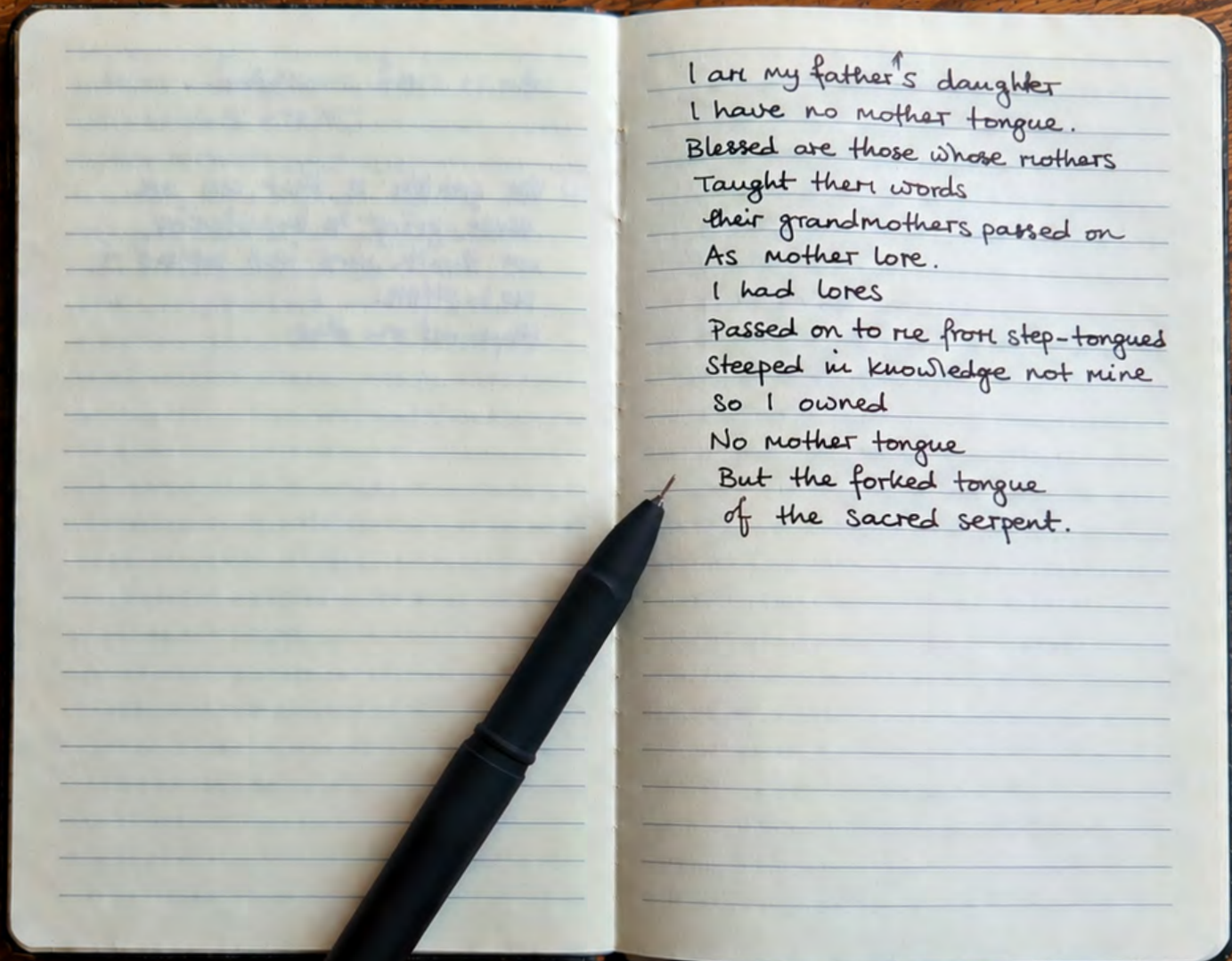


AUSIT

Volume 34 < Number 3 > SPRING 2026

IN TOUCH

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS



I am my father's daughter
I have no mother tongue.
Blessed are those whose mothers
Taught them words
their grandmothers passed on
As mother lore.
I had lores
Passed on to me from step-tongued
Steeped in knowledge not mine
So I owned
No mother tongue
But the forked tongue
of the sacred serpent.

Literary awards for a past president

Moreno Giovannoni's second novel
wins two literary prizes

< pages 5 & 16

AI in T&I - NAATI's perspective

Is a powerful partnership developing?

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A novel interview

An interview of Past President Sam
Bernier - inspired by a poem

< pages 12-16

This year's top students

AUSIT's annual comp and awards

< pages 4 & 6

Plus more ...

... including an inspiring look at
an AUSIT Language Division; a
callout for contributions to this
magazine; recent research into
renaming dementia in Chinese;
and a book that explores the role
of translation in society

< In Touch

Spring 2026

Volume 34 number 3

The submission deadline for the Summer 2026 issue is 1 November.
Read our Submission Guidelines here.

T&I editor

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Content editor + design & production

Helen Sturgess
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Cover image

A poem written by AUSIT Past President and Fellow Sam Berner inspired her colleague Nancy Guevara to take a very creative approach to our latest AUSIT Stalwarts interview (see pages 12–16).

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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

Welcome to the October issue. Our new T&I Editor, Cristina Savin (see photo inset), takes over from Hayley Armstrong, and will work with the magazine's ongoing Content Editor and Designer Helen Sturgess. Our best wishes to Hayley on her future endeavours, and warmest thanks for guiding Cristina through her first few days.

In this issue we take a close look at reinventing ourselves and our profession during what appears to be a never-ending disruptive time for translators, interpreters and editors.

NAATT's Aurélie Sheehan pens some thought-provoking words on the powerful partnership developing between humans and AI, and reflects on the T&I practitioners of tomorrow.

Interpreter Lama Al-Akhras describes the fresh approach to professional solidarity that is AUSIT's Language Divisions, and joins Arabic colleagues in their commitment to contribute collectively to the development and recognition of our profession.

Dr Zihan He's research doesn't shy away from



asking difficult questions on the topic of dementia, including which Chinese term for the condition is both scientifically accurate and culturally appropriate, and

whether renaming dementia can help remove the stigma around it.

Our latest AUSIT Stalwarts interview takes us on a whirlwind personal and professional journey through languages and identities, knowledge and transformation, friendship and generosity – beautifully crafted by Nancy Guevara and inspired by AUSIT Past President Sam Berner.

We also celebrate the literary achievements of another Past President, Moreno Giovannoni, plus the achievements of some of the newest to our profession, and review a new book that includes a chapter from three prominent AUSIT members. And with more to discover, we hope this issue will spark many new ideas and conversations.

Cristina and Helen

Contributions always welcome

We are always keen to hear from members of our T&I community.

Make your voice and story heard, so that our magazine remains a strong and inclusive platform for all of us, and a trusted companion for the wider community.

We encourage you to read our submission guidelines,* and to contact editors Helen or Cristina* with any questions you have. We look forward to being inspired by your great story!

* this page, first column



[image: Shutterstock/stockukraine]



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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)

5 Jul: Meet Czech Interpreter Helena Koutná Who Gives Voice to the Stars of the Karlovy Vary Film Festival hollywoodreporter.com

6 Jul: The critical role of interpreters in patient care insightplus.mja.com.au

7 Jul: Bulgarian interpreter Yoana Stoyanova on the challenges and joys of translation bnrnews.bg

7 Jul: Untranslatable: the words we wish English had ciol.org.uk

9 Jul: Indigenous immigrant families in Fresno confront 'a hostile immigration system' without interpreters fresnoland.org

13 Jul: Towards fair multilingual AI knowledge-centre-translation-interpretation.ec.europa.eu

20 Jul: AI falls short on context and cultural rhetoric in.edu.hk/news

22 Jul: Transcreation: beyond literal translation podomatic.com

25 Jul: Meet the interpreters at the Inuit Circumpolar Council's general assembly cbc.ca

27 Jul: Ireland: Courts Service considers implementing AI translators in bid to save money professionalinterpretersalliance.blogspot.com

28 Jul: High-stakes translation in immigration courts: How interpreters can shape asylum hearing spectrumlocalnews.com

31 Jul: Code of Practice on Transparency of AI-generated Content digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu

31 Jul: Does GenAI reliance undermine translators' roles and identities? GenAI literacy and translation competence matter jostrans.org

3 Aug: How multilingual localization is fueling the global growth of Indic sports streaming multilingual-news.castos.com

3 Aug: AI translators are getting more fluent – but communication is never just a matter of words theconversation.com

16 Aug: Deaf interpreters translate hours of Netflix content into ASL because closed captioning isn't a fix sandiegouniontribune.com

19 Aug: Egypt launches free 'BelMasry' AI platform supporting Arabic, 50 foreign languages english.ahram.org.eg

23 Aug: Interpreter shortage makes deaf Aussie feel 'less than human' news.com.au

28 Aug: AI can translate words, but doesn't bear responsibility, experts say koreatimes.co.kr

31 Aug: A prime ministerial interpreter and interpreting risk aspistrategist.org.au

31 Aug: Lost in translation: Edmonton case reveals longstanding worries about unqualified interpreters in Alberta courts edmontonjournal.com

1 Sep: From watching Shin-chan, Doraemon and K-dramas to translating shuttlers' words to the world: How young interpreters found their way to badminton's biggest stage timesofindia.indiatimes.com

2 Sep: One Month into Statewide Boycott, Spanish Court Interpreters Still Hoping for Higher Pay indyweek.com

2 Sep: AI industry adoption is measured linguist.com

3 Sep: "Not just language conversion but cultural transmission" nature.com

4 Sep: Geetanjali Shree: Beyond the borders of the page indialink.com.au

7 Sep: AI and video interpreters providing on-demand Auslan services in regional areas abc.net.au/news

7 Sep: AI Hasn't Replaced These Interpreters – But It Has Degraded Their Working Conditions capitalandmain.com

11 Sep: Literary translators brace against AI push publishersweekly.com

17 Sep: What's going on in our field: Fall 2026 najit.org

17 Sep: The very human errors of AI ciol.org.uk

21 Sep: Can schools trust AI to translate for non-English speaking parents? edweek.org

22 Sep: Vodafone and Ericsson Trial Network-Embedded AI for Real-Time Voice Translation and Noise Cancellation During Mobile Calls news.europawire.eu

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AUSIT Translation Competition 2026

Each year, AUSIT stages a translation competition for its student members, plus students and recent graduates of its **Educational Affiliate** institutions.



image: istock.com/mustafahacalaki

Each year the focus languages vary. Of the seven languages proposed this year, the organisers – AUSIT’s Education Committee – were able to go ahead with Chinese, Italian, Japanese and Korean.

French, Thai and Vietnamese had too few contestants, and Thai and Vietnamese also had too few volunteer assessors.

In contrast, Chinese received a very high number of entries, as it has for most years

of the competition, so a ‘highly commended’ was awarded in addition to a winner. Congratulations to all five (see below). Their prize is free registration to two AUSIT PD webinars. We asked each of this year’s four winners what winning this competition means to them:

Yuxin Li: *Winning this competition is a great honour for me. It motivates me to keep refining my skills in translation.*

Martina Battista: *Winning the competition is a reminder for me that I am on the right track, and that we translators are still skilled, valuable and appreciated!*

Anton Miyashita: *Winning this competition has given me great confidence in my abilities, and motivation to continue pursuing my translation goals.*

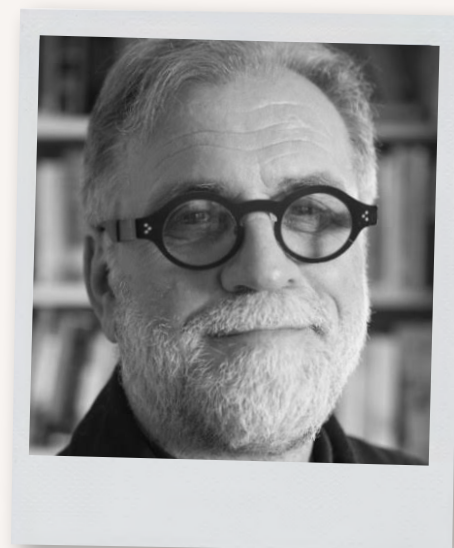
Gahye Chae: *Winning this competition gives me confidence in the path I’ve chosen and inspires me to keep growing as a translator and interpreter. Thank you!*

A huge ‘Thank you!’, too, to the experienced translators who volunteered to assess the entries in each language.

CHINESE winner	ITALIAN winner	JAPANESE winner	KOREAN winner	CHINESE highly commended
				
YUXIN LI	MARTINA BATTISTA	ANTON MIYASHITA	GAHYE CHAE	YORK WONG

Literary awards for a past National President

AUSIT's eighth National President (2000–02), **Moreno Giovannoni**, was awarded the inaugural Deborah Cass Prize for his first work of fiction, *The Fireflies of Autumn* (2018).^{*} This year his novel *The Immigrants* (2026) has been awarded two literary prizes and shortlisted for two more. *In Touch* asked Moreno to tell us about his writing and his inspiration.

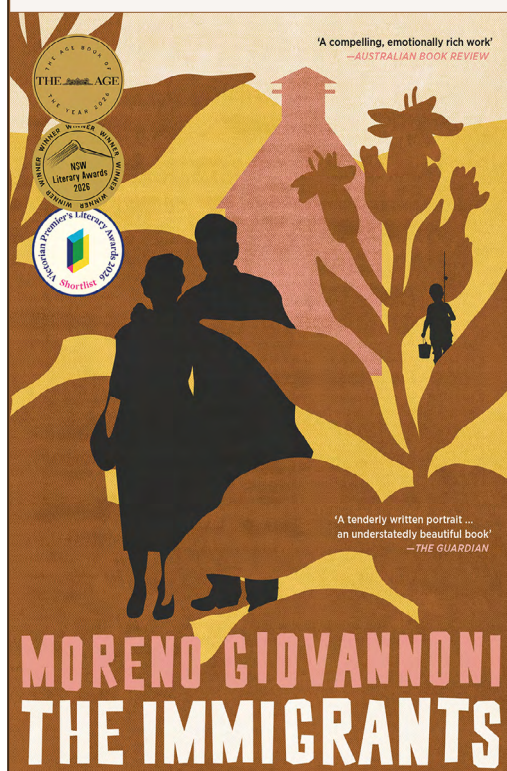


Moreno (above); cover image (below) courtesy of Black Inc Books

^{*} You can read Annamaria Arnall's 2018 interview with Moreno about *The Fireflies of Autumn* [here](#).

To date *The Immigrants: Fabula Mirabilis, Or a Wonderful Story* has been awarded the 2026 Age Book of the Year Awards Fiction Prize and

The epigraph for Moreno's The Fireflies ... is: 'Migrants never arrive at their destination.'



the 2026 NSW Premier's Literary Awards Christina Stead Prize for Fiction, and also shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards 2026 and the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Fiction 2026.

We asked Moreno to tell us a little about his writing process, and his inspiration for writing this latest work.

Q: What moves you as a writer?

It all started when I was 12 years old and I made my father buy me a typewriter. (My father was an educated farmer from Tuscany, he always reminded my brother and me that Michelangelo and Dante Alighieri, Giotto and Leonardo da Vinci all came from Tuscany.) Then 51 years later I wrote my first book The Fireflies of Autumn, and recently its sequel The Immigrants. I feel my life has been prey to the place where I was born, and from where my parents brought me to Australia. I came from a place where I did not stay and grow up. I grew up in Australia, but my parents took me back

several times, we moved back and forth between Italy and Australia. This realisation that there was another world where I came from, as well as the world where I lived, made me think what my life could have been, and this idea was very unsettling. In the end it all came down to my understanding of who I am, who my ancestors are, the place I come from and all my family comes from. All this is captured in The Fireflies of Autumn, while The Immigrants is set in Australia. So it's the voyage of self-discovery that moves me.

Q: What do *The Fireflies* ... and *The Immigrants* have in common; and what sets them apart?

What they have in common is that the protagonists are supposed to be 'the other.' In the first book they are the migrants who move to a place where they are the outsiders, and it's mainly about them even before they become the outsiders. In The Immigrants I tried to write from the point of view of the Italian community, and the Australians became the outsiders. That's the Australians made up of English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish people – they are the outsiders, and I'm looking at them from

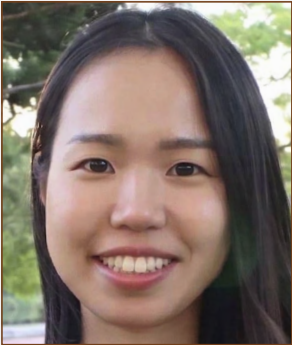
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Student Excellence Awards 2026

Each year, AUSIT invites its Educational Affiliate institutions to nominate up to four graduating students each, on the basis of academic merit, to receive AUSIT Student Excellence Awards (SEAs). Congratulations to this year's 32 recipients (see below), who each receive a certificate – presented at their Annual Branch Meeting (ABM) – and are also entitled to view two AUSIT webinars free of charge. Three of this year's recipients share the most valuable lessons they have learned as students:



Yubin Chen (top right): *The knowledge and skills I gained helped me achieve professional certification and secure paid translation projects, laying solid foundations for my career as a translator.*



Eiko Suzuki (left): *I've learned that translation and interpreting are not simply about replacing words. They are challenging yet enjoyable processes of understanding the intended meaning and conveying it effectively.*



Jordan James Przibilla (right): *To render meaning between languages requires intimate knowledge of each, and an understanding of the intentions and desires of authors and audiences that you may never meet. My understanding of the world is better for being a student of the discipline.*

AUSIT Student Excellence Awards 2026				
Branch and institution		Nominees and their courses		
NSW	Abbey College Australia (Sydney Campus)	Meixian Huang Diploma of Interpreting		
	Macquarie University	Nefi Véliz Vázquez (Interpreting), Mari Iwamoto, Sindy Pena Roncancio (Translation) Master of Translation and Interpreting Studies		
	Sydney Institute of Interpreting and Translating	Ying Jiang, Hanrong Lin Diploma of Interpreting		Yubin Chen, Yiyi Liu Diploma of Advanced Translating
	University of New South Wales	Zhenting Hang (Interpreting), Yuchen Yang (Translation), Master of Translation and Interpreting	Janet Lee Master of Interpreting	Lisda Yasin Bakari Master of Translation
	Western Sydney University	Yi Lu, Wei-Chi Huang (Interpreting) Master of Interpreting and Translation		
VIC	Monash University	Keyna Smith, Jordan James Przibilla (Translation), Prisca Si-Heng Wong, Zechen Xia (Interpreting) Master of Interpreting and Translation Studies		
	RMIT University	Renu Gupta Diploma of Interpreting	Fatima Yazbek Advanced Diploma of Interpreting	
QLD	University of Queensland	Eiko Suzuki, Liao Yilan, Huang Wei-Lun Master of Arts in Translation and Interpreting (MATI)		
WA	University of Western Australia	Lizzie Liu, Rachel Guo (Interpreting) Ashley Akomārama Moon-Lee (Translation) Master of Translation Studies		Laura Gray Graduate Certificate in Translation
	Babel International College	Jing (Mia) Luo, Yutong (Desmond) Xiang Diploma of Interpreting		Meiying (May) Huang, Qihang (Martha) Xie Advanced Diploma of Translating
SA/NT	Abbey College Australia (Adelaide Campus)	Cuiping Deng Advanced Diploma of Translating		

Exploring Translation (Un)Awareness: Recognizing the Role of Translation in Society (2026)

edited by Tanya Escudero, Päivi Kuusi and Tuija Kinnunen

reviewed by Dr Ron Witton

Cover reproduced courtesy
of Taylor & Francis Group



In some ways this is a daunting book. Its 10 well-researched chapters are linked via copious footnotes to numerous studies. These have informed the book's many authors, who examine – often in minute detail – a wide variety of situations that confront interpreters and translators in a multitude of countries.

However, as T&I practitioners we are always on the lookout for studies that examine the daily dilemmas we face in solving issues and improving our practice, and this book can be

helpful in this regard.

Drawing on studies from countries as diverse as the Netherlands, Australia, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Austria and Norway, it leads us to consider our daily practice here in Australia. It may also make us appreciate having in NAATI a national accreditation body, and in AUSIT a professional association that represents our interests. While not specifically addressed in the book, one cannot but surmise that in this regard Australia is well placed to help the world develop best practice in T&I.

This is reflected in Chapter 1, 'Best-practice translation approaches for multilingual public service communications in Australia,' by AUSIT's Immediate Past President Erika González, National Secretary Miranda Lai and National PD Coordinator Epperly Zhang. González, Lai and Zhang use the COVID-19 pandemic to illustrate the demands and opportunities that arose in Australia from this life-changing event. Interestingly, the pandemic also features in Chapter 4 'Translation awareness in communicating COVID-19 information to speakers of non-official languages in Finland and Estonia,' providing Australian readers with an immediate comparative context to their own recent life experience.

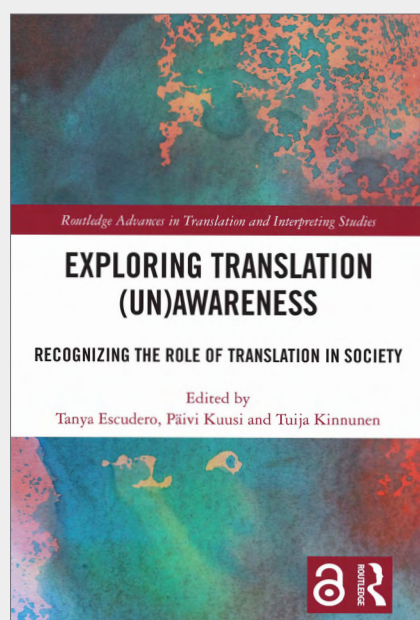
Many of the authors acknowledge that professionals who work in areas such as health, where the population comes from linguistically diverse backgrounds, are constantly switching between the written and spoken word, and hence the term 'translation' is regularly used to stand for both interpreting and translation.

The brackets around 'Un' in the book's title and throughout its pages serves to remind readers of the profound effects of being aware, or unaware, of good and poor T&I practice.

The role of T&I is examined across widely diverse areas, including the law, business, research, audiovisual contexts and publishing; and readers are alerted to the fact that bi- and multilingual professionals switch constantly between their languages, and are often reluctant to call on the services of accredited T&I practitioners. Moreover, several chapters address the implications of machine translation's seduction of monolingual professionals into thinking they can bypass professional T&I services altogether.

The diversity of research cited in this book's chapters is an inspiration to those who wish to explore our field further. It is available in both hard and e-copy, and one would hope that academic libraries will have it available to those in our profession who are contemplating postgraduate research.

***Dr Ron Witton** is an Indonesian and Malay translator and an Indonesian interpreter. He gained his BA and MA in Indonesian and Malayan Studies from the University of Sydney and his PhD from Cornell University, USA. Ron is a foundation member of AUSIT, and has also chaired NAATI's Indonesian and Malaysian Language Examining Committee (1992–2007).*



Humans and AI working together: a powerful partnership



Continuing our special feature on AI in T&I, we asked NAATI's Executive Manager (Certification Policy and Development) **Aurélie Sheehan** for NAATI's perspective on the topic.

... humans ... are, and remain, fundamentally cultural and empathetic communicators.

The global T&I sector has shown enduring resilience and adaptation in the face of technological changes over the years. Yet with the advent and adoption of AI, practitioners, educators and LSPs [language service providers] alike are grappling with the impact of this new technology and what the resulting new paradigm means for them, now and into the future.

Many think AI will eventually replace them. However, the current context provides a tremendous opportunity for practitioners to (re)define their value-add and to take agency in both educating their clients and understanding how to leverage AI responsibly.

AI supporting humans: a new level of efficiency

In 2023, NAATI commissioned researchers at Macquarie University to survey the current

impacts of technology in the T&I landscape. The report¹ highlighted how technology – including AI – can ‘augment’ the practitioner. Indeed, AI is first and foremost a powerful efficiency tool which can help practitioners to mine terminology, and to prepare assignments and drafts. It can also alleviate the cognitive load in interpreting assignments, for example by transcribing complex figures, or proposing instant translations to guide the interpreter.

Similarly, AI can support the automation of workflows. For the practitioner, this means creating an AI agent that can assist with drafting or providing alternative translations in a controlled and practitioner-led workflow. In the LSP context, this may involve the automation of project preparation, allocation of assignments, or more complex AI orchestration for low-risk content, including machine translation (MT) and automated MT quality estimation without a human in the loop.²

AI can also complement human practitioners beyond efficiency. It can increase accessibility

in contexts where there are typically no interpreters, such as internal company multilingual meetings or training sessions,³ or where the supply does not meet the demand – notably in out-of-hours emergency settings when no interpreter is available. In these situations, users see AI as a solution that is not perfect but that helps fill a gap and support better understanding among linguistically diverse stakeholders.

This is where the sector transformation is most at play. While efficiency tools are not new to T&I practitioners, tools that can complement or supplement are new – and this is where the crisis lies. The introduction of AI is undeniably changing the nature of the work – perhaps more so for translators than interpreters, with MT post-editing replacing translation and entry-level work being performed by AI. So, does using AI where there are typically no T&I practitioners foster the ‘de-valuing’ of the human practitioner? Or is an AI–human synergy in which complementary strengths are being leveraged emerging?



INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING COURSES

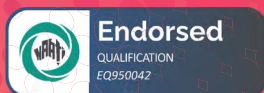
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Humans supporting AI: where meaningful and safe communication is key

Practitioners' value lies where the technology is not optimal: in being human and culturally connected. Even where the technology can perform linguistic tasks well, fine-tuning it to a particular cultural context requires much data annotation and labelling.⁴ AI simply cannot judge, or provide intention or specific cultural insights. In an article published in the May 2026 edition of *Multilingual* magazine, Giovanna Patuno emphasised that AI 'is revealing what communication has always been: a fundamentally human activity that goes well beyond arranging words into acceptable patterns.'⁵ AI is, indeed, excellent at arranging patterns and – let's face it – can do it faster than any human being. However, only humans can convey the cultural nuances, the emotions, the silences and what is said between the lines. They are, and remain, fundamentally cultural and empathetic communicators.

Moreover, in health, legal or regulated settings, T&I practitioners are also taking the edge over AI. They have become quality safeguards and risk managers, ensuring trust and accountability in communication when lives depend on it. In these settings there is no room for AI hallucinations – accurate and trustworthy communication is key, and AI alone, even if performing well, is not a sufficient guarantee.⁶ For instance, AI scribes offering multilingual functionalities are promoted as being able to transcribe medical

Today, the debate seems to be shifting from hype to governance ...

consultations in multiple languages or translate patient information sheets instantly. Indeed, LLMs [large language models] provide quick and seemingly authentic responses to uneducated users who want to access or provide content in other languages. However, this promise of accessibility and inclusiveness without a human in the loop ignores the fact that AI performs better in some languages than others. This is why T&I practitioners remain instrumental in the process: they can expertly manage the risks associated with AI while working in tandem with the technology.

So, who will be the T&I practitioners of tomorrow?

Today, the debate seems to be shifting from hype to governance in industries that are being transformed by AI. Yes – AI is undeniably here to stay. Likewise, practitioners will undeniably be required in the future. However, their focus is shifting towards quality assurance, risk management and editing – particularly in high-resource languages.

To work in partnership with AI, therefore, practitioners will need to cultivate a high level

of skills in their domains of specialisation and their LOTEs, so they can analyse AI outputs critically and avoid communication breakdowns. They will also need to understand how AI works to better position themselves in negotiating with, educating and advising their clients – in other words, in selling their true human value in an AI-supported workflow where humans and machines work together.

Aurélie Sheehan joined NAATI in 2018 to support the rollout of NAATI's certification system. In her current role she leads NAATI's work to develop and continuously improve that system, including examiner training, candidate support, test material creation and test design across specialist and non-specialist credentials. She is an AUSIT member, and has been a NAATI-certified English-to-French translator since 2010.

1. NAATI (2024). *Translation and Interpreting technologies and their impact on the industry*. Final report prepared by the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Medicine, Health, and Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney.
2. Wang, P (2026). *Multilingual AI Masterclass*. The Localization Institute.
3. KUDO. *KUDO AI Speech Translator*. KUDO.
4. Wang, P & Smith, P (2025). *Multilingual Artificial Intelligence*. Routledge.
5. Patruno, G. (2026, May). What gets lost when AI writes, and how to reclaim it. *MultiLingual*, 18–23.
6. Nimdzi (2026). *The 2026 NIMDZI 100*.

AUSIT's multiplying Language Divisions: the power of coming together

Over the last two years AUSIT's Language Divisions have really taken off, increasing from just one (Spanish) to twelve, with another four in the pipeline. We asked the Arabic LD's Delegate **Lama Al-Akhras** to tell us about the benefits of joining (or setting up!) an LD in your own working language.



For me, joining an AUSIT Language Division (LD) has meant becoming part of a professional community in which translators and interpreters, students and academics working in the same language can connect, learn, share, and support one another.

The Arabic LD's WhatsApp professional platform began with just eight Arabic language professionals in December 2025, and has since grown into a community of almost 130. This growth has been about much more than numbers – it reflects a strong desire among members to contribute collectively to the development and recognition of our profession. Along the way, we have discovered that professional connection is much more than networking – it is about solidarity and creating positive change together. The group has become an active and safe space for exchanging

... the best part of this journey is that we are taking it together.

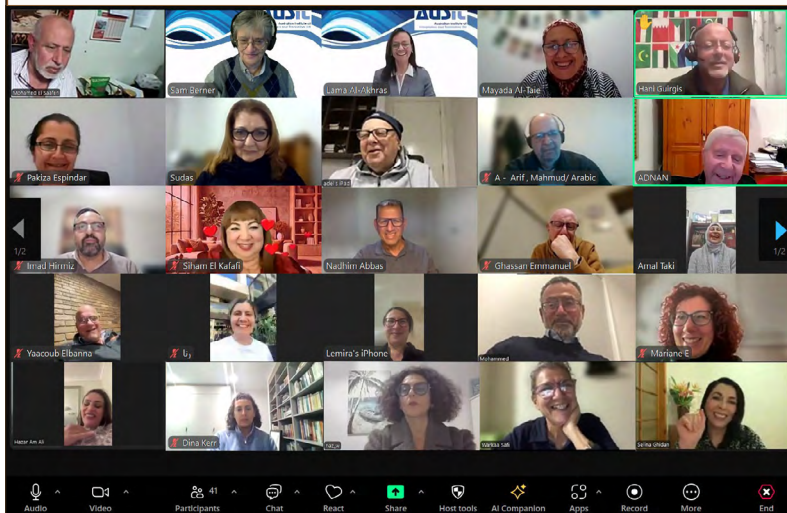
valuable information, professional resources, job and training opportunities, experiences, advice, mentoring, discussions about ethics, and updates relevant to our profession.

The group has developed five specialised subgroups: legal, medical, AI, business and tax, and also an electronic magazine. One example of the activity of these groups is our recent work on translating the **Legal Literate App*** – introduced to us by a colleague who attended training at the South Australian Supreme Court – into Arabic. Rather than working in isolation, members have come together to contribute their knowledge and skills to this

shared project. We are looking forward to publishing the translated glossary via AUSIT. This kind of collaboration demonstrates what can happen when professionals come together to work as a team.

The WhatsApp group has become a space in which members can talk openly about the realities of our profession, from difficult assignments and ethical dilemmas to work-related distress and challenging experiences. We also share successes and inspirational stories. Members discuss agencies, opportunities, remuneration and working conditions, and can turn to colleagues for help. These conversations help members become better informed and more confident in making professional decisions.

At its heart, the group has become a peer-support network where members know they are not alone in facing the challenges of working as translators and interpreters. Sometimes the most valuable response is simply: 'Yes, I've been through that too.'



Above: attendees of Lama's recent 'Language of Law' webinar

Top right: Arabic members at an SA Branch social gathering

Right: an Arabic LD face-to-face social meet-up at Bankstown Sports Club, NSW



Collaboration, not competition

The division also has a broader purpose. Together, we are helping to challenge perceptions about Arabic T&I practitioners, and about the profession itself. We want to be recognised as skilled, knowledgeable and committed professionals who contribute significantly to Australia's multicultural and multilingual society.

Our members bring different experiences, specialisations, dialects and perspectives. They include doctors and nurses, engineers and IT specialists, PhD holders, academics and teachers, journalists and writers, as well as a lawyer, a community hero and the recipient of an Australia Day Award (for commitment, services and involvement in the community). Quite a few speak more than three languages.

Our growing community demonstrates that professional excellence and collegiality can go hand in hand. Together we can advocate for better professional standards, and we see our colleagues as collaborators, not competitors. This spirit of collaboration over competition is becoming part of our professional culture.

As we look ahead, we hope to keep growing – not just in numbers, but in professional strength. Soon we will have another opportunity to take our online connection

into the real world: we are looking forward to seeing many of our colleagues face to face this November, at the AUSIT National Conference in Adelaide, during which we are planning an Arabic LD meetup.

Learning together

Professional development is another important part of our LD's work. Every month, we host a free webinar presented in Arabic. This entitles attendees to NAATI professional development points. These webinars are followed by lively discussions. We also hold quarterly themed online social meetups.

Since February 2026 we have also hosted webinars on: specialised medical interpreting, presented by Hazar Am Ali; book translation across borders (Bakri Gaber); interpreter and translator rights (Silvia Martinez); the ethics of cross-cultural communication (Sam Berner); NAATI's updated recertification process (Imad Hirmiz); legal language (me); and the preservation of Arabic in the age of AI (Dr Zeina Taleb).

In addition, we have held two online themed social meetups – one about dialects, the other about the wider role of interpreters and translators in their communities – and in NSW we have had two face-to-face get-togethers.

Our upcoming events are another themed

social meetup, to debate the AUSIT Code of Ethics, plus two webinars – one on the effect of AI on our jobs, presented by Stuart Kerr, the other on interpreters and intersectional inclusion, by Mikhael Touma – and we have already lined up a few international academics to present to our LD in 2027.

Our LD is really going places, and the best part of this journey is that we are taking it together.

*Syrian-born Arabic-English interpreter **Lama Al-Akbras** holds a BA in commerce and economics from the University of Damascus. She migrated to Australia in 2000, was awarded a scholarship to study legal interpreting at Monash University, graduated in 2025, and recently became a NAATI-certified specialist legal interpreter. You'll find a longer biography at the end of Lama's article in the Autumn 2026 issue of In Touch (page 10).*

** You can read AUSIT past president Prof. Sandra Hale's article on the Legal Literate app in the Autumn 2021 issue of In Touch (page 16).*

Attending an LD event counts towards NAATI recertification (category B.6, or if the session is held in your credentialled language, category D.5).

You'll find more about the LDs, plus how to contact their delegates and the LD coordinator, [here](#).

AUSIT stalwarts: Sam Berner

interviewed by Nancy Guevara

When AUSIT past president **Sam Berner** (2009–10) agreed to participate in this series, we asked if she could think of a suitable interviewer. Sam suggested the QLD Branch's current PD Coordinator **Nancy Guevara**, and she chose well – Nancy took an extremely creative approach to the process, and we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed editing it.



Above: Sam (top) and Nancy

Just Sam in front of her audience. No slides, no carefully designed presentation deck, no elaborate visuals. Just Sam, her handwritten notebook, and her characteristic way of speaking: thoughtful, candid, engaging and unmistakably her own.

That presentation – two years ago, at a mini conference organised by the QLD Branch – stayed with me long after the day was over. There was something especially powerful about its simplicity. Without slides or visual distractions, the focus was entirely on Sam's words and the experiences behind them. And so much of what she spoke about resonated with me personally: migration, language, identity, belonging, and the complex relationship we develop with the languages that become part of our lives.

At the start of her presentation, Sam read out a poem she had written about language and identity. It had such an impact on me that the next day I contacted her and asked whether she would share a photograph of the handwritten poem with me. She did, and I kept it.

So, when I was invited to interview Sam, I

... I was six when I figured out I couldn't speak the language of the country in which I was living ...

thought of that poem. Rather than simply give a chronological account of an impressive professional career, I wanted to return to the words that had first given me such a personal glimpse into the person behind the practitioner. With Sam's permission, I used her poem as a thread running through our conversation. Its lines became a way of exploring her journey through languages, places and identities, as well as her relationship with translation, interpreting and the profession to which she has contributed so much over the years. And so, our conversation began with the poem itself:

Nancy: First of all, Sam, thank you for choosing me to conduct this interview. It's an honour.

Sam: My pleasure.

Nancy: Let's dive straight in, and thank you for agreeing to using your insightful poem. What made you write it?

Sam: Uh, it was a bit tongue in cheek, with a bit of sarcasm. Everybody was talking about mother tongues, and I was thinking, 'What's the definition?' But also with bittersweetness, because I didn't grow up with something I could call *my* language.

Then my co-presenter Nasim Khosravi was talking about how difficult it was to write a theatre play in English for an English audience, which she'd done all the time in Farsi back in Iran, and she was sort of – through her work – trying to translate Iran for an Australian audience. And I thought, 'Yeah, that resonates, because all my life I've been translating myself to others.' That's why I wrote the poem during her talk.

Nancy: Oh yes, I remember that presentation well – so you actually wrote it at the mini conference. Amazing! Now ... let's read out the first two lines:

Sam with her mother aged around four; graduating from Khartoum University, Sudan (B. Ed.&Sc.) in 1984; and in her library in 2007



*I am my father's daughter
I have no mother tongue.*

Nancy: These opening lines seem to take us right back to the origins of your story. Where did your journey with language and identity begin?

Sam: I think I was six when I figured out that I couldn't speak the language of the country in which I was living. I was born in Poland and spent my first six years there, and I learned to read Polish when I was about three and a half.

And in the house ... I wasn't consciously aware of it at the time, but my mother and grandmother spoke a different language to the one they spoke with me, and my father spoke in another language. It seemed natural to me then, but thinking about it now, I was exposed very early on to a multiplicity of languages, some of which I owned and some of which I didn't.

I was mainly brought up by my dad. Mom was absent for most of my life, so I identified as my dad's daughter, not as my mother's. And the language which both my grandmother and my mother spoke to me, Polish, was not their native language – to my mom it was half native, because her father was Polish, but I don't have a 'mother tongue' because my mom spoke to me in a language that wasn't *her* mother tongue – it was her father's language, but not her mother's.

Nancy: Sam, where did your parents come from?

Sam: Both my parents' families were a mixture of various ethnicities, so they came from many places.

Nancy: Hmm, interesting. Let's move on to the next four lines of your poem.

*Blessed are those whose mothers
taught them words
their grandmothers passed on
As mother lore.*

Nancy: These lines speak of language and knowledge being passed from one generation to the next. What do you remember being passed down through *your* family in words, traditions, values, or ways of seeing the world?

Sam: So ... very, very young ... my grandmother reading to me. Most of the literature she read to me was not Polish ... there were many German and Italian stories that were translated into Polish. Then once I got to school I discovered there was Polish literature, too.

My father's side mainly passed on Arabic literature. And at home, it was my father's family who taught me religion, my mother's family were not practising. And values ... I got some very strong values from my father's family, which we'll reflect on when we talk about my involvement in AUSIT.

Nancy: I'd like to touch again on your ways of seeing the world. You've spoken about your upbringing and early experiences, and your love for reading, and how you started reading at a very young age ... how has the variety of cultural backgrounds you grew up in and inherited from your parents shaped how you see the world, and influenced the person you've become, and how

you've approached your work as a translator?

Sam: Well, I don't think my upbringing had a lot to do with becoming a translator – that was a coincidence that grew into a career – but it made me very cosmopolitan, I study cultures. I'm very good at fitting into every culture, but not belonging anywhere ... I'm a sort of footloose person who belongs nowhere but fits everywhere.

And books are an upbringing of their own ... you can travel the whole world and see everything, but books are travel in a different way. Both sides of my family are avid readers. It was a ritual of passage in my father's family, that when a child turned 12, my grandfather would give them the key to the library. It was something everybody looked forward to.

Nancy: Oh, wow! That's so special!

Sam: Yes, this is how I grew up ... in books. I'm very shortsighted. I'm totally sports-useless. So books were a haven for a child that couldn't go out and play without tripping over or being hit by a ball or whatever, because she couldn't see where she was going.

Nancy: So books really became your world. Now, the next two lines of your poem are:

*I had lores
passed on to me from step-tongues.*

Nancy: So I wonder ... did the different cultures, languages and places you encountered become those lores, each giving you a different way of understanding the world?

Sam: Maybe not different ways – I understand the world *my* way, but I also understand how

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(continued)

Below: Sam at a University of Western Sydney symposium in 2010

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other people understand the world through their lores, and being exposed to different lores taught me how to respect and understand the perceptions of others.

I'm very postmodern – I'm not a believer in truth with a capital T. I think respecting and giving value to other people's truths is important, and the world would probably be a much better place if we all practised this, instead of fighting over truth with a capital T.

Yeah, it's very important to get exposed to many cultures, even if you're monolingual – by reading, by exploring other people's literature, their religions, their sets of beliefs and traditions. This made me a better translator, because I developed a better ear for the audience.

Nancy: Absolutely. It helps you avoid something I find quite tricky, both professionally and personally, and that is making assumptions. I think that can be particularly dangerous in our work. Now let's move on – the next line reads:

Steeped in knowledge not mine.

Nancy: By the time you entered the profession in 1984, you'd already lived across different languages and cultures. How did that shape the

... it's very important to get exposed to many cultures, even if you're monolingual ...

translator you became? And what do you think a translator needs, beyond linguistic expertise?

Sam: The translator needs knowledge. The more you know, the better translator you are. I think the fact that I grew up on books and exposed to different ideas, different cosmologies, different mythologies, different political views ... by the age of 14, I was surrounded by adults talking about much more intense things than I should have been exposed to at that age. But growing up so fast made me a very good translator by the age of 24. I wasn't prepared to become a translator, and starting with a book on Marxist philosophy was – you know – nobody sane does that. But I've never been sane anyway, so ...

Nancy: Hahaha!

Sam: The translator also needs to have empathy. If you can't empathise with your

audience, how are you going to talk to them? Translation isn't just transfer of words and meanings, it's also transfer of the feelings in the text, so you need empathy. Of course you need tons of other things, like business and negotiation skills, but I'm not going to talk about this because this isn't what this interview is about.

I think a good translator must also be curious. Curiosity is a very important aspect of a good translator or interpreter, to love languages you need to be curious. And continually learning, because language is a living creature, it doesn't stop changing, so if you get stuck in a certain age of a language, you're out of touch.

Nancy: It's interesting you mention empathy. Normally we see those human 'soft skills' as more important for interpreters ...

Sam: A translator is a writer. True, we don't write our own words, but ... can you imagine a novelist who doesn't have empathy, and therefore writes extremely dry, inhuman texts? You need to understand other humans to be able to write a good novel, and it's the same with translators ... look, I'm a consequentialist, so every time I translate a text, I think about the consequences of it being read. If you don't have empathy, how are you going to imagine how *other people* will feel, or how they'll react to things you've translated? I think that's ethically very important too.

Nancy: Absolutely. Now, Sam, let's move on to the next lines in your poem:

So I owned

No mother tongue

Nancy: By this point in the poem, you've evoked a life shaped by many languages and cultures. Did having so many make it harder to feel that any one language, culture or identity was completely yours? We've touched on this, but please tell me more.



Below: Sam speaking at 'Jubilation 25' (the AUSIT Silver Jubilee National Conference), Sydney, 2012; centre: after being awarded an AUSIT Fellowship in 2014, with Amale Hourani, then National Treasurer and one of Sam's nominators; and right: the poem



Nancy: Mmm, I can relate to how you describe translating yourself to the world, because after many years living in this country, I'm not able to leave my old self behind and assume just one identity. I don't belong to either anymore – not fully from here and not fully from there. I'm talking about, you know, identity, not integrating into society – I'm very happy here, and happy with the contribution I'm making to Australian society – it's the identity aspect.



Sam: When I was younger I did want to have an identity ... now that I'm approaching my seventies, funny as it sounds, I'm much more comfortable in my own skin than I was.

Do I own any of them? I'm going to give the question back to you here – should anybody own anything in the first place? Aren't we all just visitors passing by? And the languages and cultures just host us, we learn from them and then we pass on and we go and learn something else. Maybe for me it was easier because I was so exposed to different things, but not belonging still hurts. But people ask, 'Where's home?' and I say, 'Where my books are.' I'm a cosmopolitan nomad, culturally speaking.

Nancy: How did that sense of being between languages, places, cultures and different influences – and even all the knowledge you've been acquiring with your thirst for books and learning – influence the professional identity you developed as a translator?

Sam: I think it made me more effective in terms of transfer of meaning. And I don't think I would've found a better career than being a translator, because all my life has been translation – translating myself for others, my identity, explaining who I am, trying to translate cultures, being in wrong cultures – cultures that didn't want to host me if I'd told them the story I told you.

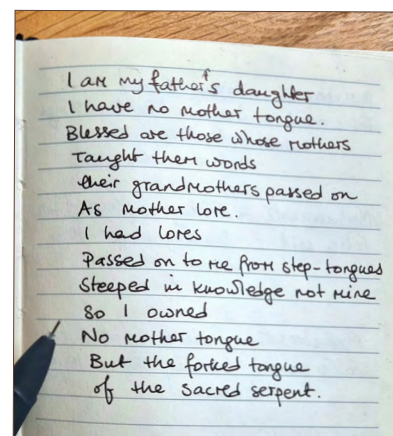
So all my life has been about translating. And the translator is a bit of a con artist, by the way, in that you're perpetually 'conning' with texts that are not yours. But yeah, I think all this exposure to other cultures made me a much more effective translator.

Sometimes I feel I'm also trying to translate an internal dialogue, almost translating my new self to my old self. I find myself asking, 'Why is this bothering me?' There are simple, culturally shaped behaviours that I still struggle with, or things I still miss, so there's this constant internal dialogue about who I am and where I belong. Now, the final two lines of your amazing poem:

*But the forked tongue
of the sacred serpent.*

Nancy: I've tried to work out what you mean here. A forked tongue can evoke contradiction or a divided identity, while the serpent can suggest knowledge and transformation. Is that what you wanted to say by closing your poem this way? No single language or identity seems to be able to contain the whole of who you are. Has living between languages and cultures ultimately felt like a loss, or a gift? Or simply part of how you've come to understand yourself?

Sam: Hmm, definitely not a loss. I'm enriched by what I've learned – and still learn – about other cultures. I have friends in most parts of the world – I'm not just interested in whatever 12 backgrounds my DNA comes from. The forked tongue can be a bilingual person. The serpent can also be perceived as a traitor, while the popular Italian proverb '*traduttore, traditore*'



('translator, traitor') refers to how tough it is to reproduce a text's original meaning.

But in Jewish cosmology the serpent has a very important role, and in feminist explanations of

Judaism it's actually an empowerer, and it's an animal that's wise – 'Be as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves,' as the rabbis say. So for me, the serpent is the owner of knowledge with a forked tongue, which could speak in more than one language.

The snake has multiple identities, and changes its skin. Some myths say snakes never die. They *do* die, but that constant renewal – I felt that was happening to me, I was constantly being renewed by learning new things. Yes, I don't have a mother tongue, but I have a forked tongue and I have the wisdom that I've acquired, and that keeps my brain eternally young.

Nancy: What a powerful way to end your poem, Sam. So, has everything that you've shared – about your upbringing, exposure to different languages and feelings about your own identity – shaped how you've connected with the profession as a whole, and particularly with our association, AUSIT, and your colleagues there? You've contributed so much in so many different capacities over the years, and I always wonder what's kept you coming back, giving to the professional community you belong to?

Sam: Well, I feel at home at AUSIT because everybody else is a serpent with a forked tongue, too – it's a very colourful snake collection. I've made so many friendships there, they've taken the place of an extended family.

And why do I keep coming back? Well, I'm a sucker for punishment, obviously – that's the tongue-in-cheek response. But it's also because the values I grew up with were – 'You own, you give.' That was highly stressed in my family – that if you have something you can share, you share it. Otherwise, that thing has no value. I believe that if you have knowledge and you just keep it to yourself, it's not knowledge. So I keep coming back. In AUSIT, I mostly mentor and teach. So, yeah, that value of giving is what

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(continued)

... if you see something wrong you should fix it,
and there are three ways to do this: ...

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keeps taking me back. And, something I've learned from my Arab Muslim friends, there's a *Sunnah* – a prophet's saying – that if you see something wrong you should fix it, and there are three ways to do this: with your hand, or with your mouth – you talk about it – or with your heart, which means you pray to God to do something, and that's the least you can do. So, for me, that's a massively important value.

Nancy: Sam, remind me, how long have you been in AUSIT? How many roles have you had? Have you been president?

Sam: Since 2003 – 23 years. I was president for one year, yes, and I've been on the Queensland Committee forever ... since 2003. In 2004 I became the PD coordinator, then sort of navigated into the chair position. Then 2008, I organised the first Queensland conference, at UQ. Then 2014, the next conference, and 2022, the third that I organised. Plus in 2017, the FIT National Congress. Yeah, I've played lots of different roles.

Nancy: The contribution you've made to the association is incredible, I want to thank you for all the work you've done.

Sam: It was a fun ride. I enjoyed it.

Nancy: Mm, sometimes I wonder why I devote so many hours to the PD Coordinator role. Of course, we have an amazing committee who all help, but sometimes I think maybe I should stop. But I can't – not yet. I really enjoy it.

Sam: That's what 'sucker for punishment' means. It's addictive.

Nancy: Yes, it's crazy how addictive it can be, the incredible satisfaction you feel when you're giving back to your colleagues and your profession, and somehow making a difference to the industry.

Sam: And karma, I believe in karma, and I have

to say that ever since I put my foot in AUSIT, that karma has been repaid in many ways. The most valuable was getting to meet fascinating people, but it also helped professionally.

Nancy: Yeah, yeah. So we're reaching the end of our interview, and I have one last question. Your poem starts with words passed down from grandmothers to mothers, then to their children – and in your case, from your father and grandmothers. You've spent so many decades teaching and mentoring and contributing to not only AUSIT, but the profession as a whole. What do you hope you've passed on to T&I practitioners who have come after you, and those still to come?

Sam: I can only judge my impact by the number of people who show up to my lectures – usually a full room. But I hope I've passed on the fighting spirit, and the critical thinking – don't take anything lying down as a professional. Your self-respect will affect how others see you. I hope I've passed that on, that you don't have to be a wilting lily. It's a very feminised profession and women, by default, are already oppressed just because of their gender. So – empowering women to stand for themselves, and showing them by example that it can be done – I think I've passed that on.

I'm very concerned about the younger, new translators. The world is changing at a speed that even I cannot fathom, and I'm struggling with that, trying to figure it out. So much of what I've taught so far is irrelevant now, I need to teach something else. But I'll get there, I haven't given up. You know, as long as I can talk, I'll be presenting.

Nancy: Sam, it's been wonderful spending this time with you. Thank you so much for answering my questions, and for embracing this creative approach to the interview.

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within the Italian community, the ones with strange customs. And in this book I sometimes refer to Australia as 'the colony.' The similarity is the community I came out of, and the main difference is that the country I migrated to is not the standard community, it's outside the real community. The protagonists are inside the real community, whereas the Australians are the outsiders, the 'other.' The first novel is set mainly in Italy, whereas the second is mainly set in northeastern Victoria, on a tobacco farm.

Q: At the centre of *The Immigrants* there is a sense of place – your parents' and yours. I'd like to explore this sense of place in your life as a writer and a migrant.

I've always been conscious of two places, it's a very strong feeling – the village in Italy where I was born, the place my parents always talked about. And that village was the place that came to the Australian farm via letters from relatives in Italy. So there were always these two places mingling together, the village in Italy and the tobacco farm in Australia. The sense of community in that village was very strong, with the streets and the houses, and the families. Then in my later life there was the other place, the tobacco farm, which was a very solitary place, and this is why I became a translator, because translators can sit by themselves and translate. And now I'm a translator and a writer. Growing up I used to sit on a riverbank and the farm in Australia was my place, until we went back to Italy for a year, and that became my place. When I returned to Australia I couldn't sit on the riverbank anymore, I lost interest in fishing and being by myself because I missed being in the village, surrounded by people, I missed the sense of community. The village became a place for me, and the riverbank also. Although I was alone, I was never lonely. So this sense of place was very strong, with memories of both ways of life.

You can enjoy Moreno's acceptance speech for the Christina Stead Prize [here](#), and read more of his musings on writing, language and life [here](#).

Our new T&I Editor Cristina Savin will interview Moreno for our AUSIT Stalwarts series in the December issue of *In Touch*.



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Renaming dementia in Chinese: finding a term that is accurate and respectful to use

Researchers: Dr Zihan He, Prof. Christine Ji, Cedric Cheng, Dr Sally Day, Lucie Downer, Prof. Lee-Fay Low

Institution: University of Sydney

[image: Shutterstock/mapo_japan]

Dementia is not only a medical condition; the word also carries fear, misunderstanding and stigma in some cultures.

In Chinese-speaking communities, one of the most common names for dementia has long been 痴呆症 (*chī dāi zhèng*), which literally means ‘Stupidity and Idiocy Syndrome.’ While this term remains familiar to many people, it can label people living with dementia in a humiliating way, and may discourage them and their families from talking openly about symptoms, diagnosis and care.

This study asked a practical but sensitive question: what Chinese term for dementia is both scientifically accurate and culturally appropriate?

Chinese-speaking regions have used various other terms for dementia, including 脑退化症 (*nǎo tuì huà zhèng*) (Brain Degeneration Syndrome), 认知障碍症 (*rèn zhī zhàng ài zhèng*) (Cognitive Impairment Syndrome), 失智症 (*shī zhì zhèng*) (Loss of Intelligence Syndrome), 认知症 (*rèn zhī zhèng*) (Cognition Syndrome) and 退智症 (*tuì zhì zhèng*) (Degenerative Intelligence Syndrome). The inconsistent use of these terms can make dementia harder for the public to understand, especially when different words carry different clinical meanings and emotional associations.

To examine these terms, we interviewed 21 Chinese-speaking dementia experts from the Asia-Pacific region. Participants included doctors, university academics, nurses and allied health professionals from mainland China, Hong



Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Malaysia and Australia, with an average of 17.5 years of dementia-related work experience. They were asked to evaluate the scientific accuracy and cultural appropriateness of existing Chinese terms for dementia, and to nominate the most suitable.

Thirteen of the 21 experts selected 认知障碍症 (*rèn zhī zhàng ài zhèng*) (Cognitive Impairment Syndrome) as the best option. They felt that it better reflects the central features of dementia, especially changes in cognition, while carrying less stigma than terms that imply stupidity, loss of intelligence or irreversible degeneration.

The study also found that renaming can have real public health value. Experts from regions that had already moved away from 痴呆症 (*chī dāi zhèng*) ‘Stupidity and Idiocy Syndrome’ reported that public discussions of dementia had become more open, media coverage had increased, and families appeared more willing to seek earlier diagnosis.

The study therefore proposes 认知障碍症 (*rèn zhī zhàng ài zhèng*) (Cognitive Impairment Syndrome) as the most scientifically accurate and culturally appropriate Chinese term for dementia. This recommendation has already had practical impact: Dementia Australia has endorsed this term and begun updating its Chinese dementia resources accordingly.

The research does not claim that terminology alone can remove the stigma around dementia. Based on expert interviews, it did not yet include people living with dementia, family carers or other community members. Future research should test how various Chinese-speaking communities understand, accept and use the proposed term in everyday life. However, the study does show that naming matters: a respectful and accurate term can become an important first step toward better dementia literacy, earlier help-seeking and more inclusive public communication.

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:

BEATRIZ DIAZ
both
Spanish-English
Sydney, NSW
1989
2017
official documents

BEN CLANCHY
translator
Indonesian<>English
Jakarta, Indonesia
2008
2021
legal

Q&A

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

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

A1

When I arrived in Australia at the age of 15 I was in Year 9, and there was already a fair amount of pressure about what I was going to do once I finished high school. I knew I wanted to go to university, so when I found out about the brand-new Bachelor of Arts in Interpreting and Translation offered by Macarthur Institute of Higher Education (now Western Sydney University), I immediately enrolled. I initially focused on interpreting assignments and worked on a fulltime basis at the Telephone Interpreter Service. Later, I focused primarily on translation work as it allowed me to work from home and offered the flexibility I wanted around the needs of my young family. That decision I made as a 17-year-old was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

A2

One of the most interesting experiences I've had was interpreting at Long Bay Gaol. I was straight out of university, very young and – looking back – quite naïve. I remember walking into the gaol and being absolutely in awe of everything around me – the endless doors, security guards and layers of security. Being escorted into one of the interview rooms was quite daunting. My assignment was to interpret for a young man who had swallowed condoms containing drugs, one of which had burst inside him while he was flying to Australia. By the time I was called in he'd spent some time in hospital, recovered and been transferred to Long Bay. It was certainly an eye-opening introduction to the realities of interpreting! An absolutely fascinating assignment, and one I've never forgotten.

A1

I fell into T&I work after a stint at DFAT as a junior diplomat. We had some language training, and regularly got shoved into impromptu interpreting assignments on that basis. After around three years at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta my stint finished. I left DFAT and moved into private legal practice there, and sat the NAATI translator test on a bit of a whim. The main reason I moved into translation is that it is more flexible timewise than interpreting. In those days, all you needed to be eligible to sit the test was a letter from someone saying that you had done some work in the field – no formal training was required. I don't do a lot of translation work per se and the work I do take on typically doesn't need a NAATI stamp, but the qualification does reassure clients that I can understand the contracts and other documentation in hand.

A2

At the top of the list would be interpreting for Australian federal ministers in meetings with their counterparts during my time with DFAT – sometimes in closed meetings, and at other times in open public meetings or at press conferences. At times, their counterparts would slip into dialect or slang, which was challenging. Sometimes these assignments were planned, other times impromptu, but in hindsight these tasks would all have been better executed if I had had the benefit of the formal training which is now a prerequisite for sitting NAATI's tests. I later took the Tafe SA online interpreting course, and found it to be well run and a thorough preparation for starting out in the industry.

