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des Traducteurs
International Federation of
Translators

Quarterly Newsletter of the
Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc

Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc

insight

in TOUCH

Volume 20, number 3 – Spring 2012

Members'
satisfaction survey

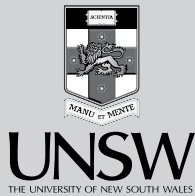
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Front cover photo: AUSIT Qld member Sam Berner at the Branch's fourth annual mini-Conference, held at the University of Queensland.

From the editor

The deadline for the Summer 2012-13 issue is **10 November 2012**. Thanks to all contributors for their submissions.

Please send any letters, articles or images for forthcoming editions to:

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

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From the helm

President **Annamarie Arnall** discusses the major findings from AUSIT's recent members' satisfaction survey and suggests ways to keep colleagues in the T&I profession

Dear Colleagues,



I'd like to share with you a comment from our recent members' satisfaction survey: 'AUSIT is the most rewarding aspect of my affiliation

to the industry. It is a community of educated and classy people which brings relief to the isolation of translators and the "mistreatment" of interpreters, and where one can benefit from a wealth of information through valuable contributions on the e-Bulletin.'

This person has been with AUSIT for the past five to ten years — long enough to give weight to his or her opinion. Nice to read, isn't it?

All in all, it seems our members are moderately satisfied with their professional body. We can do better and I believe we will do so, because feedback from the survey helps us to steer the boat in the right direction.

There were 80 responses in all. Some of you may want to point out that this figure equals merely about 15 per cent of our membership, and as such is too low to be representative. Others may warn that only the bored and the angry bother with surveys these days. I happen to believe that if we can identify strong trends through the voice of a loud minority, there is no doubt the silent majority will also want the same things to happen. Besides, the distribution of survey respondents in regard to their length of affiliation with AUSIT was quite equal, and respondent location was proportionate to overall member locations (most respondents live in VIC, followed by NSW, then QLD, SA and WA), so I think we are wise to treat the results seriously. The major findings are listed here and I invite you to write back if you strongly oppose any of them. A lack

of opposition will be taken as proof of acceptance.

AUSIT's most important activities

1. AUSIT distributes information through electronic mail and its website
2. AUSIT has a Code of Ethics
3. AUSIT has a Board of Professional Conduct
4. AUSIT represents the profession to the public sector
5. AUSIT represents the profession to NAATI
6. AUSIT holds workshops, lectures and seminars

Activities that should be given top priority

1. Provision of more PD events and a mentorship scheme, plus more online tutorials and networking events
2. Increasing general public awareness of the T&I profession
3. Working to make T&I practitioners more accountable for quality and ethical behaviour
4. Working to make the market more discriminating with respect to T&I services

It was interesting to note that about half of respondents worked as both translators and interpreters, while most of the remaining half (at a ratio of four to one) were translators only. We are not always mindful that only a small proportion of AUSIT members are interpreters who don't offer translation services as well. Another noteworthy fact is that more than half of those who returned the survey have another job besides T&I. Is this a growing proportion? Is it another sign of changes that one respondent describes thus?

'I am looking at other career options and considering turning my back on the T&I industry after a career spanning more than 20 years because I see no hope for improvement in this field. I provide a highly skilled and professional service,

and am often requested by my clients, but working conditions have eroded to the point where it is not economically viable for me to continue.'

Anecdotal evidence abounds about some of our best colleagues who are leaving the profession. What can we do to reverse the trend?

- Enlist more resources. Just as our profession is small — the total number of persons engaged in T&I is estimated to be around 3500 — so is our influence. We can't fight very well on our own, but APESMA, the trade union that represents freelancer,s stands a much better chance, if enough T/Is join it.
- Create more jobs in Australia and expand overseas. Oceania constitutes less than 1 per cent of the global T&I market; there is ample room for growth. Increasing general awareness about our profession should lead to a growth in demand from the business community, while dialogues with government sectors could result in more jobs. We at the National Council

of AUSIT are doing our best to achieve these goals.

- Boost our market attractiveness. AUSIT members should stand out from the crowd on account of the quality of their work. AUSIT offers members the resources necessary to increase their work capacity as well, by organising opportunities for self-improvement; i.e. through branch and online PD sessions in the branches, managing the www.ticpd.com website, and the ongoing dissemination of relevant information from other channels. It is now up to practitioners to learn about CAT tools, for instance, so as to earn more money per hour by working with greater efficiency.
- Learn from others and follow best practice as members of a professional body. We are strengthening links with ASLIA and NZSTI. In addition we also respond enthusiastically to invitations from overseas, such as that which came most recently from the Swedish Association of Professional Translators (SFÖ).

Major items on the AUSIT NC agenda

Jubilation Conference

Early-bird ticket prices close at the end of August. The preliminary program looks very interesting and diverse, containing something for everyone, and looks like a fitting tribute to celebrate our 25 years.

Code of Ethics revision

The final draft of the CoE revision will be sent out for a last round of feedback during September. I ask all members to contact their branch secretaries by September 20 (but not before, please) if they wish to contribute and have somehow missed seeing the final draft.

In closing, I'd like to thank those 80 members who took the time and trouble to assist us by filling in the survey, and those inspirational and admirable committee and council members who have achieved so much in the past three months. It is impossible to list everyone by name. As usual, I welcome your comments; please contact me at president@ausit.org.

Call for National council nominations



In accordance with Bylaw E: Nominations (see across), I hereby call for nominations for all electable offices of the AUSIT National Council.

The following positions will become vacant on or around 3 December 2012:

National President (currently Annamaria Arnall)

National Vice-President (currently Barbara McGilvray)

General Treasurer (currently Diana Rodriguez)

General Secretary (currently Yutaka Kawasaki)

Please note that in accordance with the Constitution (Clauses 7.3.2, 7.3.3 and 7.3.4 respectively), the President, the Vice-President and the Immediate Past President (not an electable office) cannot serve for more than three consecutive terms.

Please forward any nomination to your Branch Principal Delegate by 3 October; i.e. two months before this year's NAGM, which is scheduled for 3 December 2011.

Thank you,

Yutaka Kawasaki
AUSIT General Secretary

Bylaw E: Nominations

1. **Not later than three (3) months before the date set for the Annual General Meeting, the General Secretary shall call for nominations for all electable offices, including those where the National Council has appointed an office bearer due to a casual vacancy.**
2. **Nominations shall be made by Principal Delegates after consultation with their respective Branches.**
3. **Nominations shall be in writing and signed by the Principal Delegate lodging it, and shall be accompanied by the signed acceptance of the nominee.**
4. **Nominations shall not be accepted if reaching the General secretary later than two (2) months before the date set for the Annual General Meeting.**

Union campaign for T/Is launched

AUSIT Vice-President **Barbara McGilvray** and Past President **Moreno Giovannoni** provide an AUSIT perspective on the APESMA launch

**MANY
LANGUAGES
ONE VOICE**

Fair deal for Translators
and Interpreters



The launch of the 'Many Languages, One Voice' campaign on 25 July at Trades Hall in Carlton attracted about 130 participants, many of them AUSIT members.



AUSIT was well represented at the committee level with Barbara McGilvray (AUSIT National Vice-President), Meredith Bartlett

(Vic/Tas Branch Chair), John Gare (Vic/Tas Treasurer) and other Vic/Tas committee members in attendance, as were professional stalwarts such as Adolfo Gentile (former President of the International Federation of Translators), AUSIT Past President Moreno Giovannoni, Niki Baras, and Rita Wilson. John Beever of NAATI was there and was also acknowledged, as were representatives of the big agencies, All Graduates and VITS LanguageLink. AUSIT's support of this APESMA (Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia) campaign on behalf of interpreters and translators, as well as the presence of the National Vice-President, was acknowledged from the stage.

The APESMA T&I Committee and officials, including Victorian Director Bede Payne, Dr Kim Rickard, who wrote the 'Lost in Translation' industry report, union organisers April Byrne and Daniel Francis, and Fiona Simpson, who looks after PR, had clearly put in a lot of work to make the launch a success.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Brian



From left to right: The Hon. Brian Howe; Bisa Surla, Serbian<> English T/I; and Chris Walton, APESMA CEO.

Howe gave an excellent keynote speech linking the situation in our profession to the bigger insecure-work picture (he chairs a committee currently looking into the insecure work situation in Australia), and said he will continue to support the campaign.

Serbian interpreter Bisa Surla said all the things we've been hearing for many years about a lack of recognition and less than professional treatment of community interpreters.

The venue was wonderful: the Bella Bar of Trades Hall, located up old stone stairs to a dimly lit room with an old-fashioned bar, dark-cream walls, a black stage, and strings of lights around the walls, felt just like an old music hall. We all sat at small, round candlelit tables.

What's the next step? APESMA's Victorian Director Bede Payne says he now wants to sit down with AUSIT and ASLIA representatives, plus all other industry

participants to discuss our common goals.

The community interpreting sector in particular needs the support of a professional union, and it seems this is our best chance in a long while to bring about much-needed change. We would encourage AUSIT members from around Australia to join APESMA and help bring about that change.

For further reading, try these links:

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/push-to-translate-vital-job-as-career-20120724-22nj5.html>

www.apesma.com.au/newsviews/latest/Presentation_Bisa_Surla.pdf

http://issuu.com/barriers/docs/lost_in_translation?mode=window&pageNumber=1

www.apesma.com.au/newsviews/latest/Brian_Howe_speech_MLOV.pdf

Ten typical mistakes start-up freelance translators should avoid

Check out AUSIT SA/NT member **Nicole Adams'** great advice for starting out on your own



1. Specialising in everything:

Jack of all trades, master of none. It will look rather odd to prospective clients when they discover you specialise

in the medical, technical and legal fields — and home furnishings! Decide for yourself which field you are good at, try to get some relevant in-house experience under your belt, or complete an accredited course to demonstrate you know your stuff. Don't add ten subjects to your list of specialisations, because it will damage your credibility. And just because you once manned the supermarket till in your student days doesn't make you a financial expert.

2. Setting your rates too low: A frequent mistake new translators make is to charge too little. When I outsource assignments and receive applications from potential candidates, the first batch that go straight into the bin is those with very low rates. This creates the impression the translator is either lacking confidence in his/her capabilities (therefore the quality will probably be poor), is brand new to the industry and doesn't know what to charge, or has zero business skills — all of which are a no-go for most serious outsourcers (of course, we are not talking about the low-quality, low-rate bottom segment of the market here). Do your research, calculate what you must earn to make a decent living, and set appropriate rates that will allow you to be taken seriously.

3. Lack of marketing/networking skills: You think marketing is setting up a website, handing out a couple of business cards, then leaning back waiting for the work to flood in? Think again. In today's world, an advertisement in the *Yellow Pages* is no longer enough; you should be visible and help clients to find you. Join Twitter or Facebook, network with colleagues or clients, contribute to discussions and make a name for yourself.

Start a blog and attend conferences, set up a Google Ads campaign, let an SEO expert review your website, join a professional association, and attend business networking events in your city. The opportunities are seemingly endless.

4. Failure to investigate clients before working with them: A new enquiry hits your inbox: 15,000 words from JohnDoe@coldmail.com of no fixed abode. His job is urgent, so you apply a 25% rush surcharge, which he willingly accepts, and in all the excitement you forget to request full company and address details. But you sense a great opportunity to land your first large assignment, work all weekend and proudly deliver the translation just in time at 9am on Monday morning, together with your invoice made out to his email address. Not surprisingly, you never hear from Mr Doe again. The first thing to do when you get an enquiry from a new client is to make sure you have their full company and address details, and preferably their website to check if it appears to be legitimate. Then check their credit history and — before accepting any orders — make sure you know how to claim your money in their country if they are based abroad and decide not to pay you.

5. Poor communication with clients: There is nothing worse for the client than uncertainty — will you deliver that crucial translation in time? Did you get their last email with the updated text? Can you open the file in the new format? Clients shouldn't have to worry about any of these things. They should know that they can rely on you 100%, so communicate with them. Confirm receipt of client emails to acknowledge new information, drop them a quick line every once in a while to let them know that large project is going well, and respond to any email as quickly as you can. They will appreciate this peace of mind and you will become a trusted preferred supplier.

6. The inability to say 'no': New freelancers often don't know what they'd like to specialise in, so they gladly accept each and every assignment that comes their way, just to gain experience. These can run the gamut of technical, fashion, hotel

websites, etc. This is a big mistake. If you're not 100% confident you can translate a text well, don't accept it. If you specialise in marketing and a good client wants you to take on a translation of a contract but you are not a legal expert, decline it. One poor translation can damage your reputation, and therefore your business. Don't risk it!

7. Forget to get references: When you first start out, word of mouth is your most effective marketing tool. Each time you complete a project, ask the client for feedback and permission to publish this feedback as a testimonial on your website, for example. Word of mouth usually generates a lot of business and can create a powerful (and positive) snowball effect.

8. Failure to diversify your income stream: You hit the jackpot and have one good client that keeps you busy 24/7 and pays well? Great! But what if they go bankrupt tomorrow? Do you have other clients to keep your business afloat? You should never rely on just one or two clients to provide most of your income. This very risky strategy is likely to backfire in the long term. Clients come and go; you should never have more than 50% of your income coming from the same client. Diversify.

9. Failure to save for your tax bill: So you had a great first year and are satisfied with your income? Congratulations! To celebrate your success, you spent your cash on that long-desired holiday to Hawaii and treated yourself to a new iPad. But did you set aside enough for your first tax bill? In your first year of trading, tax is usually paid in arrears, so you may have to pay a large lump sum after you file your first return. It is surprising how many businesses don't budget for this and fall at the first hurdle.

10. Work too much: As tempting as it may be to work day and night, if the work is there, don't let your work/life balance suffer. Make sure you schedule in some time for relaxation and non-work-related activities each day; e.g. an exercise class or reading a book. Otherwise, you run the risk of burning out very quickly.

See page 10 of this issue for Nicole's excellent tips on networking - Ed.



From left to right: Patrick Geddes (NZSTI), John Jamieson (NZSTI), Robert Foote (NAATI), Idris Mansor from Malaysia, Tineke Van Beukering (AUSIT) and Olena Savelyeva (AUSIT).

NZSTI Conference news

Braving the NZ winter proved very beneficial for AUSIT Qld member **Tineke Van Beukering**

On 9-10 June, the NZSTI (New Zealand Society for Translators and Interpreters) Annual Conference was held at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. This year's conference theme was 'Celebrating Strength in Diversity'. Among the approximately 120 attendees were four non-locals: Dr Idris Mansor from Malaysia, and from Australia NAATI Accreditation Manager Robert Foote, and two AUSIT members, Olena Savelyeva and myself.

The conference was opened with an official welcome in Maori and English, followed by the keynote address by Lewis Holden, Chief Executive of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. One of the topics Lewis touched on in his talk was the exciting opportunity for New Zealand to present its literature and culture at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2012, where New Zealand will be the country of honour this year. For the occasion, over 70 books by New Zealand authors are currently being translated into German.

Next Robert Foote addressed the attendees in a plenary session, giving insight into current developments within NAATI and on revalidation, which was about to be implemented only a few weeks after the conference on 1 July 2012.

After a well-catered morning tea which provided ample opportunities for networking, the program continued with three parallel sessions in different

streams: general translation, literary translation, and interpreting. The general translation stream saw presentations on post-editing, the use and pitfalls of Google Translate, and about CAT in the Cloud; i.e. Internet-based tools and strategies for translators. The presentations were well received as the topics were highly relevant for translators in this age of rapid development in new technology and tools.

In the afternoon the program featured a wide range of presentations across the three streams, with topics such as acronyms, the history of translation in China, Chinese subtitling of the American movie *The Town*, a case study 'When interpreting goes bad', the Reiss-Vermeer model, and more.

After having made the most of the tea break for more networking, we left the Conference to have a quick break and enjoy the bohemian atmosphere of Cuba Street in Wellington's City Centre. Then shortly after the day program finished it was on to drinks at the Thistle Inn, Wellington's oldest hotel.

From the Thistle Inn we proceeded towards Parliament House, an absolutely unique location for the conference dinner. In the beautifully restored Great Hall we were welcomed by the Hon. Chris Finlayson, Attorney General, Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage and Minister of the Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations. While

enjoying buffet-style meal and historic atmosphere we had plenty of opportunity to deepen contacts and friendships made during the day and for meeting those people we hadn't had a chance to speak with. Upon leaving the hall to return to our accommodation, we were reminded we were in New Zealand in wintertime, as it was bitterly cold. Especially to someone coming from Queensland!

The second day of the conference started with another keynote address, 'Back to Babel', by Dr Adrian Macey, former ambassador, diplomat and negotiator. Adrian facilitated a very lively and fascinating presentation on language games in international climate change negotiations.

All in all, the NZSTI conference was well worth the trip to New Zealand. Since international airfares are regularly on special, I had been able to book a really good fare; attending the NZSTI conference actually turned out to be very affordable. I can recommend AUSIT members to attend an NZSTI conference and have been informed that next year's conference will be held in Christchurch. I'm sure our New Zealand colleagues would love to see more people from Australia next year. In the meantime, quite a few NZSTI members are planning to attend our AUSIT conference in Sydney at the end of this year.

Practical translation theory

Christian Schmidt's PD lecture with case studies evoked lively discussion, reports AUSIT Past President **Yveline Piller**



On 27 April this year, AUSIT NSW held one of its excellent professional development seminars at the Sydney Mechanics' School of

Arts. The event was well attended by an audience keen to hear presenter Christian Schmidt discuss the topic of translation theory.

Christian is a member of the SA/NT branch of AUSIT, and translates from and into Portuguese, German, Spanish and English. He has an honours degree in translation from the University of Heidelberg in Germany, and a distinguished track record across many countries, including Germany, Turkey, Peru, Brazil, the US and, since 2008, Australia.

After clarifying that for the purpose of his presentation, translation and interpreting would be covered as 'translation', Christian explained that theory gives us tools for problem solving and is a useful way to justify our choices when clients query our work. He touched briefly on the history of translation, before we heard an overview of various frameworks used to explain the goal of translation. These included 'equivalence', 'importing of knowledge', 'functional equivalence', or 'closest natural equivalent ... in meaning ... and ... in style', 'formal equivalence', 'dynamic equivalence', 'functional adequacy' and Hans Vermeer's *skopos* theory. (See below for how to obtain a copy of the lecture on DVD – Ed.)

We skipped over the topic of linguistic techniques used to achieve various purposes in translation, something I would have liked to spend more time on. However, Christian offered to send us his presentation, and those who are interested in this topic have an opportunity to do their own research.

One point to emerge from the presentation was the importance of weaving culture and social action into

the activity of translation. Translation occurs in situations which practitioners usually succinctly term 'context' but which, when broken down, encompasses values, expectations, prior knowledge, culture and target audience. To illustrate, Christian presented several examples of communication gone wrong because of implicit cultural underpinnings which can escape anyone unfamiliar with the target context, the audience and their expectations.



AUSIT SA/NT branch member Christian Schmidt and attendees of his excellent lecture on translation theory

This typically happens when a client peremptorily tells us to 'just translate what I say', without any regard for the challenges we face in conveying not just words, but also meaning and intention.

After the break, during which all enjoyed the delicious catering prepared by organiser Amale Hourani, we resumed with case studies which led to lively discussions. Several examples were reminiscent of situations many have personally experienced as interpreters, where the words exchanged between parties fail to convey the full, implicit meaning of the intended messages. This can lead to a string of misunderstandings, which are not resolved by continuing to strictly convey words. Not infrequently, interpreters can feel the need to remove their cloak of invisibility and step forward to suggest some course of action that will bring the

underlying meaning to the forefront of the communication. Similarly, we looked at examples where translators pick up errors or discrepancies in documents and we discussed the courses of action open to T/Is in such cases.

One member of the audience also pointed out the interesting difference in approach between inexperienced and expert translators. In difficult situations, inexperienced practitioners often adhere strictly to the rules they have learned,

whilst those who are experienced place their focus on achieving communication for the benefit of all parties, sometimes exposing themselves to criticism and praise by highlighting deficiencies in the overall communication process.

One quote from the presentation we should all put on our letterheads and emails is: 'The translator is not a passive transformer of text, but an active co-designer of the communication process.'

A DVD with Christian Schmidt's presentation 'Translation Theory: A mystery, a blessing, a curse?' has now been released. It contains the first 52 minutes of the Sydney session. Price: \$ 38.50 (GST incl) for home use by AUSIT members, \$ 55.00 (GST incl) for home use by non-members, and \$ 264 (GST incl) for public use by institutions such as universities, TAFEs, libraries, etc.

Translating Swahili: Adapting for diverse audiences

AUSIT NSW member **Jean Burke**, paraprofessional translator in one of Australia's fastest growing languages, describes the changing nature of her work



The demand for translation in Swahili has increased markedly since I translated my first English to Swahili document (a one-page

leaflet about cholera) in 2004. This is not surprising as Swahili (or *Kiswahili*¹) is one of the fastest growing languages in Australia, being an emerging language spoken by refugees and migrants from East and Central Africa. During my relatively short and casual career in translation I have observed the changing nature of the work required in Australia. The demand started with Department of Immigration and Citizenship forms and booklets, moving to small community organisations promoting their services, then on to all kinds of certificates (birth, marriage, military service), subtitling for television and, more recently, back-translating medical surveys and recording mp3 files for information DVDs. There is a continual need to develop skills to match the requirements of assigned jobs.

Some translation agencies and clients are particularly attuned to their target audiences, and have learned that Swahili has variants or dialects. The variant I speak is the Standard Swahili of the United Republic of Tanzania, considered the most pure and complex, but other major variants are the Swahili of Kenya and Uganda, and the less grammatically correct Swahili of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Globally, Swahili is spoken by about 80 million people. It is the second most widely spoken language in Africa after Arabic. Swahili is the national

and/or official language² of four nations: Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the DRC, and is spoken in many countries bordering these. Obviously, Swahili use has expanded beyond Africa to countries like Australia through migration, refugee movement and returning expatriates (like myself) (Moshi 2006, p.171).

When interpreting, usually I can relatively easily adapt to the language variety of the particular Swahili-speaker. For example, when interpreting for Congolese refugees I will often use Bantu-based words and avoid Arabic-based words of the coastal region.³ I may use English for numbers and words for the days of the week because they may be better understood than in Standard Swahili. I have learned some of the most common Congolese and Kenyan variations in vocabulary, as well as urban slang. When energy, time and ease of access permit, I have browsed language resources for *Kirundi*, *Kinyarwanda*, Arabic and French to better understand the grammar of these languages and to ascertain which vocabulary is common or overlapping, including borrowed words. However, if in the end the Swahili-speaker and I have trouble understanding each other, this fact can be conveyed to the professional involved, and repetitions, adaptations, code-switching or other arrangements can be made.

Of course, translation is a different matter. Usually there is no specific information about the target audiences and rarely any chance to obtain feedback from them.

² A national language is the language most widely used, and which is spoken in parliament while also used in administration, the media and education. An official language is the language in which the laws of the country are written and publicised (Lodhi 1993, p. 81).

³ See also the article 'A Swahili Interpreter Returns to the Congo' by Dorothy Prentice in *In Touch*, p.12, vol. 3, 2011, and the article 'Being a Rare Language Interpreter' by Jean Burke in *In Touch* p.14, vol.3, 2009.

But recently I have had several requests that have been more specific: a media release to be delivered to Kenyans, and a description of service users as Burundians and Congolese who had stayed in refugee camps in Kenya and Tanzania. The way I approach this is to simplify the Swahili vocabulary and grammar, and choose Bantu-based words over Arabic-based ones, while ensuring that meaning is preserved. Sometimes for the sake of understanding I include alternative Swahili or English words in parentheses — this is especially important for words relating to times and the names of weekdays, as Congolese Swahili-speakers may be more familiar with the English or French terms for these rather than the Standard Swahili equivalents. At times I think the best result is achieved when jobs are translated by one translator and checked by another who comes from a different region or country, as occurs in some cases. I particularly appreciate working closely with a Kenyan friend and a Congolese friend, as we can check each other's work when client budgets allow for this.

Linguistic diversity amongst Swahili-speakers is related to more than country of origin or where the speakers have resided. It is far more complex. Swahili is generally spoken in countries where there is an abundance of languages. This is a typically African situation, where many individuals are multilingual, having varying levels of fluency, proficiency and literacy in three or more languages within various domains of use. This could explain why code-switching between languages occurs, with English or French words used for technical language.

Factors which have an impact on proficiency include a lack of formal education, different policies in language-in-education and disruptions in refugee life (Borland and Mphande 2008, p.5). For instance, Borland and Mphande (2008, p.12) found that most Sudanese, Burundians, Ugandans, Somalians, Ethiopians and Congolese they surveyed

¹ *Kiswahili* is the Swahili word for the Swahili language. The prefix *Ki-* means language and custom.

in Victoria who use Swahili had learned it through community interaction, and not formal schooling. Women in particular are often at a disadvantage in regard to accessing education in war-torn areas, or in interacting with others in camps. In the Australian context this can mean, for example, a Burundian woman may speak conversational Swahili, but struggle to understand detailed legal information in written Swahili or when it is spoken in the court setting.

Proficiency can also vary across ways of communicating, such as between productive or receptive language use, or speaking and listening as compared to reading and writing. It is heartening to see some clients really considering the best way to communicate information to Swahili-speakers and others from Africa, and using such formats as CDs and DVDs plus styles of story-telling which cater to those who are not highly literate or who, by nature of their culture, have a preference for oral means of receiving information.

Despite the issues and challenges in ensuring Swahili translations can be understood well by the diverse range of Swahili-speakers, Standard Swahili is often a good choice of language for translated material. Not only is it spoken widely, but it has high status as a lingua franca used in the mass media, education and government sectors in African countries. Moreover, it is often considered to be a 'neutral' lingua franca or language of communication 'which has no borders or areas or nationality' (translated from Massamba 1990⁴ in Kiango 2002, p.188), and hence is not seen to possess any tribal allegiances. This is also why it is a favoured language of communication between refugee groups in their new communities (Moshi 2006).

Creating and adapting Standard Swahili translations for diverse audiences to understand is stimulating work. It sometimes feels to me like weaving many

4 'Isiyokuwa na mipaka ama ya kieneo au kitaifa'.

strands of colour together into a pattern that hopefully will give a clear picture from whichever angle it is viewed and in whatever kind of lighting.

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Networking to boost your business

You've heard of networking but aren't interested, because you think you can do it all by yourself? That's a shame – it means you are missing out on one of the major keys to success for self-employed small business owners.

Networking is a very efficient self-marketing and client acquisition tool with a pleasant side effect: a social network. It's all about giving and taking. You make contact with other people, build relationships, establish trust, exchange information, even work on projects together or recommend one another to clients. After a while, this may even lead to personal friendships.

Remember, you have to give and take in equal measures. Those who always just ask for help without returning the favour quickly find themselves alone again. The same rings true for your professional skills: if you rely on getting orders based on your likeable personality and large circle of acquaintances alone, without delivering the results you promise, your networking strategy is destined to fail.

Qualifications and skills by themselves are not enough either. It's fantastic that you have a top university degree and deliver

excellent translations. But what good is that if nobody knows you exist? This is where a network comes in handy: it will get you in touch with potential clients, as well as expanding your product and service portfolio. You will meet colleagues with different skills and specialisations. That means once you have established solid relationships, you may be able to accept orders in areas you don't specialise in and subcontract them to someone you trust.

Being part of a network also means that if your acquaintances need a translation, they will think of you first rather than approaching a service provider they don't know. They may even be asked for a recommendation and will pass your details on to potential clients.

Network with professionals in other industries. This will show you that other occupations also face the same challenges self-employment brings – and may also lead you to potential clients who may, for example, need you to translate their website or edit their presentation. You may even benefit from an exchange of services: a web developer you meet may want to have his/her website translated and will redesign your own website in return.

The good news is networking is usually free and can be initiated at any time. When you go to your next barbecue, make sure you take along some business cards, strike up a conversation at your next workshop, attend a conference ... You just need to be open and enjoy interacting with others.

How you approach developing your network depends on your interests. You could join professional associations (e.g. AUSIT, ATA), or open networks with access for all professions. You may be interested in women's networks or regional ones. And don't forget the wealth of professional networks on the Internet such as LinkedIn and Proz.com. Whichever option you choose, you should ensure that you participate regularly and contribute something to the network. You cannot establish any solid relationships if you only pop in every once in a while. Take part in online discussions, attend a workshop, go to coffee mornings to chat to colleagues and pass on your experience if needed.

Give it a try. You won't have to invest anything other than your time – and you'll be surprised how much you'll get back.

Nicole Adams
AUSIT SA/NT

Confessions of a verb cruncher

Translating tenses can be a fun challenge for grammar lovers, writes AUSIT's **Will Firth**



I live in Germany and work as a freelance translator from Russian, Serbo-Croat* and Macedonian into English (occasionally

into German as well). I've been very fortunate over the last few years in being able to move from my long-term base in the humanities into literary translation — and make a modest living from it. I mainly translate novels and short stories for publishers in Britain and the US.

One of the many challenges I face when dealing with a work of fiction is restructuring the tenses. There are always a multitude of instances where I am forced to change them (or have little choice but to do so) in order to reproduce the meaning and style of the original.

When translating from a Slavic language, you have to come to terms with the complexities of 'verbal aspect' at an early stage: almost every verbal notion has a pair of forms, termed 'perfective' and 'imperfective' (e.g. 'to write' in Serbo-Croat is 'pisati' and 'napisati'). The significance of aspect ranges from minor nuances to major differences in meaning to do with repetition and the sequence of events. While the perfective aspect signals an action is part of a series of events, the imperfective aspect tells the reader the action is to be considered separately and they can even expect more information to follow. This is complex stuff. Whoever has studied one of the Slavic languages will be familiar with this and know you need to have your wits about you when dealing with verbs and their aspect. I find this a challenge with every book.

My main recurring struggle, however, is with something less structural and more about convention: writers in Serbo-Croat and Macedonian make substantial use of the historical present (also called dramatic present or narrative) in order to make a description of past events sound livelier. We do this in English too — *I'm walking*

home the other day, and all of a sudden this guy comes up — but it soon becomes tedious or can leave you wondering if it's really the genuine present tense, and the danger of disorientation means the historical present is rarely an option for long passages. Still, there are a variety of situations where using it in English is possible and can make sense; e.g. when describing someone's habitual past actions if they conceivably still happen today.

It's often difficult to decide in borderline cases. Mostly I institute the past tense in my translations because I find that too much historical present in English sounds strained. There are times when I'll feel like I'm steamrolling the varied temporal landscape of the original into uniform past tense in English, but in the next chapter a scene will come up that calls for a particularly vivid description — perhaps an intense stream of consciousness — and I'll happily use the historical present again.

Often I have to really keep my mind on the context and not treat tenses at face value. None of my three Slavic languages use 'backshift' like English does to mark reported speech, although Macedonian does have a special tense for re-narration, so I regularly have to introduce changes at that level. Note this example from the Montenegrin novel *Hansen's Children* (Spahić, 2011): 'Primiče lice i kaže da se u dvorištu nešto *dogada*.' My translation reads: 'He held his face close and said that something *was happening* (direct translation — *is happening*) down in the courtyard.' Writers are also often lax about indicating a change of speaker or perspective, so I frequently insert punctuation that doesn't exist in the original, or even separate out spoken components to create a short dialogue where the original was all one paragraph. This often involves changes of tense.

A further pitfall I've become aware of recently with the Croatian novel I'm translating is that the verb in the main clause of a complex sentence is usually the 'bearer of the tense', whereas verbs in the subordinate clause(s) often have a detemporalised present tense: it's a mistake to treat these nominal instances

of the present tense at face value, and I sometimes need to remind myself that it's the main clause I should be going by. Again, note this simple example from the Croatian novel *Our Man in Iraq* (Perišić, 2012): 'Punih usta napravio sam grimasu koja je značila da *ne znam* što reći.' I translate this as: 'My mouth was full and I made a face which meant *I didn't know* (direct translation — *I don't know*) what to say.'

To round off this incomplete list of verb-related situations where one-to-one translation is not always possible, I should mention the pluperfect. Both Serbo-Croat and Macedonian have a pluperfect tense, but it's not used nearly as much as it is in British or Australian English. In a manner reminiscent of American usage, the past tense plus the adverb 'već' or 'veke' (already) often suffices to convey a pluperfect meaning. But in my translation I'll usually make a pluperfect out of it for clarity's sake. A general example from the Macedonian novel *Pirey* (Andreevski, 2009)³: 'Ho voјникот наеднаш запре со крстењето и му врза една тешка шлаканица на момчето. Со истата рака која се *крстеше*.' In English: 'The soldier stopped crossing himself and slapped the boy in the face — with the same hand that *had been making* (direct translation — *was making*) the sign of the cross.'

These examples show that I often need to substantially rework the texture of tenses in my translations. I find this to be a major challenge, on a par with reproducing the author's message, style and idiosyncrasies. But if you love grammar and the act of translation per se, like I do, it can make you feel like a happy little Sisyphus.

*This is what I choose to call the language. I intend to cover this in a future article.

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Room with a view



AUSIT WA's **Trish Worth** enjoys the worthwhile distraction of life beyond her screen



I read in the last issue of *InTouch* a request for photos of the translator's daily view. In the two photos of my view one shows the outlook from my desk under the windows facing the street (inset picture above right), and the other is how my backyard appears to me when I'm working at the outside table on my deck (main picture).

When working at the inside desk, I type up handwritten translations or edit works-in-progress. At this desk I'm inspired by people passing in the street, by the goings-on at the government flats opposite me, by birds in the branches on the other side of the glass — even birds building nests. The

bank of windows faces west. On all but a few mid-summer afternoons, when I have to lower the awning against the sun, I am afforded a clear view of the sunset. Right now, on this cold wintry afternoon, I'm watching a ball of fire descend below the horizon. All of these sunsets and birds and people distract me from translation work, but it's not wasted time. I take notes then write stories as practice for writing fiction in translation.

At the outside desk I translate with pen and paper. There are no people to catch my eye, but I can hear them, especially those neighbours with loud voices whose

comments and conversations echo between the brick houses and often stop my pen mid-sentence. But when everyone's quiet and I hear only birds or the breeze in the trees, I work long and hard and all is right with the world. In the warm months I sit on the shaded side of the table, and in winter, when it's about ten degrees, I put on a black jumper and work for an hour or so with the full sun beating on my back.

What an enjoyable aspect of translation to write about.

SA/NT Branch

The SA/NT branch continued to host its usual 'T&I Connect' meetings at Alfonso's Café on the first Saturday of the month to catch up on news, discuss issues encountered in our working lives, exchange knowledge and spend some time in the company of our colleagues in an informal setting.

On 2 June we held a workshop on social media marketing, presented by one of our branch members Nicole Adams (see page 10 of this issue), who has extensive experience at using a variety of social media and as a result has created a thriving business as a translator. Nicole went through a spectrum of social media such as ProZ, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter and how to use them to network with peers, plus become visible to potential clients and agencies who chose to seek the services of language professional over these media. This is a trend that is growing in popularity worldwide and thus gaining importance for our profession. This workshop was received with much interest by all attendees; beginners and existing users alike gained valuable knowledge from this highly informative and very clear presentation.

On 11 July Nicole also presented the second of a series of mini-workshops, with this one designed for a small group to demonstrate some existing CAT tools. The program selected for the first workshop was MemoQ, while this session, which proved very popular, was dedicated to SDL Trados Studio 2011. Attendees were treated to an excellent presentation of clear and concise information about what this tool is capable of and how it compares in performance and support with other similar products. Those of us who had never used CAT tools, or at least not this one, left with a gleam in their eye. The prospects it offers far exceed our expectations and even the sceptics started wondering if they were missing out on something worthwhile.

We would also like to bring to your attention our branch's program for the near future. Events such as this attract PD points for revalidation:



'T&I Connect' on Saturday 6 October to be held between 10am and 12noon at Alfonso's Café on the corner of Hutt and Halifax Streets in Adelaide. All interpreters and translators are welcome. Please note that you must inform the branch of your intention to attend for the purpose of reservations by emailing us at exacttranslation@netspace.net.au.

Recent events held include: 'The New AUSIT Code of Ethics – a workshop' which was presented by Christian Schmidt, co-author of the new code on 8 August Adelaide TAFE, Light Square; and the AUSIT SA/NT AGM held on Wednesday 5 September at the German Club in Flinders Street.

Look for reports on these events in forthcoming issues of *In Touch*.

Caroline Sanders, Branch Secretary and the SA/NT Committee

AUSIT SA/NT Branch Secretary Caroline Sanders (left) chats with a guest at one of the SA/NT Branch's regular T&I Connect catch-ups on the first Saturday of every month at Alfonso's Cafe.

Reaching the World

Bangkok, 5-9 November 2012

Authors, poets, literary translators and emerging writers are invited to register for the Asia Pacific/South East Asian 'Reaching the World' Summit and Showcase in early November.

Organised by AP Writers (evolved from the Australian initiative, Asia-Pacific Writing Partnership) together with the South East Asian Writers Awards (SEA Write) and Chulalongkorn University, 'Reaching the World' explores the value of literary prizes and the need for literary translations of work from Asia. Participants from more than 20 countries are already confirmed.

For more information, see <http://apwriters.org/asia-pacific-writers-supports-s-e-a-write-festival/>

Qld Branch Activity Report

AUSIT QLD has been buzzing with activity as usual. On 9 June our committee held its fourth annual mini-Conference at the University of Queensland.

Around 60 people attended the whole-day event, which included six presentations. Our committee member Rona Zhang spoke about her experiences of moving beyond simple marketing and diversifying one's market. Christian Schmidt from Adelaide presented an overview of the proposed revisions of our new Code of Ethics. Our former National President and current EO Daniel Muller, who flew in from Sydney for the event, gave a brief on technology and how it improves AUSIT's performance. After lunch and some face-to-face networking, NAATI's CEO John Beever fielded questions from the floor about the imminent introduction of the revalidation system. Sam Berner then gave a short talk about the philosophy of Continuing

Professional Development. The last presentation of the day was Sarah Dillon's lively explanation about the benefits of webinars.

On the networking scene, the branch had yet another very well-attended Chat Breakfast on 14 July, with members and non-members availing themselves of the opportunity to meet, talk and exchange industry news.

On 23 July 23 Jadranka Brown and Sam Berner presented a joint workshop on Health Interpreting and Medical Translation at the Brisbane City Council Library, providing an overview for those T&I practitioners who are thinking of specialising in the health and medical field. The event was well attended, and an interesting discussion ensued.

AUSIT QLD is also addressing the need for ethics workshops, as many practitioners

are concerned about the ethics CPD points required for revalidation. Our committee has been in contact with the local NAATI office, which will provide training rooms for a series of three half-day workshops in late September/early October.

More events are currently planned for the rest of the year: In the last week of August, Tea Dietterich, who recently returned from Europe where she attended a number of localisation conferences, will share her newly acquired knowledge in a workshop on the new directions being taken by our European colleagues. An end-of-year picnic for all members and their families will be held sometime in November. Keep your eyes peeled for details.

If you wish to contact your QLD Branch Committee, please contact Branch Secretary Elisabeth Kissel at ekissel@primus.com.au.

Share the experience

UNSW runs a Masters course in Interpreting and Translation Studies (MAITS), with current students' LOTEs including French, Russian, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Spanish, Korean and Chinese.

Students have 'practicum' obligations, requiring them to notch up a certain number of hours of practical work in T&I (depending on their area of specialisation). The University would welcome the involvement of any AUSIT members able to help students, through a form of mentoring, to meet these practicum requirements.

What is envisaged?

In translation

Participating AUSIT members will send 'real life' texts to the students, allowing time for the latter to return their work to members for finalisation ahead of client deadlines. The members concerned are obviously responsible for the final product. They would provide feedback to the students, either orally or in writing, on their handling of the translations. (Note: a feedback session using Skype can be both effective and time-efficient, since it requires no travel and may obviate, wholly or in part, the need for written comments.)

Members might mentor more than one student and could send the same translation material to all the students concerned. Where several students are involved, they could collaborate in preparing draft translations (simulating translator/checker teams). If members prefer, they could use texts that have already been dealt with and returned to clients – but they could simulate the "real life" dimensions of the task by imposing the kind of deadline we are all accustomed to dealing with! (It should be noted that, as T/Is-in-training, students regard themselves as bound by the customary code-of-ethics confidentiality obligations. Identifying details could, however, be deleted from texts used for practicum purposes if participating members wished.)

In interpreting

AUSIT member interpreters will take a student along to selected interpreting assignments. The prior agreement of all parties (including any agency involved) would need to be obtained — with the possible exception of assignments at court hearings which are open to the public, and where the student will merely observe from the public gallery. In addition to students observation of members at work, the latter would take time to mentor

students on preparation, punctuality, dress and demeanour, the positioning of all parties in the room, issues of 'detachment' vis-à-vis the parties, etc. In some liaison-type settings (e.g. an appointment with a legal or medical practitioner), there may be scope to seek the parties' agreement for students to try their hand at interpreting under the supervision of members. Many people are receptive to the development needs of younger professionals, and would be happy to assist in this way if asked.

Sean Cheng from the School of International Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UNSW will act as the coordinator for any AUSIT members wishing to assist. Sean can be reached on (02) 9385 2314 or by email at sean.cx@unsw.edu.au, and will be happy to send on a copy of the practicum guidelines and answer any questions members may have about the operation of the program. He will also match members up with students.

These students are our future colleagues. I encourage you to put your name forward and to contribute to the promotion of high standards in our profession by sharing your experience. You don't have to wait until the start of an academic year or new semester. (Hint: a good time to begin would be ... now!)

The Translation and Interpreting Studies Section at Monash University is pleased to announce the availability of Professional Development Short Courses for practitioners in the T&I sector funded by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship) and the Victorian Department of Health. The PD short courses are intended for the following two groups:

- 1) experienced T&I practitioners (7 courses in total)
- 2) entry-level practitioners with no previous T&I training (1 course only).

All courses are of 30 hours duration, consisting of 18 hours of in-class activities and 12 hours of self-access/on-line activities.

In these courses, expert presenters from the relevant fields (law, healthcare, education etc.) share domain-specific information and explain how they work with interpreters. Presenters also include experienced T&I practitioners as well as academics, who will focus on professional challenges and suggest effective strategies to meet these challenges.

The courses focus on areas in which interpreters and translators perform a great deal of their work – law and health as well as on specialist areas – e.g., mental health interpreting, education interpreting and emergency services interpreting. The technology module focuses on the use of translation memory software as well as the use of technology (video-link, telephone) in remote interpreting. The orientation module is intended for recent graduates or newly accredited practitioners and includes tips for setting up a business as well as ‘tricks of the trade’ of the T&I industry.

The PD short courses will be conducted at regular intervals from June 2012 to April 2014 in Melbourne (Monash University Caulfield Campus) and in the Victorian regional centres of Shepparton and Mildura.

	Melbourne (Caulfield)	Shepparton	Mildura
Courses for experienced T&I practitioners			
Legal Interpreting	June-July 2012, Jan.-Feb. 2014		
Health Interpreting	June-July 2012, June-July 2013	Sep. 2012	Sep. 2013
Mental Health Interpreting	Jan.-Feb. 2013, Jan.-Feb. 2014	April 2014	
Education Interpreting	June-July 2013		
Technology module (Computer assisted translation, remote interpreting)	Jan.-Feb. 2013		
Emergency services interpreting	June-July 2013		
Courses for entry-level practitioners			
Orientation module	Jan.-Feb. 2013		
Entry-level (community)	Nov.-Dec. 2012, Jan-Feb. 2014	Sep. 2012	Sep. 2013

The cost of each short course is \$ 484 (incl. GST). A number of bursaries are available that cover the full cost of the course. Applicants who seek a bursary are required to provide some information about their circumstances on the relevant section of the application form. Trainees will obtain a ‘Certificate of Completion’ provided they attend 90% of classes and complete all online assignments.

For further details on the short courses and to download an application form, please visit:
<http://arts.monash.edu.au/translation-interpreting/prof-development.php>

Enquiries: Ms Jocelyne Mohamudally
 Tel: (03) 9905 2223
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