

# AUSIT NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Volume 16, number 1  
Summer 2008

*AUSIT NSW Branch's end-of-year Xmas function was well attended and very festive (more pictures on back page).*



*AUSIT member Riham Youssef at work as a permanent staff member with the Arabic Translation Service (ATS) from the UN's Department of the General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM). Read the interview with her inside on page 7.*

**Arts meet languages**  
**Ethics and newspeak**  
**Translation from the future**  
**An AUSIT member with the UN**



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A national organisation of professional associations

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## National Council February 2008

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VICE-PRESIDENT Annamaria Arnall (WA)  
SECRETARY Patricia Avila (Qld)  
TREASURER John Crone (Vic)  
IMMED. PAST PRES  
(stand in) Moreno Giovannoni (Vic)  
PD COORDINATOR Willya Waldburger  
(NSW)

### PRINCIPAL DELEGATES:

ACT Malcolm Leader  
NSW Somsak Patradoon  
QLD Ita Szymanska  
SA/NT Claudia Ait-Touati  
VIC/TAS Eva Hussain  
WA Yutaka Kawasaki

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### From the editor

I would like to remind members that the deadline for the autumn issue is **10 May**.

Special thanks go, as usual, to all contributors, and anyone else who helped.

Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome, as are any images (including author photos).

Please send any letters, articles or images for forthcoming editions to me at my new address:

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The editor reserves the right to edit or not to publish any item submitted for publication. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editor or those of AUSIT and its executive.

This newsletter is printed by Bounty Print and distributed by Mailing Advantage.

### Hearty congratulations to the following members who have been granted Senior Practitioner status:

Rosy Lazzari from ACT

Lingling Holloway from Qld

### Since publication of the last newsletter, the following people have been admitted to the Institute as either members or associate subscribers:

ACT - Faiza Syed

NSW - Michele Roger

SA - Dr Robert Moyer

Vic - Tiantao Zhang

WA - Maria Fisher

### Congratulations and welcome all!

## 19<sup>th</sup> JBML by Dr Lindsay Heywood now on our website

I am delighted to inform you that the 19<sup>th</sup> Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture given by Dr Lindsay Heywood, CEO of NAATI, is now available on our website. The paper gives an insight into the T&I profession in Australia from the perspective of an astute observer who now has a vested interest in its success. The paper is both provocative and constructive, and aimed at fostering continuing cooperation and collaboration between AUSIT and NAATI as we face the challenges ahead.

Dr Heywood explained his approach to his lecture:

'When I was asked to give this lecture I contemplated possible topics and decided that, as I am new to this world of translating and interpreting, I could perhaps offer some "outside" views on the translating and interpreting profession, unencumbered by any prior position. My aim today is to offer a perspective as a newcomer, which I hope may provide a foundation for AUSIT and NAATI's continuing work together in building the profession.'

In closing he remarked:

'There are many challenges and opportunities ahead in building the profession. I have covered some of these today including:

- clarification of the identity of the profession and its "ownership";
- the desired structure of the profession, including identification of an "entry level";
- induction, mentoring, role modelling and debriefing;
- professional standards and training packages;
- sanctions and counselling;
- effective advocacy.

I look forward to being part of the next phase of the profession's development and working with AUSIT and our other colleague organisations in particular.'

For a full text of the paper visit <[www.ausit.org](http://www.ausit.org)>.

### AUSIT's membership of the Association Forum and Professions Australia

Our memberships with the Associations Forum and Professions Australia continue to give us relevant support and advice, particularly from the Associations Forum, where members' meetings provide us with tips on ways to increase membership and provide quality services to our members. The

# President's Report

## Sarina Phan keeps members up to date with current AUSIT issues and events

National Executive plans to invite John Peacock, Director of the Associations Forum, to our next National Council meeting to provide advice and assistance.

### AUSIT collaborating with other T&I Associations

As part of AUSIT's strategic plan, I will be meeting with Jemina Napier, President of ASLIA, and Heather Glass, President of WAITI, via Skype to discuss some common issues effecting our profession and what we can do collaboratively for the betterment of T&I in Australia. This meeting will bring benefits to our members and strengthen the relationship between the three associations. AUSIT also plans to re-establish our connection with NZSTI (the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters).

### Administrative Review

This project is now well underway and the working group (Moreno Giovannoni, Claudia Ait Touati, John Crone and myself) is hopeful that changes will be implemented at the beginning of this financial year. AUSIT will be publishing our expression of Interest document, inviting individuals, companies and services to tender for the provision of administrative and secretarial services and financial support to AUSIT.

### Changes to PD Logbook

By agreement AUSIT's PD logbook is also utilised by ASLIA and NAATI. Recently we received a request from Jemina Napier (also consulted on and agreed to by NAATI) for some changes to our PD logbook. These changes appear under 'Ethics of the Profession', 'Maintenance of Language', 'T&I Skills Development' and 'Complementary Skills Development', and apply mainly to Auslan interpreters and for clarification purposes (see also Annamaria's article in this issue on page 5).

### Recommended Guidelines for Health Professionals Working With Interpreters

National Council is also planning a series of launches of the AUSIT *Recommended Guidelines for Health*



### Professionals Working with Interpreters.

This booklet was developed and completed last year and planning is underway for distribution of the booklets.

### Code of Ethics Review

For a number of years now the National Executive has been discussing whether the AUSIT Code of Ethics needs to be updated to reflect the work of T/Is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The NE has agreed to explore the possibility of working in partnership with RMIT on this project and many AUSIT members have volunteered to contribute. We shall keep you informed of the progress in the next issue.

### National Council Mid-Year Meeting

With many of these issues still to be discussed in details and decided upon, the NC is planning its mid-year meeting possibly in April or May. The meeting is envisaged to take place in Melbourne so that the cost can be kept down to a minimum.

On behalf of the NC I wish you all a very prosperous and exciting year ahead, and look forward to our next issue.

AUSIT stands for unity — united effort, a united front, unity of purpose.

# NSW PD events for 2006-2007

## Report by Sarah Walls and Terry Chesher

In 2007 the NSW Professional Development Committee consisted of the following members (listed alphabetically): Terry Chesher, Stephen Houston, Teresa Lee, Felicity Mueller, Somsak Patradoon, Maurice Thibaux, Willya Waldburger and Sarah Walls. Convenor Michael Grunwald stepped down due to other commitments. The committee's general aims continue to be to provide practical and educational professional development events, and to raise revenue for offering improved services to AUSIT members.

During 2007 fewer PD events were organised due to other pressures and the group's other commitments, notably planning and preparation for Critical Link 5 and associated activities. This international congress on community interpreting was sponsored by the University of Western Sydney (UWS), with AUSIT member, Associate Professor Sandra Hale in the role of Chair of the Organising Committee. CL5 was held from 11-15 April 2007, and brought together 489 delegates, including 301 from Australia (*AUSIT National Newsletter*, May 2007, Vol. 15, No. 2).

The NSW PD committee organised an AUSIT table at the Conference, co-ordinated by Willya Waldburger, to recruit new members and get existing members to renew. Well over a dozen people joined or re-joined AUSIT. The conference was anticipated as an excellent launch pad for NSW AUSIT's PD event documentation DVDs. Frustratingly, Stephen's equipment had broken down at a very inopportune time a couple of months before, and it was looking near impossible to complete the editing of the DVDs in time for CL5 until John Benson stepped into the breach by editing, mastering and designing the graphics for the packaging of all the DVDs in readiness for the AUSIT stand. Sales went well, and both the UWS and the Community Relations Commission have expressed interest in obtaining the CL5 DVD set.

In another AUSIT promotional initiative at CL5, Terry Chesher convened a very successful gathering to greet delegate practitioners. This event achieved its aim of warmly welcoming international delegates to Australia under the hospitable banner of AUSIT as Australia's T&I professional association. Yet another excellent outcome from the conference was that Stephen Houston recorded the CL5 plenary lectures and panel session onto video. In an arrangement offered by Associate Professor Hale, AUSIT now has control of these recordings and will sell them to raise PD income when post-production logistics are decided — hopefully not too far into the future.

Since the last AGM in 2006, the committee has organised four PD events. All were held in the San Francesco Room at CoAsIt in Leichhardt, with whom we continue to have an excellent working relationship. The entry fees (including GST) have been established at \$22 for members and \$33 for non-members for three-hour Thursday evening sessions including a generous supper; the standard of catering by committee members continues to be excellent. National AUSIT PD points are awarded for attendance.

### The events of the last 12 months were:

Date: 1 December 2006  
Topic: Is Technology Helping Translators?  
Convenor: Terry Chesher.  
Presenter: Dr Anthony Pym, University of Tarragona.

Date: 8 Feb 2007.  
Topic: Interpreting and Translating for the Police.  
Convenor: Felicity Mueller.  
Presenters: Several interpreters participated in the excellent role play opportunities (Joseph Abdo, Maria Escribano, Elizabeth Friedman, Associate Professor Sandra Hale, Veronica Millar) as did AUSIT member Steve Elkanovich (Australian Crime Commission), Judy Saba, Det. Sgt. Mark

Parsons (NSW Police). There was also an unforgettable role-playing interview by Barbara McGilvray's son Angus, with his boss Miguel Andrade acting as a drug runner. Both work for the Australian Federal Police.

Date: 21 June 2007.  
Topic: Business Skills for T&I.  
Convenor: Willya Waldburger, 2007 PD Administrator.  
Presenter: Somsak Patradoon, member of the NSW Branch and PD Committees, gave an entertaining and informative three-hour workshop on the critical questions facing interpreters or translators looking to put their business on a firm footing (*Newsletter* Aug. 2007, Vol. 15 No. 3).

Date: 9 August 2007.  
Topic: Conference Interpreting.  
Convenor: Willya Waldburger, 2007 PD Administrator.  
Presenters: Margot Seligmann, conference interpreter and lecturer at UWS; Marlis Walther, a senior interpreter with the Sydney South-West Area Health Care Interpreter Service; Erika Gonzalez, visiting academic at UWS from the University of the Basque Country; and Rebecca Ladd, an AUSLAN conference interpreter.

In the last year it has become clear that DVDs from AUSIT PD events have excellent potential as a fund-raising resource. Thanks to the inspiration and skills of Stephen Houston, almost all PD events have been recorded since 2004. Following the first DVD from the September 2004 session on ethics, there are four others on issues of stress, attracting non-government clients, and on working with police (*Newsletter*, Aug. 2007, Vol. 15 No. 3). Presenters are now routinely invited to authorise the release of recordings to AUSIT for educational purposes. Since the 2006 AGM, 87 DVDs have been sold. Furthermore, an educational licence has been sold to Macquarie University, raising \$3,271 plus \$500 for the educational licence. Middlesex University in the UK has enquired about using the AUSIT DVDs for an online database. This requires a decision on the most suitable arrangement; that is, a one-off or annual licence payment by the university to AUSIT for use of our copyright material. However, AUSIT's resources for producing further DVDs remain inadequate and require further financial support.

The committee has decided that realising the full fund-raising potential of the DVDs requires:

- a post-production plan for editing and mastering those recordings ready for distribution. At present Stephen and John do not have sufficient equipment or time to take on this task;
- a marketing plan to sell existing DVDs locally and internationally, developed and coordinated by someone with expertise;
- continued recording of PD events and production of DVDs; and
- a financial commitment to cover the cost of filming equipment, software, skills and time so as to reduce the current reliance on loaned equipment and voluntary input.

The committee has also developed a job description and checklist for a paid administrator for PD events and this year has piloted this new arrangement. The PD Administrator this year has been Willya Waldburger; the PD Committee will decide which of its members will be PDA for 2008.

The NSW PD events programme has been successfully run for some years now by a dedicated group of volunteers, with some paid administrative assistance. These events could not have been held without the generosity of pro bono presenters and the PD group, or the enthusiastic participation of members and their colleagues who make up the audiences.

We are always keen to involve more members in this rewarding work, so NSW members are encouraged to make themselves known to a committee member if they would like to contribute to future events. Ideas for future topics are also welcome.

The National AGM was held in Sydney on 10 November, just two weeks after the NSW AGM, and members of the PD Committee Somsak Patradoon, Teresa Lee, and Terry Chesher organised a splendid lunch following the Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture, with great food provided and culminating in a spectacular 20<sup>th</sup> birthday cake for AUSIT, arranged by Wai Kwok.

## Improvements to PD logbook and AUSIT website

### Expanding the PD Logbook

Two recent changes have made the PD Logbook even more flexible.

The first is on the front page and allows for the recognition of events which are not strictly or specifically ethics sessions, but which still foster the maintenance or development of a practitioner's knowledge about the ethics of the profession. Reading and writing articles about this topic and participating in debates can now be also rewarded with credit points.

The second change is an addition: 100 points can now be claimed upon the

completion of tertiary studies towards a qualification in a related discipline, such as Linguistics, TESOL, International Relations or Deaf Studies.

Happy learning — and harvesting the PD points for it!

### Slight changes to the website

Although the website redesign working group is merely about halfway through the task, our members can already benefit from two improvements.

Colleagues who use Skype in their client communications may want to display their Skype address. To do so, please

visit <[www.ausit.org](http://www.ausit.org)>, click on 'News' and follow the instructions.

Another improvement serves our Senior Practitioners. When a search is made, their names are now displayed in bold letters.

Remember, you can find an amazing amount of information inside the members' only pages. Translators tools, branch committee members' addresses, PD programs, official documents, statistics, an archive of old newsletters and many photos. We hope to bring this treasure to you in an updated website with a fresher image and more user-friendly logistics. Your suggestions are always welcome.

Annamaria Arnall  
Vice President

## Multilingual subscription winners

The winners of the two free subscriptions to *Multilingual* magazine for best submissions to this issue of the newsletter are:

**Moreno Giovannoni** for his short prose piece, 'Fun in court with Remulus and Romus' (see page 16), and **Sam Berner** for 'The book to bind them all', her review of *Translation As a Profession* by D Gouadec (page 14).

Both receive an annual subscription (eight issues plus an annual resource directory/index) to both the online and hardcopy editions of *Multilingual*,

a magazine for website globalisation, translation, international software development and language technology, courtesy of member Vivian Stevenson and *Multilingual* Editor Laurel Wagers.

Remember, there are still two subscriptions left for the best submissions to the May 2008 edition of the newsletter, so get those pens, pencils or fingers to work!

## Apology

My sincere apologies go to member and Senior Practitioner **Silke Gebauer** for failing to credit her with authorship of the excellent article 'Frills, frocks and fanfare', published on page 7 in the previous edition of the *AUSIT National Newsletter* (December 2007, Vol. 15, No. 5).

Bradley Dawson  
Editor



# Arts meet Languages — now on record

## Rita Pasqualini attended the recent session on 'translating theatre' in WA as interest grows in multicultural aspects of the arts

Thanks to the contributions of AUSIT, Barking Gecko and Community Arts WA, the 'Arts meet Languages' (the capital 'S' emphasises the importance of the plural; that is, two or more languages) session took place at the Blue Room on 23 October. There is now a DVD of the discussion which followed the readings from two plays involving different types of translation for different outcomes.

The first piece, *Trains of Thought* by Shirley van Sanden, is a multilingual play in Cantonese, English and Mandarin, produced in 2006. The work follows the story of Andrew, an Australian-born Chinese teenager, and how he negotiates life between his Chinese-speaking parents and peers and his Anglo and European friends. Only one of the three actors in the original production spoke Cantonese and Mandarin, but all played multilingual roles. Hearing how the company managed the piece was stimulating at many levels, and one response I would like to convey to all those involved and interested is the importance of accessing language professionals who can help with translating theatre. In this case, a performer contacted a friend in Singapore, and the author trusted the latter's work. Pronunciation coaching had to be done by telephone.

This task would probably have been easier if someone with the appropriate linguistic qualifications, but also with adequate knowledge and understanding of performance requirements, could have been found here. Help also could have come from the practical suggestions for further action made at the Australian National Playwrights Centre (ANPC) seminar in 2006, where it was proposed that a public register/database of bilingual theatre artists be established, extending to interested language professionals. While we may see T/Is as the main language professionals, their roles may well extend into other aspects, such as pronunciation coaching, an area well worth exploring. This was the topic of a

meeting held on 10 November 2006 at Kulcha in Fremantle, which focused on roles for language professionals in the performing arts.

The second reading was from Afeif Ismail's *The Son of the Sun*, an English-language play by an Australian-Sudanese poet and playwright, originally composed in Classical Arabic. Afeif collaborated with Vivienne Glance to produce an engaging and lyrical English text for performance. The script is at the first-draft stage, and participants heard Afeif and Vivienne discuss how they got there and the next stage of 'transcreation'. Barking Gecko aims to produce the play in 2009, and the audience felt privileged to witness and discuss the work in progress.

Vivienne Glance is a creative and performing artist who is also involved in training, and has been exposed to some forms of the Arabic language and associated culture. As noted above, work in this area requires a range of competencies, and further suggestions from the ANPC seminar reflect this concern: practical workshops with exchanges of expertise could include sessions on cultural advocacy/awareness and linguistic/idiomatic detail. Here language professionals could help theatre professionals, whilst theatre professionals could help language professionals in terms of the structures of the form (i.e. dramaturgy), and other types of practical introduction to theatre technique. There are already contacts with potential trainers in these areas, and we hope experiences across Australia can be coordinated and shared.

The Blue Room evening began after five with a cordial welcome (a choice of rosé or raspberry) and a brief introduction to the project, followed by the readings, then a discussion which concluded after 7 pm. However despite the hour, enough people returned for the rest of the programme. This involved a brief sample of interpreting associated with the visual arts: an

Italian collector had brought a painting and related information, which was interpreted into English; after that, two participants shared their experiences, keeping the audience riveted until well after 9 pm. Thomas Papathanassiou spoke mainly about his award-winning one-man show *Looming the Memory*, which uses Greek and English, noting that he was told to keep both languages, even when performing in Greece. While the second part of the evening is not recorded in the DVD, similar issues were raised in discussions of other works involving Barking Gecko's performers, and the audience was invited to comment on their linguistic proficiency.

The other speaker Joanne Foley, a puppeteer performing in French and English, asked relevant and practical questions about ways to present such work. It was rewarding for the organisers to find such lively collaboration from people who had only heard about the evening through general publicity; most of the audience was not associated with linguistic and related professions, but a quick survey of those who remained to the end showed a wide range of interest in languageS and cultures, particularly through the arts.

The growing interest in multicultural aspects of the arts at the institutional level is reassuring, and it was particularly good to have received the (in)kind support of Barking Gecko. What could be better to see than this theatre company for young people existing to serve the multicultural community of WA, not to mention marketing our work to present and future generations?

Besides the in-kind contributions from AUSIT and Barking Gecko, support for the project came through a grant from CANWA (see the appropriate acknowledgment below).

Please send an empty message to <tra-the-subscribe@yahogroups.com> if you wish to join the newly-formed 'translating theatre' Yahoo group.

To all, my thanks and best wishes for ongoing progress in our cooperation.

**The State of Western Australia has made an investment in this project through the Department of Culture and the Arts (ArtsWA), and through the Community Arts Network.**

I heard Riham for the first time on SBS, and became an instant fan. But although I am a great admirer of this feisty young Egyptian, Riham and I have never met in person, although we intended to. By the time I had organised myself, Riham was back in Cairo and on her way to where her heart has always wanted to take her — to New York and the UN. I have been lucky, however, to be able to maintain contact with her online, and this interview took place on Facebook, where we are both members.

SB: Riham, it is often said people come to translating — or that translating comes to people — in amazingly different and fascinating ways. What got you into it?

Riham: It was all a happy coincidence. My background was actually in tourism with the Guidance Department of the Egyptian Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management.

Soon after my graduation in 1994, the Cairo Opera House posted an announcement asking for ushers from among our students/alumni to travel

# Itinerary: from Cairo to New York

## Sam Berner interviews UN T/I and AUSIT member Riham Youssef.

to Luxor and assist in the production of the opera *Aida*. Being an opera lover, I decided to volunteer, just to have access to the performances for free.

During the interview, the famous Egyptian tenor (turned actor) Hassan Kamy was the production manager. He noticed that I had all it took to be his personal assistant. So I was 'promoted' on the spot. One of the main tasks he entrusted me with was translating the official catalogue of the opera from and into the five languages I speak. (As proud as I am of this book today, and

of my name on its cover, I wish I had the chance to redo it today, after having gained much more expertise and skill.) This experience made me fall in love with translation and I decided to make it my career. I enrolled in the translation and interpretation programme offered at the American University in Cairo (AUC), where I studied 42 specialised T&I subjects. The program familiarised me with interpretation too, and I realised I had a passion for it as well.

SB: There is a belief amongst many translators that theory is not necessary for making a good translator. You yourself decided that it was a good idea to do a course. What were your

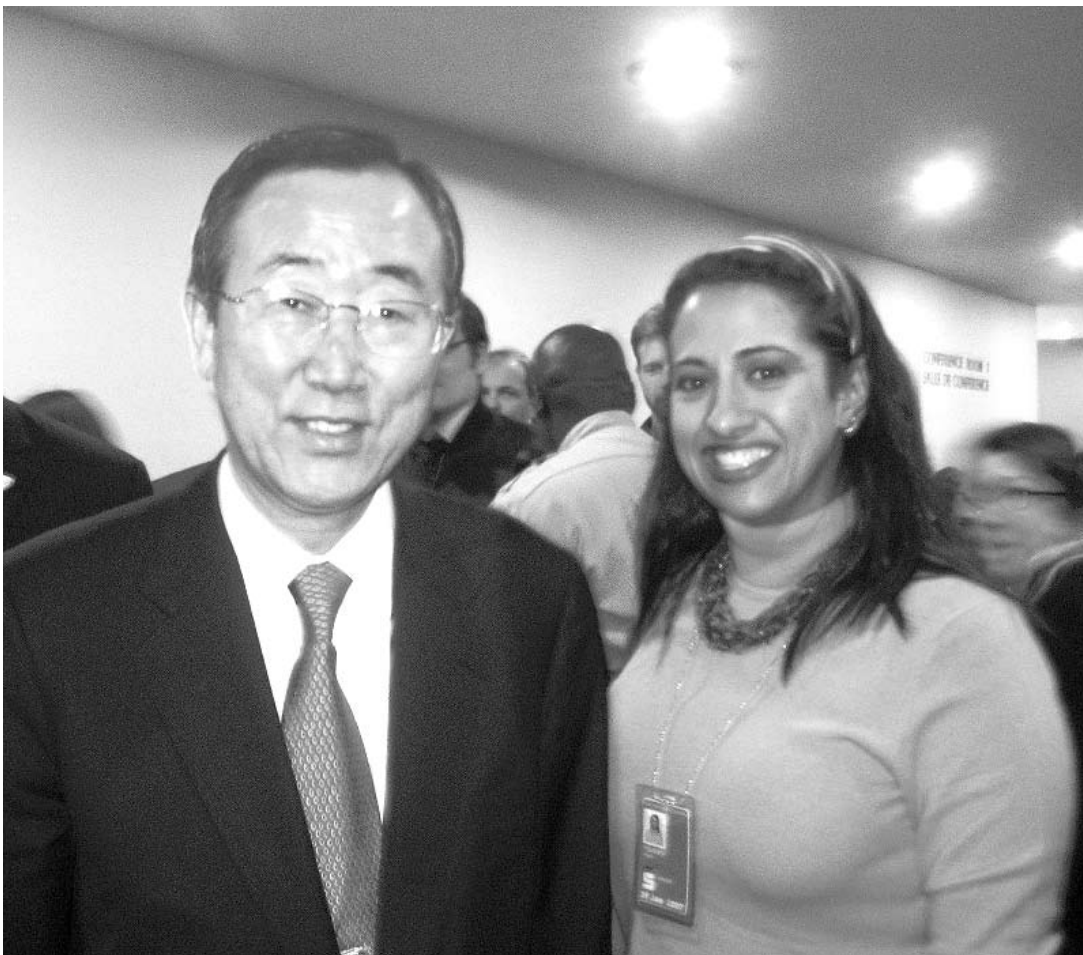
experiences then, and do you think you could have been as good a translator as you are now without the AUC course?

Riham: Absolutely not. I believe a good translator is a combination of theory and practice.

The course I did at AUC, the BA in Translation and Literature I completed at Cairo University, and the MA in Translation and Linguistics I completed at the University of Western Sydney (UWS), have all given me a solid foundation which I have been building on throughout my career.

However, I don't think that courses

Riham Youssef pictured here with current UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.



alone make good T/Is. Just as people are born with different abilities; for example, some are more athletic, have an ear for music, etc. T/Is either have it or they don't — courses can't perform miracles. We've had so many students in our AUC program whom we could not help, as they simply did not have what it takes.

*SB: Put your teacher's hat on: What do you see as the main problem faced by the majority of young people undertaking the course? And what would be your advice to anyone thinking of doing, say, a BA in translation?*

Riham: I would mention the following to them:

- Do they believe their proficiency in English is enough to make them good T/Is?
- Are they proficient in their own LOTE (in my case Arabic). Students can make embarrassing mistakes in Arabic, in terms of grammar, word choices, sentence structures, punctuation, and so on. I have had to teach basic grammar rules in class to correct this deficiency.
- As conference interpreting is a lucrative, glamorous career often involving travel and meetings with celebrities and dignitaries, it has attracted many young people; some of whom are only after what they believe is easy money earned in a fun job.
- I advise anyone who wishes to become a T/I to think of it as a profession requiring a lot of skills and hard, ongoing work. They have to be honest with themselves and decide whether they really have what is needed, and whether they are ready



for all the hard work and stress this job entails. They have to love it, otherwise they will never succeed.

*SB: Speaking of lack of proficiency in native languages, do you see this as a global issue? Does it in some way, tie up with the fact that the younger generation does not read enough, or does it have something to do with the education they receive prior to their university careers?*

Riham: I think it is a global issue, though I can only speak with certainty about the Arab world. You are right. The young generation reads much less overall, and books have generally taken a back seat in the age of modern technology. Everything moves at a much quicker pace, so activities that by nature are known to take time and

require patience in developing, such as mastering a language, be it a foreign one or your own, are no longer so interesting.

Young people are always in a rush. They want to send their messages across quickly, not eloquently. They aim to make people understand what they want to say, rather than be impressed by their style. They choose to use a language full of cool jargon, not giving much attention to all the linguistic rules they are thereby breaking.

And you are right in the second part of your question, too, because school and tertiary education in the Arab world is declining at an alarming rate. Many school teachers and even university professors lack the basics of Classical Arabic. How can they impart knowledge they don't possess?

*SB: You are both a translator and an interpreter — which one gives you more satisfaction and why?*

Riham: I personally find much more satisfaction in interpreting. To me, it's much more interactive and lively. Interpreting, especially conference interpreting, takes you to the most interesting places, be they in your country or overseas. It introduces you to new people, many of whom you would otherwise only know through the media. Interpreting makes you feel you're part of the action. You're inside of it, not just watching from a distance, as is the case with translation.

The actual process of interpreting itself is something I enjoy a lot too: all the

**'The young generation reads much less overall, and books have generally taken a back seat in the age of modern technology. Everything moves at a much quicker pace, so activities that by nature are known to take time and require patience in developing, such as mastering a language, be it a foreign one or your own, are no longer so interesting.'**



instant decisions you need to make as to what to keep and what to drop (yes, with conference interpreting you do sacrifice some non-essential words and fillers for the sake of keeping up with the speaker's pace and delivering all the essentials!); the fact that you have to be 100 per cent alert and cannot afford to be distracted, even for a split-second; the way you cope with the speed and poor command of English on the part of the speakers; the thick accents, bad acoustics, and interruptions. All that adrenalin rush, and all the excitement!

As much as I enjoy translating, I find it to be quite lonely and isolated in comparison, especially as I'm not a nine-to-five person. Conference interpreting is definitely the job for me.

SB: *Which do you find is harder to do — translating or interpreting?*

Riham: This question is a bit hard, but I'll try to give it my best shot.

I believe conference interpreting is harder than translation, due to the many skills that need to be readily available, all at the same time and almost subconsciously. It requires, inter alia, an enormous amount of concentration, an alert mind, quick responses, sound diction, a perfect command of both languages, especially the target language and their grammar, and an ability to construct grammatically correct, good sentences in no time.

SB: *How does the translation/ interpreting scene differ between Cairo and Sydney?*

Riham: In Egypt, the vast majority of interpretation jobs are between English and Arabic, rarely in any third language. There's much more conference interpreting there than there is in Australia, probably owing to Egypt's central location.

Egypt is a developing country, with numerous development projects taking place. The endless reports, case studies, recommendations and so on to be translated and the endless workshops, training sessions, lectures, T/Is.

We also do a lot of chuchoutage at functions where there are only one or two non-Egyptians present. Often an event is sponsored by a foreign agency/ development programme and someone from that body will attend at least one day of the event, where they will give an opening remark (to be

consecutively interpreted).

Community interpreting doesn't exist in Egypt. T/Is, especially interpreters, are held in very high esteem and are very well paid, especially compared to the low average incomes in Egypt.

As much as I love Australia and the Australian lifestyle, I always felt professionally frustrated there. Although I am highly qualified and well trained in T&I, I never found what I was looking for. Throughout my four-year stay in Australia, I did not interpret at a single conference, whereas conferences had almost been the order of the day for me in Egypt.

I even had to plan my holidays back to Egypt around times where I could interpret there at a conference or two, just to at least partially maintain my skills. I kept myself busy in Australia with other jobs and activities; for example SBS subtitling, working as a journalist/ broadcaster for SBS Radio, and teaching/ marking at NAATI, but I still missed conferences and the substantial translation work I had been doing.

SB: *So where does Australia fit into your translating journey?*

Riham: It was due to my association with Rotary. Initially, I'd always had Germany in mind. This was until I went on a six-week Rotary group study exchange trip to Australia in 1998. I was hosted by nine senior Rotarian families in nine cities and towns in NSW. This was when I saw that moving to Australia would be a better idea.

Two years later, I went to Sydney on a 'fact-finding' trip, to see how things were and if there was a chance for me. This is when I was told about NAATI. So I went and sat all three NAATI level three exams in two days.

When they mailed my certificates to me in Egypt a few weeks later, and I found that I had passed with flying colours in all three of them, I realised I probably had what it took to work in the Australian T&I market.

SB: *And then came the UN?*

Riham: I was glad to hear that the UN was holding a competitive exam for Arabic translators. I applied and was subsequently called to sit their (full-day long, highly technical) exam at the closest examination station, which was Bangkok, Thailand.

A few months later I received an email saying that I had passed the exam, and

was now required for an interview, this time in Cairo. A panel of four scrutinised me, and a few weeks later I was advised that I had passed and that my name had been placed on their roster for future vacancies.

This vacancy presented itself around eight months later, and now here I am, a permanent staff member with the Arabic Translation Service (ATS) from the UN's Department of the General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM).

Meanwhile, I went through this same process with interpretation (but at least this did not involve any travel, for I sat both the exam and the interview at the UN headquarters where I work). I am now on their roster too, and within a few months I will be moving there permanently.

It's worth mentioning that UN exams are offered only between English and the five other official languages of the UN: Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish.

SB: *Just to wrap up, where do you see yourself professionally in five years?*

Riham: In five years, I will be working here (and hopefully till my retirement age at 62). Nothing else!

**‘Community interpreting doesn't exist in Egypt. T/Is, especially interpreters, are held in very high esteem and are very well paid, especially compared to the low average incomes in Egypt.’**

# The ethics of working with 'newspeakers'

## Bradley Dawson asks whether T/Is can stay impartial and accurate where deceptive language is used

WAR IS PEACE. FREEDOM IS SLAVERY. IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

**E**ric Blair, aka George Orwell knew well the power of language and its misuse. In 1984, his magnificent and still-relevant dystopian novel and satire on Soviet Russia (and other totalitarian regimes), the government of Oceania posted these three absurdist contradictions everywhere and repeated them with such ferocity and frequency until society came (or was forced) to believe them as truths (with the help from the government of murders, imprisonment and torture for any thought or act deemed a threat to the dominance of the dreaded Party).

Our world today, as always, is filled with similarly laughable and frightening examples of language abuse, nonsensical statements and chilling mild euphemisms for unspeakable acts of violence, crime and cruelty. How do we as T&I practitioners reconcile the cornerstones of our profession, accuracy and impartiality, two of the main qualities separating us from non-professionals, with deliberate attempts by speakers and authors to obfuscate or deceive? Can we maintain our commitment to clarity and accuracy in such a world?

How does one translate or interpret a word such as *rendition*? This word, originally meaning 'an interpretation, performance' or even 'an interpretative translation or interpretation of an artistic work', is now used by the US military and its allies as a euphemism for 'illegally and forcibly taking the citizens of another country who are under suspicion of a crime by the US military/CIA and moving them to a country which does not abide by the Geneva convention on human rights for means of torturing the suspect'. The CIA and others use this word to reduce

the emotive meaning inherent in the latter definition. Some could argue this is clever and intelligent use of language to deceive or mislead. We T/Is have to convey as accurately and impartially as possible the original message as intended by the speaker/author, even if that message includes deliberately misleading or obfuscatory language.

But accuracy, impartiality and clarity cannot always coincide. When translating or interpreting military 'newspeak' (or for that matter any new jargon, terminology or colloquial speech) which is not yet a broadly understood and accepted part of the target language, we can choose to include some sort of explanatory note to aid listener/reader comprehension. This aim at clarity and accuracy (of meaning) can affect our impartiality. If the author or speaker of the original words intended to deceive or mislead, by providing an explanation where no equivalent words exist we are not conveying the message as intended by the author/speaker. But if we leave out an explanation, the original message may not be understood.

In Russian (the language I translate from), rendition is almost always written in English, then as a roughly equivalent word in Russian (there is no exact word just yet, so the word for extradition, *выдача*, or *vydacha*, is used, or perhaps *передача/peredacha* — the transfer/handing over) which is then followed by an explanation along the lines of the longer definition used above. It works similarly in many other LOTES.

Once a T/I believes a particular new term or phrase is known by (the majority of ) his/her audience, and has become a part of 'everyday' language, the footnotes or explanations which might be added are dispensed with. US military euphemisms such as 'friendly

fire' and 'collateral damage', (injuring or killing members of your own armed forces, and unintended or incidental damage to civilians and their property during a military operation, respectively) once needed explanation. Like Orwell's Party slogans, through frequency of use and repetition these terms have become part of the world's lexicon and are no longer ridiculed as they once were. They are simply muted descriptions for killing and their creators' goal of reducing the emotional impact of actions they describe has been achieved.

How would you interpret or translate the following ugly examples of newspeak (in bold) into a LOTE? (I have provided the actual English-language meanings for you.)

- negative patient health outcome** — death
- area denial munitions** — landmines
- experienced vehicles** — second-hand cars
- significant emotional event** — death/injury, maiming, loss of property due to cluster bomb
- non-core promise** — lie
- terrain alteration** — aerial bombing
- dehousing** — allied bombing of German civilian homes
- transfer tubes** — body bags
- pain compliance/tough questioning/control technique** — torture
- final solution** — genocide of Jews
- downsizing/right-sizing/headcount adjustment/reduction in force** — sacking of workers
- network** — assassination
- servicing the target** — killing the enemy
- acts of asymmetrical warfare** — Guantanamo prisoner suicides
- self-harm incidents, hanging gestures** — Guantanamo prisoner attempted suicides
- unintended benefit leakage** — fraud

**A**t a recent AUSIT gathering I mentioned to colleagues a technique I had used for checking my translations. I had hit upon this idea only by chance, and wondered if others use it.

Late one afternoon a client arrived with a two-page letter to be translated from Chinese. The English version was required for a meeting the next morning — the client's career depended on it!

Work began immediately, and after dinner I completed the first draft. I phoned the client, asking her to collect the work. After spell-checking, I re-read the translation three times to ensure the quality of English expression. Generally I enjoy translation work: usually it is quite easy, and where difficulties arise these are mostly fascinating challenges.

Then began the final touch: checking that the meaning of the translation equalled the original. Ugh! This is the one part I don't like. For me, this last stage is a confusing double act. Here one is checking that everything in the original is reflected in the translation, while somehow ensuring that the latter contains nothing superfluous. Moving one's eyes repeatedly from one text to another, late at night is the very limit of my endurance.

The doorbell rang. I ushered in my client, and told her it would be 'a little while' before the work was ready. Then I had a brainwave: *I asked the client to read the letter aloud.*

Having read the Chinese letter several times, understanding her words required zero mental effort. As she spoke, 100 per

# Am I the first — or the last?

## Robert Crouch discovers a new technique for checking his translations. Is he alone?

cent of my attention was concentrated on the English version. Sometimes I would say, 'Stop' or 'Again Please'. Listening to the text made checking leisurely and enjoyable. Mostly my eyes followed the English words line by line, but often they would dart up and down to examine other sentences. It was easy to spot superfluities.

Since that night I have used this technique once more. I have become convinced that for longer works this system is superior to the visual checking of both texts. Perhaps it would be especially applicable to literary translation, where one is eager to capture the atmosphere of the original — in such cases a voice recording may already be available.

I suspect one could produce work of better quality using this method, even if unlimited time was available. Neurologists and psychologists might suggest that listening to the original text makes better use of the mind's capacities.

No longer was I fumbling in a state

of high anxiety with various pieces of paper. Instead, listening to my client speak, I had the feeling of being a true professional. My dormant alter ego, The Interpreter, was triumphant!

Translators with sight defects may find this method especially helpful. My own difficulties partly result from mild strabismus<sup>1</sup>.

Some translators have assistants who can read texts to them. Unfortunately, I discovered that the CD/radio/cassette system I bought recently does not allow one to record one's voice. Perhaps I shall purchase some new device for this purpose.

So my question remains: Am I one of the first to think of this — or one of the last?

<robertcrouch@mail.com>

### Footnote

<sup>1</sup> A condition in which the eyes are not properly aligned with each other.

## Important dates for autumn 2008

### 7 March Zamia Cafe Perth

WA Branch regular water-cooler session

### 14 March

Vic/Tas workshop — Mentoring: What's in it for me?

### 15 March Brisbane Square Library

Qld workshop — Editing and revising for translators

### 29 March

Vic/Tas workshop — Translation

programme: Research and resource building for translators

### 19 April

Vic/Tas workshop — Ethics refresher course for T/Is

**Don't forget the FIT XVIII World Congress, 4-7 August 2008 in Shanghai.**

## Format change

The *AUSIT National Newsletter* will now appear in summer, autumn, winter and spring editions, instead of the previous arbitrary bi- or tri- monthly format.

Deadlines will now be fixed at three weeks before the end of each season; that is, 10 May (for the autumn edition), 10 August (winter), 9 November (spring) and 7 February (summer).

The Annual Report/AGM will, as usual, be issued a month before the NAGM

Keep those submissions coming in!

Archeologists have finally made public the following dialogues and accounts, found in the year 1999 on digital disks in a platinum chest at the time of the City Link tunnel excavations in Melbourne, Australia. Parts of the disks have been translated from Cantonese into English so Australians may access them now, in 2008. Dates found on the disks cannot be explained by today's science.

# Ling and the American languages cylinder

(A translator at the end of the century - Part One)

## Anonymous

**Beijing, Spring of 2099 — Headquarters of the Global Corporation of Translators and Interpreters**

**7 am sharp**

'Good morning, Mr Yuan.'

'Good morning, Ling. You must start running Johnny immediately. We finally have a commission from Washington DC. This is the dossier. Have it ready by eleven, please.'

'Yes, Mr Yuan.'

Ling left the director's glass office on floor 55 of the Corporation to descend to floor 12. In the lift he glanced at the acrylic case containing digital plates with 700 petabytes to be translated into Cantonese...

*Twelfth floor already! Well, we will see now*, he thought as he entered Johnny's cubicle. There were 54 cubicles on floor 12, and some were already buzzing with activity. Vinicius and Paramansa were already in action. He closed his glass divider to block out the Brazilian samba and the Indian Ragga — the two other translators had left the machines working without muting them off. He switched on to the global memory occupying floors three, four and five. Then he started Johnny up: 3000 googas of passive memory, all devoted to the American languages, appearing only in bilingual pairs with either Cantonese or Mandarin. Johnny's special features were the extensive contextual references, including the use of video and audio material illustrating semantic and/or phonetic connotations current for the last 200 years. Earlier material could be obtained at the Archives.

Ling inserted the first digital plate and saw the first chunks of text on the pre-translation screen. Naturally it was written in a language he could not read, but at least he would get an idea.

No graphs, no photos, no illustrations? It did not look like a financial or medical text. He gave up and began talking to Johnny.

'OK, Johnny, I give up. Start translating.'

Ling opened up the screens for source and target language, audio, video and references. Johnny whistled its customary opening *C sharp arpeggio* and slowly the Cantonese text started to appear on the target screen. Ling pulled out the knitting needles from his silken shoulder bag. Since keyboards had fallen into obsolescence, translators had taken up all sort of handiwork to relieve stress during the long hours of dialogue with their computers. He resumed his bright red hat knitting project and started to read the target version of the source text in the American language.

It was a linguistic treatise: 15 volumes on dead or extinguished languages. *Boring*, he thought, and opened his thermal bag, extracting an aromatic cup of 'eight treasures' tea. When he was on his second sip, Johnny launched the alert signal.

'Come on Johnny, you can do better than that. Explain yourself!'

Johnny listened to the command and replied by playing some baroque computer music ('A hard day's night' by the Beatles Quartet), whilst flashing the green fluorescent warning:

**Equivalent is unavailable. Contextual reference found non-existent.**

That was interesting. The screen also showed the problem word. Never before had Johnny surrendered to its weakness in such a humble manner.

**7.30 am**

'Excuse me, Mr Yuan.'

'Yes, Ling.'

'Johnny is having difficulties. It stopped at word 3,001 and advises not to continue until clarification is found.'

'Very well, Ling. Please go to the Archives. I extend the deadline to 1 pm.'

'Yes Sir.'

Ling was in the lift again, going to the basement and cursing his boss and Johnny because the deadline was really stingy. At the basement he took the ultra speed underground shuttle to the Forbidden City, now moved to Shanghai for ecological reasons. Ten minutes later he was there and, walking briskly, he managed to get to the Translation/Interpreting Pavilions in another ten minutes. As usual, his spine shivered with horror looking at the glass cabinets depicting scenes of interpreting and translating as it used to be done a century ago, before Devastation. The dusty mannequins in the hospital and the court scenes were quite spooky, as were the scale models of ghostly home offices where the primitive translators had kept dozens of thick dictionaries on shelves, with cats walking over them. It was primitive, alright. He shuddered and hurried past dozens of doors in the Dead Languages section. After circling around the last three doors — German, Dutch and Afrikaans — he found the Archives' Surviving Languages department. Finally, he went into the American languages cylinder. He locked himself in and fastened his cylinder belt, as words started to pass swiftly in all directions. He spent a good 20 minutes digging into the zetabytes of the last five centuries using his *portel didephom* (portable telescopic digital decoding photo machine) to scan and store his findings. By the end of the session he was dizzy and fed up.

**9.00 am**

'Hi, Ling, how was it?'

'Sorry to inform you that Archives did not help. I viewed all of the 2-D, 3-D, hologram and holographic versions, but the word is not listed.'

'Mmm...Any ideas? The client wants the job today. This is very unusual.'

'Sir, can we get an extension? The Americans are very slow to pay anyway. I could visit the International Museum of Words, in New New Delhi.'

'Can you not send the Indians an electronic search request and save us the trip?'

'I have already tried but there is an energy breakdown in the Bangladesh express broadest band. Big floods, you know. Radioactive octopi contaminated the water farms all the way up to Tajikistan. The whole of Nepal has no drinking water. They are a grim sight the Himalayas on the news. Not a pinch of snow.'

'Disgusting!' shouted Mr Yuan, thumping his fist on the desk. 'All because of those midget presidents who did not want to sign the Kyoto protocol at the beginning of the century, before it all began! What were their f..... names? The ones who turned into salamanders before their deaths...Push and Backward? Or was it Bastard?'

'Yes, I know who you mean...the infamous ones, Mr Yuan. It serves them and their decadent countries right anyway — now they are our satellites. But a pity for the Nepalese, don't you think? Anyhow, I have checked the

Concord fast shuttle schedules. I could be back before lunch, with enough time to do research at the Museum and bring back some authentic *malai koftas, roti* and saffron rice.'

'Say no more, Ling, but make mine a tandoori chicken. We will charge all expenses to those decaying Americans naturally. The deadline stays at 1 pm then.'

'Very well, Sir. I will keep the receipts.'

#### 9.45 am

Devastation had finished with the Old New Delhi; the New New Delhi was pristine and built with flashing architecture. The International Museum of Words was the only place on Earth where relics of words were kept, dating back to the beginning of literacy. When Ling entered the lobby, the crystal floor was scintillating with millions of words of different colors, traveling along acrylic tubes. A million googas, under the floor, produced the never-ending dance of these words, all in bilingual combination with either Hindi or Bengali. But the

Museum also provided Chinese pairs, as the bulk of the translation work was done in Beijing. The Museum had 77 floors made of transparent materials, and the dancing words were visible everywhere, changing colour according to the language being exhibited. Ling went about his research floor by floor, carrying his didephom. Screens, films, and DVDs, recordings, old graphic files containing duplicates of extinct paper books and magazines, wax tablets and stone engravings were quickly scanned, yotabyte after yotabyte. Ling felt hungry.

#### (To be continued)

*If you would like to speculate on how the story ends, please email the author with your guess. If you are correct, you will receive a special prize. All correspondence should be sent to the author's secretary:*

<catalinarussi@gmail.com>.

# Don't doubt your worth

Here are some mistranslations from signs and notices throughout the world. You have to give the translators an 'E' for their efforts — Victor Xu

*Seen in a Tokyo Hotel:*

Is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such thing is please not to read notis.

*In a Bucharest hotel lobby:*

The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.

*In a Belgrade hotel elevator:*

To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving is then going alphabetically by national order.

*In a Paris hotel elevator:*

Please leave your values at the front desk.

*In a hotel in Athens:*

Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 A.M. daily.

*In a Japanese hotel:*

The flattening of underwear with

pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.

*In an Austrian hotel catering to skiers:*

Not to perambulate the corridors in the hours of repose in the boots of ascension.

*On the menu of a Polish hotel:*

Salad a firm's own make; limpid red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger; roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people's fashion.

*Outside a Hong Kong tailor shop:*

Ladies may have a fit upstairs.

*In a Beijing dry cleaner's:*

Drop your trousers here for best results.

*In an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist:*

Teeth extracted by the latest Methodists.

*In a Czechoslovakian tourist agency:*

Take one of our horse-driven city tours - we guarantee no miscarriages.

*In a Copenhagen airline ticket office:*

We take your bags and send them in all directions.

*On the door of a Moscow hotel room:*

If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it.

*In an Acapulco hotel:*

The manager has personally passed all the water served here.

*From a Chinese information booklet about using a hotel air conditioner:*

Cooler and Heates: If you want just condition of warm in your room, please control yourself.

*[I once read some lyrics for the Rolling Stones song 'Dead Flowers' in Russian, where a reference to drug taking:*

*'I'll be in my basement room, with a needle and a spoon', was translated into Russian thus: 'I'll be in the basement sewing and cooking.' — the Editor]*



# The book to bind them all

## Book review by Sam Berner

**Gouadec, D. (2007) *Translation as a Profession*. Amsterdam. John Benjamins**

If I had money to buy just a single volume of translation related material, I would gladly spend it on Gouadec's book, *Translation as a Profession*, and never look back, despite its exorbitant price (US\$149, plus postage). I would also probably rarely lift my eye off it, as the book is not only the most comprehensive, but also extremely readable for both the newcomer and the veteran to our profession.

I remember sighing in exasperation when I first came across the book. Over the past seven years I have seen all kinds of 'books' purporting to be fonts of advice on how to start, but which usually leave me severely disappointed. Most are written by well-meaning freelancers and cover such ultra-essential issues as the need to have a fax, and the fact that there are many types of translation software but – wink, wink – we human translators can do it better and will live happily ever after. What tempted me to pick up Gouadec's book was the fact that it was a Benjamins' Translation Library publication, and they mostly publish excellent stuff. Besides, the book was bulky (over 300 pages) so one could assume the writer had something substantial to say. One can't waffle about ergonomics and carpal tunnel syndrome over 300 pages, can one?

Besides, Gouadec is not just any run-of-the-mill freelancer. He created and currently directs the translator-training institute at the University of Rennes. He wrote his thesis on training translators. In between teaching and research, he managed to produce ten books and dozens of articles and presentations, as well as developing websites on terminography, translation quality, and the professional aspects of being a translator. His current research deals with models of quality of translation service provision. I was suitably awed.

I was also impressed by the range of information the book contains. It covers past, present and future, starting with an extensive grounding in what translation is and what the main categories of work are, followed by a very well-written exposition of the whole translation process. Not much theoretical pie-in-the-sky stuff here, but rather hands on, down-to-earth practical advice on how to find work, deciding on requirements, preparation, the planning process, organising the job, translating it, quality control implementation (corrections, revisions and editing), all the way to follow-up. In short, this volume is as beneficial to the soul and nourishing to the mind as one of Anthony Pym's lectures.

The writer next moves to defining the profession (mostly female, specialising in subject and language pairs, and rapidly adapting to the technological changes). T/Is work in such a variety of positions that Gouadec speaks of many professions not just translating. He even describes a category of 'outlaws'; that is, those doing it for 'black money', without qualifications, without professionalism, and definitely unethically. Agencies' *modus operandi* are described with the proviso that market demands are changing the lines dividing the various categories of work.

After having blessed us with a taxonomy, Gouadec next poses the rhetorical question: 'Does the reader, having gone so far, still want to be this species, or have they developed cold feet?' If they have persevered (or worse, belong to the species already), they can jump to the next chapter, the one written for the wannabes, the strugglers, the wanderers and — as the *For Dummies* series so often remind us — 'the rest of us'. Except that this is not a book for dummies, and the writer takes the whole process very seriously: Should you specialise? In what? Where do you find clients, and how do you hold on to them? What about rates, invoicing and growing your business? I have to

admit this is the first writer in the field who advises translators very early on in his book to go and do accounting, marketing and management courses if they want to succeed. He even has a section on managing during the 'famine' periods, not to mention a whole chapter on buying products, dealing with partners, other translators, agencies, direct clients, lawyers, accountants and IT specialists.

One thing I have against the book is that professional ethics appears late, in Chapter 10. I have always preached that if one has to wait for a professional association to teach ethical behaviour, then it is too late anyway. But this section was still good to see, as quite a few of the other 'How to become a God-knows-what' publications gathering dust on my shelves address neither ethics nor cooperation, both of which, in my opinion, are quintessential to success. Gouadec also tackles standards (the ISO variety), qualifications, recognition and — oh, my — regulating access to the profession, not because it would solve the problem of shoddy work, but because regulated translators would be obliged to pay taxes. He does say that conferring the title 'professional' to those who have a university degree or enough experience to merit it still depends on whether translators feel such a title is important enough to merit them not doing shoddy work. A bit circular that, and highly subjective.

Chapters 13 to 16 deal extensively with all these new, wonderful and scary aspects of the information revolution and globalisation which affect us as translators: the Internet, incessant software upgrades, globalisation of the market, inflation, recessions, and so on. It makes one seriously nostalgic for the quill and parchment era, devoid of copyrights and limited to Latin. This discussion leads invariably to the coming generation of translators and how precisely they should be trained.

There is an epilogue about what the future (might) hold for us. It is not good news for the freelancers. But I am not into spoiling the movie, so go ahead and read it yourself. All is not lost (yet!).

The book should be compulsory reading for any translation course worth its value (not much in it for interpreters, unfortunately). And the rest of us, of course. Gouadec has converted me and I will be using what I have learned from him not just to improve my own performance, but my workshops as well.

# Tribute to a true climber - Annabel Tak Yu Choy



happens, all climbers mourn with heartfelt condolences, whether or not we know the brave soul in person. Of course when it is someone we know, the disheartening mix of pain, sorrow and sympathy doubles.

Annabel had displayed a spectrum of admirable traits in her short yet fulfilling life, especially during her years as a climber. Courageous, determined, confident, graceful, she

was able to make swift decisions and resolve situations when faced with imminent difficulties, was a risk-taker, team player and nature lover. This is the true spirit of a climber. And

Annabel showed her family, friends, climbers and people who had not yet met her, souls she had not yet touched, the very essence of what she was — a climber and a true fighter.

Climbing is a beautiful activity. When we climb, we are dwarfed by nature's vastness, submitting every ounce of ourselves to a massive giant. Climbing is like living life: every step is a challenge, and every obstacle passed makes one stronger. However, there are circumstances beyond one's control. We fight, and sometimes we lose. We may have lost Annabel, but she remains in our hearts always.

Whatever language we speak, the pain of losing a loved one is multi-lingual. We hope to share the bereavement of Irene Ko and husband. Annabel had scaled great heights, and I can see her now soaring in paradise, watching over us, eyes beaming with happiness and contentment, an expression that will be etched in our memories for many years to come.

Deepest condolences.

*Loren Leong  
AUSIT member and fellow climber*

**T**he language of rock-climbing, like the language of music, is universal. When a talented climber scales great heights, a standing ovation is inevitable. And when a tragedy

## Who will be there to interpret the costs of protecting your professionalism?

Aon has again managed to negotiate, with our Australian authorised insurer, highly competitive premiums.

Keeping that in mind we have now improved our professional indemnity and public liability insurance designed specifically for translators and interpreters.

Some of the significant benefits include:

- Individual policies so that your insurance cover and premiums are not based on the claims circumstances or history of others.
- Low excesses for general, legal and medical translation and interpretation activities.
- Cover limits now up to \$5,000,000.
- Cover for your contractors to give further comfort.
- No excess and no costs deducted from your insurance limit, for defending claims made against you if you are not found to be at fault.
- Increased optional public liability cover from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000.

### Contact

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phone 02 9253 7000

Smiles all round at the AUSIT NSW Branch Xmas 2007 function.



Hania Geras (left) and Sarah Walls.



Michele Miller and Alain Puyas.



## Fun in court with Remulus and Romus

### Moreno Giovannoni

**I**t was in one of the higher courts and I ended up working there for five days.

The two main characters were Romulus and Remus. Or Romolo and Remo. Sometimes the barristers would forget and would end up using the English versions. Even the character I was interpreting for, the surviving brother, Romolo, occasionally forgot his own name. He was given to referring to himself in the third person and sometimes the distance between his self and the character he was talking about became blurred and the two would merge and he wouldn't know who he was anymore. I could tell. I was standing six inches away from him. Sometimes one of the other courtroom players would say Remulus or Romus.

*Romolo and Remo were born into a poor Calabrian peasant family. The father knew he would not have much of a legacy to offer his children so he decided he would give his male children names that would help them get through their lives and with a bit of luck build an empire. He started by calling the first-born Romolo, prayed the next heir would also be a son and when it was he called him Remo. Romolo never learned to read or write so it was*

*Remo who largely ran the business and out of a sense of devotion to his older brother looked after him, kept him in the business, gave him work. When the younger brother died Romulus was surprised to learn that most of the business belonged to Remo. And so the challenge to the estate.*

Sixty-six years after Remo's birth it had come to this—five days in a Victorian court. The empire had collapsed. I wondered how their father would have felt.

*When the witness is in the box I stand next to him with my notebook resting on the ledge and my eyes fixed firmly on the page, pen in hand. This helps me concentrate. I carry a spare notebook and pen in my jacket. It has happened before that my pen has run out ink. I can retrieve the new pen without missing a beat. My mind is emptied except for a desire to listen and think and interpret. I mainly scribble verbs, names of people and places, numbers, years. My feet hurt so I change legs occasionally. The tipstaff keeps me supplied with water in paper cups.*

*I learned to work like this in the classes run by George Strauss at the Royal*

*Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1981. The Spirax notebook and a Uniball pen are my security blankets now. Armed with them I can do anything, anywhere. I remember George fondly.*

I stood beside Romolo for five days, scribbling fast in my little yellow notebook, listening and interpreting to the court his answers to misunderstood questions, resisting the temptation to explain the question to him and to start questioning him myself.

*How can you say that when a minute ago you said the opposite?*

None of my business though.

The poor man thought I was on his side and sometimes he would try to whisper something to me so that the judge and the rest of the court couldn't hear. This was embarrassing and I would interpret what he said anyway, which included his asking me 'How should I answer that?' When he wasn't in the witness box I would sit at the back and whisper the goings-on to him. This probably led him to think I was his friend even though I kept telling him I wasn't.

At the end the barristers and the judge just about applauded. The judge congratulated me on my performance anyway, and both barristers smiled and nodded. They all looked confused when I said it had been fun. Barristers and judges are so full of their own importance that they think they're the only ones who can have fun in court.