has very good skills and an even better attitude needs to work for me full time for a couple of years to understand our system, because we don't operate like other T&I agencies. What it means to work for me can be found [here](#). I've only had a couple of staff in the past who could have done this kind of work. Emily Fukuda Molinaro has worked with me for four and a half years, including at the last two Melbourne Writers Festivals.

2. What are some of the unique challenges of interpreting for a literary festival?

Making money! Taking all our hours into consideration, I think we (the company) only made about \$25 per hour on this year's festival. The only way we get to do these things is by subsidising them through our other work, which averages more like \$140 per hour gross profit. Emily is on a fixed salary. Unusual things do come up when you're part of an event like this. This year we had extensive correspondence with the moderators/interviewers beforehand in which we raised problems with existing translations, and they were very grateful for this. Plus we both had the experience on stage of the moderator asking us to comment on the translation, which raises issues regarding the boundaries of the interpreter's role.

3. Does the interpreter need to be familiar with

the work of an author they will interpret for?

Well, that's a good question. We tend to assume that we need to be, because if something came up and we were unfamiliar with its context, that would limit our ability to construct sentences. This would perhaps be apparent, and therefore make for poor quality interpreting. On the other hand, the breadth of topics that come up in an interview is sometimes so great that the actual content of the book is relatively trivial. But just in case, we read their main recent works – in both languages, of course. For this year's festival Emily and I each interpreted for a different Japanese author and just in case, we read their main recent works and watched a movie – in both languages – in the lead up. Importantly, both of the authors we worked with this year have been interviewed extensively in and outside of Japan, so there were plenty of Youtube videos that we could study to see the sorts of things they discuss, acclimatise to their idiolects, and find out how other interpreters have translated their ideas. All these preparatory hours are what make it hard to make much money.

T&I Editor, *In Touch* magazine and Chair of its Editorial Committee

Translator **Hayley Armstrong** has been this magazine's T&I Editor and Chair of its Editorial Committee since 2020, and is stepping down to devote more time to a new teaching role and her young family – so if you like the sound of the role she describes below, look out for the call for applicants, coming out soon.



Hours/month:
10–12

Paid?
Yes

AUSIT member for:
19 years

Time in this role:
6 years

Other AUSIT roles to date: none

Q1. What does the double role of T&I Editor and Chair, Editorial Committee involve?

It involves connecting with people across the T&I profession and inviting them to share their expertise, specialisations, work practices, perspectives on industry trends, and thoughts on what the future may hold. It requires keeping abreast of developments in the profession and working closely with the Content Editor to shape those stories into engaging and coherent articles. It also involves liaising with book publishers to obtain review copies, contacting libraries and archives to request permission to reproduce images, and following up with contributors to help keep each issue on schedule. At times, this means juggling content to fill available space, or rescheduling articles for future issues when there is an abundance of content. And of course chairing the Editorial Committee and helping develop the ideas they bring to the table.

Q2. Why did you choose to

take on the role?

When I heard the role was available, I jumped at the opportunity. I was curious about the publishing process and keen to learn how a magazine comes together behind the scenes. I was also looking for a meaningful way to contribute to AUSIT while living overseas, and because the role could largely be performed online, it was a perfect fit.

Q3. What do you feel you have learned in your time working on the magazine?

I learned a great deal about the publishing and editing process, as the role spans every stage of producing the magazine. And as many of my responsibilities were shared with the Content Editor, it was very much a collaborative role. As T&I Editor I was particularly responsible for balancing content to reflect various perspectives across T&I fields and languages, and for assessing whether articles raised ethical issues – in which case we would consult AUSIT's Ethics & Professional Practice Committee.

I also supported the Content Editor with editorial and design decisions, such as article sequencing, layout and colour schemes, as well as proofreading laid-out pages and assisting with referencing. Being involved in both the content and production sides of the publication gave me a much broader understanding of how a professional journal is developed, from initial planning through to final presentation.

Q4. What advice would you give to someone considering applying for the role?

Stay curious and think of yourself as a facilitator of knowledge, much like a moderator guiding a discussion at a conference. Pursue some topics that genuinely interest you – if you find them engaging, chances are your colleagues will too. Be open to new ideas and different ways of reaching readers, and be willing to experiment in order to keep the magazine relevant and valuable to professionals in an ever-evolving industry. Most importantly, enjoy the opportunity to learn from the remarkable breadth of experience and expertise within our profession.

MEMBER PROFILES



NAME:
Translator or interpreter (or both):
Language(s) and direction(s):
Location:
Practising as a T/I since:

Member of AUSIT since:
Main area(s) of practice:

CRISTINA SAVIN
translator
French and Romanian into English
QLD
2018

2018
academic texts; economics and finance;
government; literature; art history

TERESA LAWRENCE
translator
Polish<>English
Perth, WA
1972 (with breaks due to my other career in the international education and training sector)
2020
official certificates/documents/transcripts; legal documents; court case reports; memoirs

Q&A

Q1
How did you come to be a translator and/or interpreter?

Q2
Tell us about a project you have worked on that was especially interesting or challenging (within the bounds of confidentiality of course).

A1

All my life I've had a passion for languages and cultures. I started learning foreign languages in primary school, first French then English, and continued with both until university, where I studied French. Later in life I took up Indonesian and Mandarin Chinese, but my proficiency in both is limited. I've lived, worked and studied in several countries, and have always remained connected with languages and cultures in various forms. Almost a decade ago I took the formal path – master's and PhD in translation studies at Monash University – and became a professional translator.

A2

A few years ago I worked on an art authentication project commissioned by an art gallery in Paris. At the centre of this project was a painting by Wassily Kandinsky, one of the first abstractionist artists. I have a lifelong interest in art and took art history courses at the Université d'Angers, France in 2003, so I was very well suited to this project. I translated complex information on painting techniques, pigment types, brushstrokes and shades, stratigraphic examination of the canvas, and various optical microscopes used in the analysis of the painting. But even more interesting was the translation of supporting material used to ascertain the authenticity of the painting: a wide range of documents that belonged to the Kandinsky family; snippets from memoirs; commentary on the artist's drawings, sketches and landscapes; and the gallery curator's analysis of theoretical essays published by the artist. And the final verdict? Yes, the painting was by Kandinsky.

A1

I graduated in English philology, did my doctorate in applied linguistics (on collocations and their influence on language proficiency) much later, and am very interested in semantics. In Poland in 1972, a local authority asked me to do some English–Polish interpreting at a manufacturing plant. I'd just graduated and started teaching. After work, I interpreted on location a couple of times a week for a few months, for engineers and food production process experts from both Poland and the US. Then I started translating technical manuals, legal documents and personal letters as a sworn translator endorsed by a court of justice.

A2

One project in particular required more time than usual and very careful attention to detail. It was the handwritten memoir of a Polish soldier fighting on an eastern front in the Second World War, and experiencing starvation and misery due to bad weather, lack of decent clothing, the toil of fighting, difficulty in avoiding the enemy in very harsh territory, and despair. The author's descriptions of the conditions and his feelings were so vivid, it was easy to picture the situations he found himself in. It was hard to distance myself from the content, especially as a member of my family was a POW and managed to escape on foot from Germany. The writing was legible, but the memoir was written in a dialect. Luckily, I had a relative who had studied that language, and also had excellent knowledge of place names in the region in question. I was really glad the next generation of the memoirist's family would be able to read about his war experience.

