



Member organisation  
Federation Internationale  
des Traducteurs  
International Federation of  
Translators

Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc

# AUSIT in TOUCH

Volume 21, number 1 — Autumn 2013

## CLOSING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

The challenge of interpreting between  
Aboriginal languages and English

### INTERVIEW:

Entrepreneur Nicole Adams on the wealth of options available to freelance translators

### EQUITY IN HEALTH:

The Health Care Interpreter Service celebrates its 35th birthday

### LETTER FROM FRANCE:

AUSIT links up with the Société française des traducteurs



**MARCEL WEYLAND**  
reads from  
his celebrated  
translation

**AUSIT releases updated Code of Ethics \* AUSIT develops editing guidelines**

(ADVERTORIAL)

# Provided by Congress Rental – Bosch Solution

## What is simultaneous interpretation (SI)?

In a world that keeps getting smaller, people from all over the world want to communicate with each other all the time, be it for a conference, a training session, a business meeting or governments from different countries wanting to discuss issues. Naturally, this involves people from various language backgrounds who may not be able to communicate with each other under normal circumstances without the help of interpretation, wherein an interpreter converts the language of the speaker into the language of the listener. On a number of occasions, this interpreting needs to happen simultaneously (as the speaker is speaking).

## Why do you need simultaneous interpretation equipment?

Simultaneous interpretation equipment facilitates this process. It allows interpreters (usually seated in a sound proof booth) to listen to the speaker / presenter and convert one language simultaneously into a delegates' language(s). The delegate can listen to his/her choice of available languages through a wireless headset, thus following the proceedings of the meeting in his/her own language in real time.

## What kind of equipment is available to be used for a meeting?

Simultaneous interpretation equipment is usually available as an infra red system. Infra red light from our emitters fills the room, allowing delegates to listen to their choice of languages via the wireless headset from anywhere in the room. Unlike a radio frequency, Infra red signal does not leak through walls and doors. This is particularly useful for confidential meetings.

As in any other area of the audio visual industry, Simultaneous Interpretation equipment is available in analogue or digital technology. Analogue technology is the older of the two. Given advancements in the industry, digital technology is currently the best solution as it offers superior quality audio that is free from interference from other audio visual equipment such as powerful lighting transformers, other wireless frequencies, etc. The **New Generation Bosch Digital Interpreter** consoles and conference microphones stocked by Congress Rental are also immune to mobile phone noise. What this means to the delegate is an easy to use headset that provides pristine CD quality audio. To the interpreter too, the equipment is very easy to use, thus ensuring an interpreter is free to concentrate on the Interpretation.

**Congress Rental has the largest and most modern equipment in the Asia-Pacific region** and has invested continuously over the past 11 years. In the past 5 years we have invested heavily in the new generation of digital equipment that is now in our rental stock. Congress Rental exclusively stocks and hires Bosch (formerly Philips) Conference Systems. Bosch is recognised worldwide as the best supplier of Congress and SI equipment in the world with a 60% market share globally.

## Why are high quality Interpreter Booths important to the SI process?

Simultaneous interpretation is a very intense process for the Interpreter; it is imperative all other distractions be minimised to allow the interpreter to concentrate on what the speaker / presenter is saying. These distractions can take the form of unwanted noise from the meeting room environment, a cramped booth with not enough space for two Interpreters (which is the standard requirement for SI), not enough ventilation, etc.

Congress Rental stock contains the latest booths from Audipack which are the highest quality booths available for SI anywhere in the world. They are the only booths that truly meet the ISO 4043 specification for sound insulation and are fire retardant. The booths are not only spacious, but also come equipped with silent ventilation systems which keep the interpreters comfortable at all times, allowing them to fully concentrate on their work.

## What is onsite technical support?

At every event with simultaneous interpretation there should be an onsite technician specialised in the SI equipment to monitor all language channels and ensure smooth functioning of all the equipment. Congress Rental technicians are all qualified either directly from Bosch / Philips or through a rigorous internal training program. Full system checks are undertaken prior to all events. The equipment is then re-checked each day prior to the start of the day's event. Technicians are always available on-site, at least 1 hour prior to the start of an event and earlier for the first day. Our technicians are trained to problem solve and resolve issues. They pay particular attention to detail, ensuring cabling is hidden and tidied away and cables crossing walkways are taped down so they do not create a safety hazard. Our technicians constantly monitor the interpreter's input and output to ensure any issues are rectified immediately, often before delegates know that a problem exists.

(Congress Rental was a Gold Sponsor of AUSIT's biennial conference, Jubilation 25, in 2012.)

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# From the helm...



Dear Colleagues,

AUSIT has accomplished some important landmarks during the last three months. The JubilaTION 25th AUSIT Biennial Conference attracted some 300 delegates for the 40 presentations, workshops and panel discussions which ran in four parallel streams over two and a half days.



Don Watson delivers keynote address at JubilaTION 25, 2012



The audience gets involved in a discussion at JubilaTION 25, 2012

## Conference DVDs and publication

Some of the presentations were filmed and will soon be available from the same distributor who sold previous conference material on DVD ([www.artfilms.com.au](http://www.artfilms.com.au)). A book of proceedings containing most papers is expected to be released by Cambridge Scholars Publishers just before the end of the year. This way everyone can access most of the material that the conference attendees were lucky enough to enjoy in person. Viewing DVDs is a self-directed PD activity and claimable as PD points. For more information please visit [www.ticpd.com](http://www.ticpd.com), a website dedicated to professional development maintained by AUSIT.

## Code of Ethics

The new edition of the Code of Ethics has attracted serious interest from the industry. There will be presentations and workshops in each branch to promote better understanding of principles and processes: opportunities to get PD points in the Ethics of the Profession category.

## Website upgrade

The upgrade of the [www.ausit.org](http://www.ausit.org) website has received a lot of praise from those who have visited it, searching for information on language services, or to find a translator or interpreter. Our members tell me they appreciate the user-friendly way we can edit our public profiles in the Members Area. If you are yet to discover these features and need assistance, please

send an email to [admin@ausit.org](mailto:admin@ausit.org) or call (03) 9895 4473.

## AUSIT's Closing the Gap in Communication mini-conference

Looking forward to the next three months, the *Do You Hear Me? Closing the Gap in Communication* mini-conference being organised in Alice Springs in May is a long cherished dream coming true (see conference details on p.6). I hope many AUSIT members can attend the event or contribute in other ways towards enhancing the interpreting scene in the Northern Territory, and particularly in Central Australia. Stay tuned!

## AUSIT Excellence Awards

Also stay tuned for announcements regarding the AUSIT Excellence Awards. Keep your eyes open for outstanding performance and performers. And if you hear of a failure resulting in serious consequences in communication due to not engaging a professional interpreter or translator, let us know about that as well: case studies based on facts and figures assist us moving forward.

I'd like to thank again a cheerful and competent army of volunteer members serving on various committees or just lending a hand to achieve a goal, finish a project or deliver a task. As usual, I find it impossible to list your names. As always, I invite your comments, suggestions and constructive criticism. Keep in touch!

Annamaria Arnall, [president@ausit.org](mailto:president@ausit.org)

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### Front cover image:

*Polish literary translator Marcel Weyland delivers a professional development session to the WA branch*

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The deadline for the Winter issue is **10 June 2013**. Please send any letters, articles or images for forthcoming editions to:

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# Working smart

## Secrets of a solo entrepreneur



Nicole displays her Australian Excellence Award

Nicole Adams describes herself as an ‘accidental translator’, but with business awards and a book in the wings, how has she come so far? **Sam Berner** investigates.

**N**icole, I note that you describe yourself as a German/English translator specialising in marketing, PR and corporate communications. How did you get to become a translator, and why this particular market niche?

I never actually planned to become a translator. Initially I studied law, and then North American studies, politics and history. I then worked in a number of in-house roles including accounts, quality and project management. In 2003, I came across an ad by translation agency that was looking for a German translator to translate business documents and I thought, hey, I can do that! I was hooked right away and realised that this was what I wanted to do. I completed a Masters in Contemporary English Language and Linguistics in the UK and then obtained the official German translator’s qualification. Although I knew absolutely nothing about the industry when I started out as a part-time freelancer, by 2007 business was going so well that I made the switch to full time. Like most new translators, I took on all kinds of projects in the first couple of years.

Over time, I realised that I enjoy projects related to marketing and communications the most, so I obtained additional diplomas in marketing communications, social media marketing and public relations via distance learning. This helped me to specialise and focus only on those areas I most

enjoy working in: it never gets boring to translate PR and marketing campaigns. Many of my clients are small to medium-sized communications or advertising agencies who offer their clients full-service packages including graphic design and typesetting, so it’s always fascinating to see the final product and be an integral part of a team working across a range of disciplines, especially if they are very well known brands or the product hasn’t been officially released to the public yet, like a new car model.

**OK, so you are a bit of an accidental translator. Many of us can identify with that. But looking at how far you have come as a freelancer, there doesn’t seem to be anything ‘accidental’ or haphazard about your approach. What is your business mantra?**

Work smart, not hard. I’m all about boosting productivity and saving time wherever possible because time is money. I believe it is important to embrace technology rather than be afraid of it. It’s a myth that CAT tools only serve to make large language service providers money. I strongly believe freelancers, too, can benefit financially by using CAT tools wisely.

Then there’s social media. What better platform for free marketing and reputation building is there? I was actually a very late adopter of social media, but not using it for business is simply not an option anymore, because our competitors are already doing so. Secondly, with some exceptions, I have

found that a direct client or reputable agency will choose one freelance translator over another for their reliability, great client relationships, responsiveness and giving the client exactly what he wants. These days everybody claims they deliver ‘quality translations’, so claiming the same will hardly set you apart anymore, but having a reputation for being 100% reliable, will. Finally, to me ‘work smart, not hard’ also means constantly evolving and keeping up with developments in the market. Stand still and you’ll lose out.

**Well said. But where do you find the time, Nicole? I am an avid follower of your Tweets and Facebook postings, and I know that you invest in many business webinars. And yet you are also a mother of two young boys and freelance fulltime. Is that some magic time management formula, or just sheer iron discipline?**

It’s a magic time management formula called a very supportive husband – everyone should get one! I’m very lucky that four years ago my husband offered to take a career break and become a stay-at-home dad to take care of our young boys to allow me to focus on my business full-time. That allows me to enjoy a great work/life balance with a lot of family time in addition to working.

I usually work for a few hours during the day and then I work at night, usually from 7.30 pm to midnight. Part of my day is always reserved for social media and continuous professional development (CPD), and I usually attend a webinar at least every other day. Most importantly, I multi-task a lot; i.e. I carry out smaller tasks like sending a quick email or posting a Facebook post while waiting for a file to load or a CAT tool analysis to run, or when being stuck on a difficult term. So I’m not sure there’s any magic formula there, but if you love what you do, it all comes easily.

**Where does the continuing professional development fit into your business formula? We often tend to underscore the fact that CPD is an actual business investment, so we don’t make it a priority – and yet you attend a webinar almost once every two days. Isn’t that a bit excessive?**

Without CPD, and that includes webinars, my business would definitely not be where it is today. A lot of the webinars focus on business skills or small business marketing, so they are a great resource for any solo-entrepreneur. I don’t think acquiring or brushing up your business skills can ever be excessive as a business owner. On the contrary, it should be made obligatory! What’s

more, most webinars are free or cost very little, so the only investment needed is time. I don't think our focus should be on learning tricks to become a better translator. That's the basic skill set we all should have, but that's not enough to succeed as a freelancer if you don't continually hone your business and marketing skills.

**Very well, but translation theory and subject-related CPD are as important, right? And of course, technology. What role do CAT tools play in your freelancing?**

Correct, subject-related CPD is certainly important to help us become even better experts in our areas of specialisation, which, in turn, will attract better clients and result in better paid work.

Translation theory is a bit of a sticky subject, isn't it? Surprisingly few practitioners – myself included – have actively studied translation theory in great detail, yet most of us are still excellent translators. If more translation theory courses/webinars were offered though, I'd most certainly sign up.

**'Entering an awards programme should be in everyone's annual marketing plan because it makes you evaluate your own business and helps you improve.'**

Technology and CAT tools, in particular, are extremely important in my daily work. I started out with the rather complex old Trados version and spent the better part of three years learning it inside out, only for SDL to kindly replace it with their completely overhauled Studio version. Today, I'm an avid user and advocate of MemoQ. Admittedly, buying a CAT tool requires an initial investment, but in the long term it will more than pay for itself.

Once again, it all boils down to productivity. In my case, CAT tools have made me substantially more productive: no more time spent on formatting, no more time spent looking up terms you know you've used before, no more time spent trying to remember preferred client terminology, because it's all right there. I use CAT tools for every single text I process, even if it's just a sentence because you never know when a similar phrase will come up again, or you may have already translated it years ago.

A lot of people worry that using a CAT tool means agencies will try to cut prices and refuse to pay for repetitions or 100% matches. While it's true that

some agencies expect discounts in these cases, you are always free to make a counter-offer or stick to your own rates. That's the beauty of being a freelancer: you don't have to accept any discounts if you're not comfortable with them. Plus many agencies and most end clients don't use CAT tools at all, leaving you to enjoy all the benefits.

**You were awarded the Australian Excellence Award for Service Excellence in 2013 and the Australian Business Quality Award in 2012, so you have been paid back for all this hard work! It must have given you a great motivational boost. Would you like to tell us a bit more about what it took to win these awards?**

Entering an awards programme is something every small business owner should consider. It's a great motivational boost. It sets a great signal for your clients and sets you apart from your competition. I found out by chance that the Australian Excellence Award has a Service Excellence category and so I decided immediately to participate. After all, the worst that could happen was not winning!

Both the awards I entered and won were based on a self-assessment report I had to submit as part of the application process, coupled with customer surveys my clients had to fill in, which were then evaluated and the results benchmarked against other businesses.

I'm especially proud of the Australian Excellence Award, because one of the other finalists was a major Australian wine company that has already bagged a number of awards, so winning was a real surprise.

I was also pleasantly surprised how many clients volunteered to take the survey to support me. What's more, I received a summary of some of the answers they submitted, which is of course very interesting and helpful in identifying both one's own strengths and areas that can be improved.

It goes without saying that being an award-winning business, especially in a service excellence category, is also a great marketing tool and raises a company's profile. Entering an awards programme should be in everyone's annual marketing plan because it really makes you evaluate your own business and helps you improve. It shows your clients that you care about providing a great service, and after all you've got nothing to lose!

**Since we are on the subject of marketing, and if you don't mind me asking – you have written a white paper on public relations for translators. I understand you are**

**in the process of writing a book. Tell me a little bit about what it is about, and how that helps in the marketing efforts of your business?**

Yes, last year I published *The Little Book of PR for Translators*, which is available on Amazon.

My current book project focuses on how to succeed in the seemingly volatile environment of the language industry through diversification; i.e. by offering additional services or products to clients or to fellow language professionals.

**'The main reason for writing this book is to show colleagues who are worried about changes in the industry that there are a wealth of options out there...'**

The main reason for writing this book is to show our colleagues who are worried about the changes in the industry that there are a wealth of options out there that can be utilised, and to inspire fellow translators to look beyond mere translation and explore other avenues to secure additional income streams.

I started mentoring newly established freelance translation professionals about three years ago and have started to notice that, in light of current developments in the translation industry, especially on the technological side, an increasing number of colleagues, including people who have been in the industry for decades, are starting to worry it is becoming too insecure and have even voiced plans to leave the industry.

But I strongly believe that changes in the industry are harbouring a wealth of opportunities for professional freelance translators, which is why I have started to work on this book on diversification.

The book will feature a collection of contributions from well-known industry leaders, including some familiar names from AUSIT, on their specialist subjects.

Topics to be covered include machine translation, post-editing, online language teaching, passive income streams for translators such as CPD, training and publications, and editing of non-native copy, to name but a few.

The book should be released around the middle of this year, so stay tuned!

**Thank you for your time, Nicole. We all look forward to reading the book!**

# Closing the COMMUNICATION gap

Alyawarr interpreter **David Moore** explores the gap in understanding between Aboriginal languages and English.

The Commonwealth Government policy has been one of 'Closing the gap', a metaphorical gap. In Central Australia a 'gap' is a gully or break in the hills and there are a number in Alice Springs: Heavitree Gap, Pine Gap and Jessie Gap. The gap metaphor refers to differences in housing, health, educational outcomes and life expectancy between Aboriginal Australians and other Australians.

**'The gap metaphor refers to differences in housing, health and life expectancy between Aboriginal Australians and other Australians.'**

The gap metaphor can't be translated directly into Central Australian languages. Many messages are not understood by the speakers of Indigenous languages. There are many aspects of communication in Central Australia which are challenging to interpret between Aboriginal languages and English. As interpreters we aim to 'close the communication gap'. An area of difference is in idioms and metaphors used frequently by English speakers but which are hard to interpret into Aboriginal languages. When a lawyer says a sentence is 'hanging over your head', this is an idiom which can't be interpreted directly and would have no meaning if it was interpreted literally. English words often have meanings which don't match the sense a word might have in an Aboriginal language. Lawyers talk about 'dropping' a charge where it is not possible to use the equivalent of 'drop' in Aboriginal languages. A word meaning 'cancel, wipe out' is more appropriate.

In English it is usual to say 'take your medication' whereas the equivalent term

in Aboriginal languages doesn't mean 'consume', it just means to carry or move something. To 'see' a doctor doesn't mean 'visit' a doctor, it just means to visually observe the doctor. Some words have a special sense in legal contexts and this special sense need to be understood. The word 'guilty' is often not understood by defendants when they plead 'guilty' in courts.

Another area of difference is that English has a number of abstract nouns for which there are no equivalents in the languages of Central Australia. Abstract nouns are common in legal English: legislation and imprisonment. Imprisonment must be interpreted as 'a person who is in prison'. Steve Swartz discusses the latter in his paper to the Language and the Law Conference (<http://www.supremecourt.nt.gov.au/>) in Darwin in May 2012.

**'Some standard English words have different meanings in local Aboriginal English... the word 'smart' can mean 'aggressive' or 'assertive' in Aboriginal English.'**

Hypothetical sentences are often not understood or are thought to describe events that will really happen; for example, 'If we get the mining royalties' can be heard as 'When we get the mining royalties'. Margaret Bain has written about the serious misunderstandings caused by language difference in *White Men are Liars*.

Often lawyers use formal English with words such as 'consume' rather than the more familiar 'drink'. They will say 'commence' rather than 'start', using words which are not used in local

Aboriginal English. Interpreters need to know what all these more formal Latin-derived words mean and how to interpret them into Aboriginal languages.

Some standard English words have very different meanings in local Aboriginal English. The Alyawarr word *aneyel* means 'live, exist, stay' but is often interpreted as 'stop' in local Aboriginal English. The word 'kill' in local Aboriginal English often means 'hit, strike with force' similar to the Arrernte word *tweme*, and doesn't mean 'cause to die'. The word 'smart' can mean 'aggressive' or 'assertive' in local Aboriginal English. These words are 'false friends', words which sound the same but have very different meanings and which can be misleading. Serious miscommunication occurs. The policy of 'direct translation' doesn't work; interpreting must be meaning-based, taking account of the speaker's meaning and intentions.

## What is happening in Alice Springs?

Interpreters work in twelve Aboriginal languages across Central Australia including Luritja, Western Arrarnta, Eastern Arrernte, Warlpiri, Alyawarr, Pitjantjatjara and Anmatyerr including many dialects of these languages. Interpreters are trained through the Diploma of Interpreting course which is run at Batchelor Institute in Alice Springs.

The Aboriginal Interpreter Service runs induction courses and courses for legal and health interpreting and employs interpreters on a casual basis. Interpreters work on rosters in the Alice Springs Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. Some interpreters work in 'bush courts' which are held in remote communities such as Ali Curung and Yuendumu.

I write from the experience of working as an interpreter in the Alyawarr language in the Alice Springs courts. Interpreters have a vital role in 'closing the communication gap'. Interpreting skills need further development to close the communication gap in Central Australia.

### Do You Hear Me? Closing the Gap in Communication An AUSIT mini-conference

Venue: **Alice Springs, 10-12 May 2013** Keynote speaker: **The Hon Justice Dean Mildren RFD**

Providers and recipients of interpreting and translation services in Central Australia come together for a mini-conference to discuss the directions for moving forward. How will the government improve communication in Central Australia and engage in genuine dialogue with Aboriginal people through interpreters? What progress has been made since the Language and The Law Conference in May 2012? Topics include legal interpreting and will also extend into the health domain, incorporating a session on mental health. The freshly updated AUSIT Code of Ethics will be introduced.

For more details and to register, please visit [www.ficpd.com](http://www.ficpd.com).



# Outside the box

**Will Firth** discusses how to be true to the essence of an original text in literary translation

**A**s *literal as possible, as free as necessary* – this is often seen as the guiding principle of faithful translation. As we know, there are times when something of a mental leap can be required to find an appropriate equivalent in the other language.

I'd like to look into a few situations where this kind of departure from the *wording* of the original is vital in order to be true to its *essence*. Having spent many years translating official documents and academic papers, which demand terminological faithfulness and a largely literal approach, it's been quite a challenge for me to branch out into more creative genres where I've had to learn to be bold in order to do justice to the original. This article is partly a way for me to take stock of some of the changes I've learnt to make.

**'...it's been a challenge to branch out into more creative genres where I've had to be bold to do justice to the original.'**

When translating prose, I make changes fairly often where extra contextualisation or explanation is required. One simple example is when contemporary writers from ex-Yugoslavia refer to 'the war'; often it's only clear from the context of the book which war is meant, so in the translation I'll usually expand on this and refer to the Second World War or one of the post-Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, at least at first mention.

Substantial reformulation is often required in order to explain implicit cultural assumptions. For example, the protagonist in the Croatian novel *A Handful of Sand* (Koščec, 2013) explains that his unemployed mother can't add to the household income in the early 1990s by giving accordion lessons: 'Graničilo je sa životnom opasnošću znati svirati harmoniku.' (Literally: It bordered on mortal danger to know how to play the accordion). I felt this one-to-one rendering wasn't conveying the implicit reason *why* his mother's skill was so disdained at that time, so I reformulated the sentence in line with the author's cynical style: 'In oh-so-refined Croatia, few things were considered as barbarously Balkan as playing the accordion.'

Sometimes there are difficult terminological issues to deal with, and since footnotes are generally not acceptable the translator is faced with

the option – or even necessity – of accommodating them by creatively tweaking the text. With one demanding historical novel I saved myself many headaches by persuading the publisher to let me write a brief introduction dealing with some of the terms and issues. Jokes and wordplay are notoriously hard to translate and often demand a recasting of the image so as to express the emotional valence with suitable terms in the target language.



*'Our Man in Iraq' is written by Robert Perišić, translated by Will Firth and published by Black Balloon Press*

In a book of memoirs I translated for a Croatian-Australian family, the memoirist—a successful soccer player in his youth—describes a doctor friend writing a fake sick report for him. He quips about his feigned condition being a *čir na jedanaestercu* (in English: an ulcer of the 'eleven-metre mark', i.e. the penalty spot).

There is a clever allusion here to a duodenal ulcer, but I found this untranslatable because we don't say 'eleven-metre mark' in English soccer terminology. The challenge was therefore to come up with a term referring to soccer and also mentioning an inner organ or illness, and after much experimentation I settled for an 'offside gall bladder'. Avoiding mixed metaphors can be a reason to intervene, though one should be careful not to overstep the mark. The short story 'The Nose of the Badger' by the Russian writer Konstantin Paustovsky contains a scene where fish and other animals by a lake react in fright to a loud noise: '(...) и у самого берега, как пушечный выстрел, ударила пудовая щука'. I translated this as: '(...) and right at the bank a forty-pound pike slapped the water like a thunderclap'.

The original actually refers to the startled pike 'hitting' the water 'like a cannon shot', which is certainly expressive, but I couldn't get my translation to gel. A cannon's bang and a fish smacking the water just seemed too much of a mixed metaphor, so I decided to use the image of thunder instead, with the 'clap' and 'slap' bringing in some onomatopoeic back-up.

When I translated the Croatian novel *Our Man in Iraq* (Perišić, 2012), I changed the name of the main protagonist from 'Tin' to Toni because of the associations in English: 'Tin' sounds just too much like the metal, or a tin box, and it might have been reminiscent of the cartoon hero Tintin, who is a totally different kind of character.

**'Jokes and wordplay are notoriously hard to translate and often demand a recasting of the image to express the emotional valence with suitable terms in the target language.'**

In *A Handful of Sand* I also changed the names of two characters to make them less daunting for readers: 'Grga' became Goran, and 'Zvezdan' became Zoran. I figured they were imaginary characters anyway, and the editor immediately agreed. Occasionally it can make sense to alter even minor details in a work of fiction so they won't jar. Novoselov, the author of a Russian short story I translated recently, mused that his grandchildren would probably learn to use smileys along with other forms of punctuation, and he went on to mention several common punctuation marks that kids learn to use at school. The trouble here was that the punctuation marks difficult for Russian school students are not the same as the ones we have trouble with in English, so I changed the author's 'brackets, exclamation marks and ellipses' to 'colons, hyphens and apostrophes', since these arguably pose more problems in English. I should actually have found a way of touching on the mess that is English spelling, but I wanted to keep the intervention small. Sometimes, though, there are major stylistic issues to tackle.

Several years ago I translated a novel by an elderly Macedonian writer that was full of pathos and family pride. That may work in the cultural context of the original – but try presenting it to a Western audience in the 21st century! I decided to substantially tone down the pathos, but the publisher still found the language overly cluttered and proceeded to edit out whole blocks of highfalutin text. At first I felt this was being unfaithful to the original, but on the other hand it was an effort to make the story readable and stay true to the overall message. I think it worked.

*Continued overleaf*

Finally, I should mention that there have been times when I've come up with a new title for a book because a literal translation of the original title would have been bland or misleading.

One example was a witty short story by a Bosnian author about a fellow who cruised through life, constantly tipsy, and

discovered he could speak any language provided he drank the corresponding national beverage.

The title of the original was 'Skraceni jezički kurs' (*A Condensed Language Course*), but I thought that sounded too dry and managed to convince the publisher to settle for *A Drink or Two*

*Loosens the Tongue*. The element of lateral thinking involved in finding divergent solutions like this is demanding, and there are days when I feel I can't loosen up and think outside the box. But I find it immensely rewarding when I do come up with something appropriate — and even more so when readers like it!

## Ethical issues in cultural exchange

**Elisabeth Meister** considers translation ethics in response to Sandra Bermann's essay, 'Translation and the Ethical'.

In her essay 'Translation and the ethical', Sandra Bermann discusses both the necessity and the limitations of translating from one language into another. She notes that translation is not limited to the actual words on the paper, but encompasses their deeper meaning and thus the larger background of their culture. Translation cannot take place without a specific historical, cultural and linguistic context, and the translator's awareness of it. With translation becoming more and more of a necessity in our globalised world, Bermann argues that this also increases the chances for translation to foster true understanding between cultures and nations.

**'While each translator is bound by the same ethical principles, he or she invariably takes on the role as a facilitator of cultural exchange...'**

Translation is therefore a transcultural activity, with all the associated dangers and pitfalls as well as possibilities and opportunities. While translators are ethically obliged to translate what is on the page, no less and no more, the real question is what that means: should foreign concepts be assimilated so that native readers can understand the text without having to think about it? Or should a trace of 'otherness', of the foreign, remain or even be highlighted in order to be true to the originating culture and text? When we encounter the foreign, the other, in our own language and thus to some extent on our own terms, where are we to draw the line between foreignness and familiarity in translating, how to decide how much of the original culture must shine through and how much adaptation is required in order for readers to understand the text?

Bermann discusses these questions mainly in light of literary translations,



Elisabeth Meister

but they apply to any kind of text such as news, film, finance, the military and legal texts. Legal concepts and principles, for example, vary from country to country, making translation extraordinarily difficult. Words may seem to be equivalent but may incorporate a specific context, a number of background facts, historical and social implications or additional knowledge that must be taken into account when translating; otherwise, the translation will fail to be true to the meaning of the original. Sometimes there may not even be an equivalent in the target language. The legal system of the target language may in fact be completely different. Cultural background knowledge, a deeper understanding of source and target cultures, not just languages, are paramount.

In this context, Bermann also discusses the question of what it actually means to stay true to an original text. If translation is simply the 'carrying across' of concepts from one language to another, how are we to account for significant differences in translations of the original text? These differences may occur over time, such as when an older book receives a new translation, but they may also occur in the same period, between different translators.

In the case of a new translation of an older text, it becomes apparent that

any translator must bear in mind their target audience. Word usage and the understanding of certain concepts change over time and may become outdated. Similarly, something that was common knowledge in older times might have to be explained to modern audiences, or vice versa, meaning that translations must adapt to changed circumstances. In these cases, while the source text remains the same, any translation for a new, different audience requires a re-thinking, ultimately a re-interpretation, of the text.

However, differences in translations also occur between different translators. Part of this is obviously due to personal style and preferences, but it also points to some deeper issues: As Bermann points out, 'translation can never be a complete or transparent transfer of semantic content'.

While each translator is bound by the same basic ethical principles, he or she invariably also takes on the role of a facilitator of cultural exchange and international knowledge transfer. In the traditional view, translation simply attempts to correspond to the 'truth' of an original text; Bermann however argues for a concept of 'linguistic negotiations occurring over time'.

Ultimately, this means that depending on the individual translator's cultural knowledge of both source and target language, as well as his or her understanding of the meaning of translation, the results of his or her judgement calls regarding practical and cognitive questions may vary. An awareness of this in turn can only highlight the complex ethical issues and the great responsibilities translators are facing today.

Sandra Bermann, 'Translation and the Ethical', Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (Eds.): *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, Princeton University Press 2005, p. 4-10.



## AUSIT NEWS

### AUSIT releases updated Code of Ethics for interpreters and translators

AUSIT has released the long-awaited, updated version of the Code of Ethics for interpreters and translators. The Code of Ethics is binding on all members of the professional association and is endorsed by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).

Government agencies require interpreters and translators contracted or employed by NAATI to comply with this code, which sets the standard for professional conduct and practice in Australia and the region; NZSTI, the professional association of translators and interpreters in New Zealand, has adopted it as well.

The revised and expanded code contains a general section on ethical principles such as confidentiality, impartiality, accuracy, professional solidarity and professional development.

It also contains a section explaining how the ethical principles translate into professional conduct, followed by a section where separate issues pertaining to interpreters and translators are discussed.

The new edition is the result of an intensive two-year revision process that involved leading researchers and academics, senior AUSIT members, major translation agencies, NAATI management, and important state entities that rely on the services of qualified practitioners. Online access to the Code of Ethics is free for everyone. Visit the AUSIT website [www.ausit.org], click on 'About' and then choose 'Ethics and Conduct'. Printed copies are

distributed to AUSIT members at face-to-face events and meetings, free of charge. Non-members can purchase the booklet by contacting admin@ausit.org.

### Editing, reviewing or proofreading? AUSIT members determine recommendations for translation practitioners

How many times, as a professional translator, have you received a job back from an agency which has been 'edited' by a member of the (foreign language) community, scribbled over and 'corrected', with lots of grammatical and/or register mistakes? Or where a job that you carefully translated has been 'reviewed' by another professional translator who either simply did not like your style, (even though there were no mistakes) or just wanted to justify their fee?

Then, you have to either reject your own choices or waste a lot of time giving reasons for not accepting those changes!

We have to face these situations all too often. We may also be asked to 'review', 'edit' or 'proofread' someone else's work or our own. How (and more importantly, how much) do we charge for that work? It is time for us, as members of AUSIT, to determine these matters.

Last December, at the AUSIT Biennial National Conference, we held a consultation workshop, to find out how different countries tackle these topics. We then discussed how to find our own definitions of terms like 'review', 'edit' or 'proofread'. The idea was for all participants to understand and compare different ideas about this issue and to come up with some final suggestions.

In our consultative workshop we covered three basic points: definition of applicable terminology for this type of work (whether it

should be called editing, revision, checking, proofreading or another name); the tasks specified by each of those terms and who can perform them (translators, linguists, or other language specialists); and finally, charges applicable to those jobs. All the participants' suggestions and comments are now being processed and collated so that we can prepare a final survey; this will be posted online so that all AUSIT members can offer their opinions. After collating all this information, we shall have a final document that AUSIT can validate as recommendations for practitioners, users and agencies.

We also had the chance to learn about the adage, *Muphry's law*, a deliberate misspelling of Murphy's law. John Bangsund of the Society of Editors (Victoria) set it down in 1992 in the Society of Editors Newsletter.

"The law, as set out by Bangsund, states that: (a) if you write anything criticising editing or proofreading, there will be a fault of some kind in what you have written;

(b) if an author thanks you in a book for your editing or proofreading, there will be mistakes in the book;

(c) the stronger the sentiment expressed in (a) and (b), the greater the fault; (d) any book devoted to editing or style will be internally inconsistent."

We know that our final document will not be the magic bullet and that not all Australian agencies and clients will apply the principles indicated in AUSIT's guidelines, but it will be an excellent starting point to unify terminology, and a stepping stone from which we can have better negotiating terms when it comes to the fees that we can charge.

Adriana Rozada

## Letter from France — the Société française des traducteurs seeks links with AUSIT translators and interpreters

You might have read about the project to develop links between AUSIT and the Société française des traducteurs (SFT) in a preceding newsletter. Well, slow but steady progress has been made and we are now in a position to announce that the SFT is launching an international discussion group for professional translators and interpreters working in the English <> French language pair. Members of AUSIT will be able to take a full and active part in this discussion network free of charge! Called 'FRENSEMBLE', the discussion list aims at:

Creating a forum where participants can share knowledge, network, engage in discussion, offer mutual assistance and support, and develop their professional skills.

Enabling participants to benefit from the diversity of global, international membership.

Building closer ties among participating professional associations that are members of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).

Facilitating membership growth by enabling new subscribers to register year-round.

Offering a free service that is open to a wide community, yet restricted to qualified, legally practicing translation and interpreting professionals.

### Who is the SFT?

The Société française des traducteurs was founded in 1947 to defend the interests of translators and the translation profession and is a founding member of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), a Category A UNESCO organisation. Its current bylaws were adopted by its members on January 19, 2013. The SFT today has more than 1,400 members, making it the largest professional

translators' union in France. The role of the SFT is to serve as a single point of contact for language service providers of all categories, the users of language services and government agencies. It is managed by an elected board of directors made up of active members of the association, who define policies and procedures. There are currently 11 members. Board members receive no payment or other compensation for their services.

### Membership

The SFT represents the many different professions that make up today's global translation market, whether salaried or self-employed, such as technical and literary translators, court and conference interpreters and language service providers in the audio-visual field. Every application for membership of the SFT is carefully assessed to ascertain that the applicant

*Continued overleaf*

is suitably qualified, has appropriate experience and practices in accordance with French law.

Applicants are required to provide evidence that they are legally registered, currently practicing members of the profession. In addition, all prospective members must electronically sign the SFT's Code of Professional Conduct.

### Activities

The SFT is an essential interface between language service providers of all categories, the users of language services

and government agencies in France. In addition to its national activities, the union is also present at a regional level through numerous local committees.

Services provided to its members include continuing professional development, local, national and international networking opportunities, negotiated rates for professional liability insurance and health insurance, member discounts, e-newsletters, legal advice, surveys, special interest and language Internet forums and networks, and an online directory.

### The future

By working with AUSIT to provide practical useful services to our members, the SFT hopes to establish a long-term relationship between our two organisations.

Developing links in other areas, such as training, are definitely items to put on the agenda. We hope you will be interested in making this new international collaboration a success when the time comes!

For any further information feel free to visit <http://www.sft.fr/index.php>.

## Is that a real word?

An explosion of new vocab is making its way into modern conversation but which words qualify for the English dictionary? Central Queensland University's **Marc Barnbaum** explains.

It may be tempting to say 'bah humbug' to some of the 'madcap' words being added to dictionaries these days. Just some of the new words added to *Oxford Dictionaries Online* recently include 'photobomb', 'lifecasting' and even 'mwahahaha'! However, the invention of new words is not a modern phenomenon. Charles Dickens coined 'bah humbug' back in 1843 for *A Christmas Carol* and Shakespeare conjured up 'madcap' for *Love's Labour's Lost* in 1598.

While you don't have to be a famous literary figure to help influence the English language, neither can you just think up a word and have it accepted. The *Oxford Dictionary*, for example, considers two billion words in use online through the Oxford English Corpus in addition to many extracts from books, songs and journals through its Oxford Reading Program. Obviously, many of these words are repeated; the word 'the' accounts for almost 100 million of the words in the Corpus.

Editors at *Merriam-Webster* have a simple answer for how words are selected for dictionaries. It's all about the 'usage'. These editors spend hours each day researching a cross-section of published material, scouring the texts in search of new words and new usages of existing words. These go into a computer system to create citations, expanding on files first created in the 1880s (they now have 15.7 million examples of words used in context).

For a word to make the jump from citation file to the dictionary, it must have enough citations to show it is widely used. Even then it might be rejected if it's only used in specialised publications reflecting a jargon of experts within a single field. The word must have enough citations to allow accurate judgements about its establishment, currency and meaning.



Photo by Peter Lawrence

Words can also take time to be widely accepted by all dictionaries. The Aussie 'bogan' (or unsophisticated, uncouth person) was accepted by Australia's *Macquarie Dictionary* well before it earned the graces of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The *Macquarie* even offers state-based alternatives, including Queensland's 'bevan' and 'bev-chick'. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* has been quicker to reflect the online world with additions including 'retweet', 'sexting' and 'cyberbullying'. Youth culture also gets a look in with 'woot' and 'OMG'.

One of the great delights of the English language is the ability to mix old and new words together. Even Dickens, who was by no means known for 'podsnappery' would be 'flummoxed' by the idea of a 'vajazzle', although he would possibly 'LOL'! So before you consider 'voting the idea off the island' why not try out some more of these words and phrases added to dictionaries during 2012: micropig, hackathon, group hug, dirty martini, date night, hosepipe ban, soul patch, devo, fracking, planking and tweeps!

But what about those words that didn't quite make the cut? The *Oxford English Dictionary* keeps millions of rejected words in a vault of filing cabinets. These words have been submitted but are yet to gain common usage. You could almost feel sorry for these Cinderella words, some of which have been waiting for decades to see the light of day. Meanwhile, their oft-used step-sisters are flitting around in society, travelling the world, spilling out of the mouths of the mighty and the meek, princes and paupers.

According to graphic designer Luke Ngakane, who explored the cabinets a few years ago, the rejected words include 'furgling' (fumbling in your pocket for keys or loose change); 'dringle' (a watermark left by a glass of liquid), and 'earworm', (a catchy tune that you can't get out of your head). If you don't believe me just look it up.

By the way, 'wurfling' is apparently the act of surfing the Internet while at work!

*This article is republished from Central Queensland University's Be magazine. AUSIT thanks the editor Priscilla Crighton.*

# Health Care Interpreter Service — providing access and equity in health



Terry Chesher, Vera Crvenkovic (Health Care Interpreter), Lisette Engel, Van Tran Bach (Health Care Interpreter)

Prior to the establishment of the Health Care Interpreter Service, hospital cleaning staff were sometimes called upon to interpret for non-English speaking patients. **Terry Chesher** reports on the organisation's 35th anniversary.

**H**ealth Language Services (providing interpreting and translating for South Western, Sydney and South Eastern Sydney Local Health Districts) organised a celebration for their staff and invited guests at Bankstown Hospital in July 2012 to commemorate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS), which has been in continuous operation in NSW since 1977.

HCIS was first based in Crown Street Hospital, but has since expanded to a state-wide 24-hour service, employing around 180 permanent interpreters and hundreds more on a sessional basis. Today, Health Care Interpreters operate out of several Sydney administrative centres, as well as Newcastle and Wollongong.

In the South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) where the celebration was held, many of the current team of 81 have been employed for 10 to 25 years. Guests at the Bankstown celebration were welcomed by Katina Varelis, Director of Health Language Services, Interpreting & Translating and Amanda Larkin, Chief Executive of the South Western Sydney Local Health District. They included colleagues from multicultural and refugee health services, Health Language Services interpreters and support staff. Lisette Engel (Pollak), co-founder with Roy Richter of the HCIS for the NSW Health Department, and Terry Chesher, who was a project officer for HCIS, were given a special welcome.

This Sydney district is the most culturally diverse district in NSW, with approximately 40% of the population

speaking a language other than English at home. Major languages are Arabic, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Italian and Greek. Health is at the core of every person's being regardless of what language they speak, and the Service is committed to ensuring quality and safety in health care. The work of professional, highly trained and accredited interpreters ensures fair access and equity in our health system, with the indispensable support of staff members in the Call Centre.

**'In 2010-11, in the South Western Sydney Health District, interpreters took 213, 715 calls, in hundreds of languages...'**

Clear communication between patients and those treating them is a must for successful diagnosis and treatment and Health Care Interpreters facilitate this communication, assisting patients, clients and health care providers alike. In SWSLHD in 2010-2011, interpreters undertook 213,715 calls in hundreds of languages, for patients in hospitals and clients in community based health services.

Lisette Engel (Pollak), a guest speaker, paid tribute to the late Roy Richter whose energy and enthusiasm was pivotal to the establishment of the HCIS. Thanks to their combined efforts, and those of others long gone, a program was designed to employ and train interpreters in health and legal settings in NSW, drawing in part on federal funds specifically provided for State language services. The Health Commission (now NSW Health) and the Ethnic

Affairs Commission (now CRC) jointly advertised in the press for the first full-time interpreters to be employed by the state government. Of the 1200 applications received, a number were selected for interview with the prospect of working for the HCIS or for the Community Information and Interpreter Service.

In the 1970s the idea of government providing bilingual services was novel. The Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service (now TIS) had been established in 1974 by the federal government but at a state level the HCIS was a pioneering initiative to offer full-time jobs for interpreters in hospitals and health centres.

Earlier in NSW there had been a migrant education programme in baby health centres, and a pilot trial employing four interpreters at the Children's Hospital. But in those days if you were in hospital in Sydney and didn't speak English, it was often impossible for patients to tell the doctor or nurse what was wrong.

This was the era of so-called 'veterinary medicine' when doctors had to base their diagnosis on observation, guesswork, and information from family members. Or hospital staff would ask family members, cleaners or hospital porters if they'd help communicate with patients.

Roy and Lisette, with their combined knowledge of the health system, of interpreting, and how to lobby for funds, developed a framework for HCIS operations. They devised an innovative interview process involving role play by candidates in simulated interpreting situations, (some time before NAATI had developed its testing model). There were few if any precedents for training of interpreters to work in health care settings, so an intensive training programme was developed, lasting four weeks.

Twenty-seven bilingual staff became the first Health Care Interpreters, with their base and booking service in Crown Street Women's Hospital. Health Care Interpreters were on call to all of Sydney's major hospitals.

As I remember, Lisette herself thought up the job title of 'Health Care Interpreter' and this has become the widely accepted term locally and internationally for interpreters who work exclusively in health settings.

A 35<sup>th</sup> birthday cake made by Health Care Interpreter Susan Macri was cut by Amanda Larkin, Katina Varelis and Lisette Engel at the afternoon tea which followed the ceremony.

*Report by Terry Chesher with thanks to Katina Varelis, Amanda Larkin and Marlis Walther.*



# Correspondence

**Dr Jim Hlavac** responds to Will Firth's article 'What's in a name?'  
(*In Touch*, vol. 20, no. 4, Summer 2012)

**A**s a T&I in a 'smaller' language, it is always interesting to hear the views and opinions of colleagues who share the same language combination, even if one does not share those views and opinions. In his article in the Summer 2012 edition of *In Touch*, Will Firth advocates the term 'Serbo-Croatian' and argues against categorisation of Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian as separate and distinct languages.

In this response, I address the arguments that Will puts forward and counter them with data from the fields of linguistics, sociolinguistics, language planning and with information on T&I occupational practices, to show that mutual comprehension between the languages does not justify their categorisation as a single code. This article also supports the notion that national speech communities should be able to designate their language in their own terms and for this to be uncontroversial and unremarkable. This article further argues that the comprehensive application of separate standards, together with language planning regulations that guarantee the linguistic rights of minority groups, has now led to a de-escalation of inter-ethnic tensions.

**'...national speech communities should be able to designate their language in their own terms and...this (should be) uncontroversial...'**

In his article, Will Firth states that 'the degree of divergence between standard Croatian and standard Serbian is no greater than between British and American English'. This is incorrect. The lexical differences between British and American English are few and usually fill a page or two on Internet sites or in ESL textbooks. The lexical differences between Croatian and Serbian are much more considerable: the largest Serbian-Croatian dictionary is over 600 pages long with about 40,000 entries. There are further differences between the languages in their syntax, semantics, intonation, prosody, phraseology and pragmatics.

Second, categorisation of the languages as distinct is, as Will describes it, reflective of 'separatist views prevailing in Australia'. The categorisation of the languages as separate is not specific to Australia. In the

US, the American Translators Association introduced translation tests for Croatian in 2005 and undertook to introduce separate tests for Bosnian and Serbian in the near future. Credentialing or certifying authorities elsewhere also distinguish the languages: the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council; the UK's Institute of Linguists, Austria's Universitas and Germany's BDÜ list all three languages separately.

**'...language planning regulations that guarantee the rights of minority groups has led to a de-escalation of inter-ethnic tension.'**

Third, Will also mentions the killings and violence during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s. He writes: 'Muslim names were particularly identifiable. Being a Mustafa rather than a Miroslav could decide whether you were let through at a checkpoint, or taken off the bus and executed.' Will is unable to relate this reference to arbitrary execution on the basis of ethnicity to any of his arguments in favour of 'Serbo-Croatian'. It appears as a piece of information unrelated to his general argument. But it is supposed to serve the purpose of suggesting to the reader that there is some sort of connection between people who kill others on the basis of their ethnicity and those who advocate separate and distinct names for their languages.

I find it questionable that the execution of people, on whatever basis, is used as supporting evidence for the claim that Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian are one language. There is no evidence that the recodification and return to a separate designation of each group's language in 1991 was a cause or motivation for inter-ethnic conflict. The causes of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were political, not linguistic.

Fourth, Will refers to a UN institution, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague that has adopted a policy of grouping Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian together. However, the ICTY does not have such a policy. The Head of the T&I services at the ICTY, Maja Draženović-Carrieri stated in 2002 that 'this designation does not in any way intend to put the three languages

under the same hat or claim that they are one and the same. ... The choice was guided by pragmatic reasons.'

Fifth, Will asserts that 'Serbo-Croat' is a pluri-centric language. The concept of pluri-centric languages developed in response to the need to describe national varieties that now function independently of the 'parent-language' that was usually the language of a colonising power. In the case of Croatian and Serbian, both languages had been codified more or less independently of each other before the creation of a common state and the systematic imposition of a common norm after 1918. There was no scientific or popular need for each language community to have a further 'fraternal' linguistic standard to draw from and therefore no reason for them to be considered 'Siamese twins'. Contemporary research on pluri-centric languages no longer lists 'Serbo-Croatian' as an example of a pluri-centric language.

Will also mentions texts in which authors mix their prose drawing on different standards. This is a device that writers commonly employ when they assume that their readership will understand not only the different codes, but the allusions that these different codes have for the protagonists involved. There is nothing remarkable about this and the shifts in language are evidence of the differences that each language embodies, not their sameness.

The last argument that Will puts forward is the instance of a speaker of one language requesting the services of a health interpreter from another language because of the fear that an interpreter in his/her own language would divulge information to other members of his/her community. Apart from confirming the relative separateness of the speech communities, Will does not recognise in this instance its most pertinent point – its problem in relation to T&I ethics: a client fears that an interpreter does not uphold confidentiality. It is the fear of a breach of confidentiality that motivates a client to seek the services of an interpreter from another language, not because of a client's belief that all of the languages are the same.

In conclusion, I would like to make brief reference to the term 'Serbo-Croatian' and to contrast this with contemporary language planning regulations that have

now largely solved 'the language problem' in the successor states of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The label 'Serbo-Croatian' arose as part of a political ideology in the mid-nineteenth that advocated the unity of all South Slavs. According to this ideology, known as the Illyrian movement, the idea of union in a common, South Slavic state, would need to be underpinned by linguistic homogeneity amongst large numbers of its future citizens.

After the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918, political agendas continued to guide linguistic ones. The Yugoslav policy of linguistic engineering and levelling, upheld and advocated Serbian linguistic norms in a way that it did not for other ethnic groups, most notably Croats but also

Bosniaks and Montenegrins.

The estrangement of non-Serb national groups from 'Serbo-Croatian' is not only a political act, but a consequence of that linguistic variety primarily representing the largest ethnic group.

At the same time, in Serbia there were many who objected to 'Serbo-Croatian' on the grounds that it led to a marginalisation of the Cyrillic alphabet. On the ground and in private usage, the term 'Serbo-Croatian' remained unused and unloved.

After the democratic elections of 1991, the designation 'Serbo-Croatian' was abandoned across the SFRY and the standard languages of each group underwent some re-codification. Official designations now reflect popular

sentiment. The perhaps complicated but comprehensive language planning arrangements that pertain in all four countries of former SFRY have now largely resolved and ended the linguistic antagonisms that once plagued inter-ethnic relations during the time of SFRY.

Far from igniting antagonisms, the current linguistic arrangements have contributed to a de-escalation of tensions between all four groups. Grievances about one group using linguistic means to impose its hegemony over another are now a thing of the past.

*Dr Jim Hlavac lectures in the Translation and Interpreting Studies Program at Monash University. For an extended version of this article please see the online version of In Touch on the AUSIT website. Will Firth's article 'What's in a name?' is also available online.*

## Review

*How to Succeed as a Freelance Translator*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Corinne McKay, Two Rat Press, 2011.

**Reviewed by Catherine Doherty.**

Translating is for the most part a solitary pursuit, so it's a great comfort to have on one's desk, bedside table or shelf, this most useful and accessible 200-page volume by a successful freelance French-to-English American translator of ten years experience. I came across it when reading a translators' blog and decided I would give it a try, as I was in need of inspiration and encouragement.

This book provided me with the latter in spades; this could be the book for you, whether you are new to the business or a seasoned professional. Do not be put off by the fact that McKay's experience is US-based or that her language pair is different from your own; the advice she provides, except for a few minor matters, is universally applicable to all freelance translators and far from parochial. This is a translator who works within the context of the global translation industry.

I cannot list all of the topics she covers, but you will find examples on: how to launch a freelance translation business; how to market one's services; and detailed tips on translation technology, research tools and methods.

The book gives structured advice on how to write a translation resumé; this prompted me to radically update my own.

Another pertinent subject was improving communication with clients. I realised that I was sometimes matter-of-fact in my messages and now take pleasure in giving my communication a little more polish! McKay also takes the angst out of self-marketing by providing a long-term plan of action divided into discrete sections, each with very specific suggestions.

Her book also has chapters on how to navigate the challenge of setting rates, and the desirability or otherwise of investing in translation technology software. Each chapter is followed by an extensive list of resources, so that one can go further afield for additional ideas and advice.

As AUSIT members, you will be interested to know that the writer accords great importance to participating in professional associations, where professional standing is validated and nurtured.

I found *How to Succeed as a Freelance Translator* a pleasure to read, not just because it provides a window into the way another translator operates, but because it is a user-friendly book; the topics are clearly set out and the content very specific. McKay gives her readers the confidence to stand tall as translators. She sets out the tools needed to make big improvements in our professional lives and hence value ourselves more. This has got to be a good thing for translators in Australia.

If you want to get a taste of the author's writing before investing in the book, you can go to her excellent blog at <http://thoughtsontranslation.com> or you may want to wait a little for her imminent *Thoughts on Translation* publication. Further down the track, *Beyond the Basics of Freelancing* is the title she now has in the pipeline.

## Translator's cautious steps pay off

**Coral Petkovich** explains how she undertook her first literary translation

**I** am Australian, of English and Scottish heritage. In the ordinary course of events I would never have learnt another language well enough to be able to become a translator.

However my life took a big detour when I met and married my late husband, and went with our two children to live in Croatia, in what was then called

Yugoslavia. I had no idea in those first two or three years when I was struggling to learn the language, that one day I would with great pleasure sign the contract to translate a book written in what is now called Bosnian but what is in actual fact the same thing we used to refer to as 'Serbo-Croatian' (give or take a few words and phrases). This means

the people in the book of course are not English people and do not speak as English people would; my concern was to convey as well as I could the difference and still translate into normal English.

I had been translating documents since I passed the NAATI test, not long after I returned to Australia. This had included

*Continued overleaf*



Qld branch members receive AUSIT's revised Code of Ethics

# Branch News

## Queensland

**Back in Swing:** The Sydney Conference, Christmas and New Year have come and gone and after the summer break the AUSIT QLD branch is back in full swing. The first committee meeting for 2013 was held on 11 January at Tea Dietterich's house. Since not everyone was able to attend in person, Sam Berner, Asanka Haluwana and I (Ilke Brueckner-Klein) joined the meeting virtually via Skype. It worked brilliantly!

**Professional Development:** At the top of the priority list was our professional development schedule for 2013. There will be quarterly Chat Breakfasts, which over the years have proven to be popular social get-togethers, held on Saturday mornings at a local café. Keep your eyes peeled for e-flashes announcing the dates.

**Code of Ethics & Mini Conference:** Since the revised Code of Ethics ('the Code') was presented at the NAGM in Sydney last December, AUSIT QLD invited Christian Schmidt, who worked intensively on the revision of the Code, to hold a workshop introducing the new Code on Saturday, 1 June, 1-4 pm. The venue and further workshop details will also be advertised via e-Flash. The 5<sup>th</sup> **QLD Mini-Conference** will be held on Saturday, 3 August. This full-day annual

event will include presentations for T/I professionals and students. The tentative date for the QLD AGM plus a PD workshop is Thursday, 26 September. There will be a number of PD workshops throughout the year, advertised individually via e-flash.

**Brisbane Hosts 2014 Biennial Conference:** Those of you who attended the AUSIT Biennial Conference in Sydney might still feel the buzz. I cannot emphasise enough just how inspiring and motivating these conferences are. Thus the QLD Committee is proud to announce that the 2014 AUSIT Biennial Conference will be held in Brisbane. We hosted the 2008 Biennial Conference and are thrilled to roll up our sleeves once again.

**Chat Breakfast:** Our first event this year was the quarterly Chat Breakfast on Saturday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, attended by 20 members — quite a number considering the nerve-wracking floods just the weekend before. AUSIT QLD took this opportunity to distribute copies of the new AUSIT Code of Ethics and to present *The Little Book of PR for Translators* authored by our own member, Nicole Adams. The book is available from Amazon.

Should you wish to contact your QLD Branch Committee, please send an email to our secretary Elisabeth Kissel at ekissel@iprimus.com.au.

## Your QLD Branch Committee:

Chair — Ilke Brueckner-Klein  
 Vice-Chair — Alison Rodriguez  
 Branch Delegate — Tea Dietterich  
 Secretary — Elisabeth Kissel  
 Treasurer — Asanka Haluwana,  
 PD Coordinator — Yoyo Dong.

**Members:** Sam Berner, Yvonne Goldmann, Ita Szymanska, Vicky Zeng, Max de Montaigne, Rona Zhang.

*Ilke Brueckner-Klein (Chair)*

## Victoria/Tasmania

**Re-accreditation and Professional Development:** Over the last six months local activities have been the focus of the VIC/TAS branch as we work towards maintaining and re-building our membership. Professional Development has been high on our agenda as everyone contemplates the realities of the NAATI re-validation initiative. In June 2012 Sophie Meunier and Mirna Cicioni organised a workshop on ethical dilemmas — *What do I do if...?* — always a relevant topic for interpreters, who can sometimes find themselves in sticky situations. In August, we presented another workshop on telephone interpreting with the assistance of a national service provider and our committee member, Dongmei Chen, nominee for the AUSIT Remote Interpreter Award 2011. There were lots of suggestions from both presenters on how to acquire and improve those skills necessary to be confident and successful on the phone!

**Branch AGM:** On October 20th the Branch held its AGM. We are very grateful to John Beever, NAATI CEO, who preceded the official business with a timely presentation on the re-validation process. We were delighted to welcome some new faces to the 2013 committee but also extremely sad to lose the expertise of our long-standing treasurer, John Gare, our go-to person whenever for any issue that needed resolving. Thanks again John from all your friends and colleagues at the branch.

Christmas dinner at a Fitzroy restaurant

*Continued from page 13*

the occasional hand-written letter and once, some poetry written in Bosnian by a young lady during the war. Did these things qualify me to translate a novel? I had always loved writing. Recently I had had a novel of my own published. Did this mean I was qualified? I believed I was; I believed I could translate as well as anyone else.

I asked to see a few pages of the novel in question, just to make sure. The book, *Seven Terrors* by Selvedin Avidic, deals subtly with the way war changes lives. Happily there was no problem with the language. The author kindly agreed to reply to my emails and help with any

unknown words and without further ado the contract was signed. It was only later I realised just how complicated the book actually was, how many literary, historical and contemporary allusions there were, most of which I could not find in any of my dictionaries; and indeed, how much I liked the book and the way it was written.

I have been told I did well as a translator—I can only hope I managed to convey meaning while retaining the unique voice of the writer, who communicates a very important message in an understated but memorable way.

To convey meaning while retaining the unique voice of the writer is what translation is all about.



*Seven Terrors* is published by Istros Books



on December 10th was our final function for 2012. We enjoyed excellent Italian cuisine and good wine, and farewelled our good friend and hard-working committee member Sophie Meunier, who after five years of study and work in Australia decided it was time to turn homewards, at least for a short spell! The new committee has begun work organising a very interesting line-up of PD topics and social gatherings – stay tuned to the e-flash to learn all about what we have in store for 2013.

#### Your VIC/TAS Committee:

Chair:—Meredith Bartlett  
 Vice-Chair — Nadesan Sundaresan  
 Branch Delegate— May Hu  
 Secretary/Membership Officer — Dorothy Prentice  
 Treasurer— Dongmei Chen  
 PD Coordinator— Denise Formica  
**Members:** Sevim Akcelik, Bi Yi Fang, Ida Giaccio

### New South Wales

**Membership:** Happy New Year from the NSW Branch and a particularly warm welcome to our new members! Since the AUSIT JubilaTIon Conference in Sydney, our branch has been processing a large number of membership applications – a testimony not only to the vibrancy of the T/I community, but also to the momentum generated by the conference! All NSW members can contact the branch at [ausitnsw@gmail.com](mailto:ausitnsw@gmail.com). We always welcome feedback and fresh ideas! New and existing members are also encouraged to attend our regular branch meetings (usually on the second Thursday of every month – see <https://sites.google.com/site/ausitnsw> for details).

**JubilaTIon 25 Report:** In the past few months, the NSW branch has mostly focused on supporting AUSIT's silver jubilee celebration. The conference took place at Macquarie University from December 1 to 3. The more than 300 participants included a large number of T/I practitioners and representatives of the public sector, academia, language service providers and sister organisations such as NZSTI. It was acclaimed as a resounding success, as presentations were of high calibre and touched on every aspect of the profession, ensuring that attendees could find sessions of interest to them. It would not have been possible without the dedicated work and energy of the many volunteers behind the scenes.

**Interpreting for the Police:** Whilst AUSIT remains focused on current challenges, the organisation can be extremely proud of the progress it has achieved over the past 25 years. Even while preparing the conference, we managed to hold a PD session on October 6 on interpreting for the NSW police. Judy Saba, Workplace Diversity Trainer of the NSW Police, explored the various

dynamics in interpreting for the police and presented several fascinating case studies.

**Branch meeting:** After a well-deserved break following the jubilee celebration, the Committee started the New Year with a branch meeting on February 7 at our regular location, the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts on Pitt Street. We attended to regular matters such as membership applications and the branch delegate's report on the National Committee's activities and scheduled our next networking events in February and March (see details below).

**Professional Development:** We also discussed ideas for PD events in 2013 to complement national events organised by AUSIT. In February and March, we will be holding three different morning get-togethers across Sydney. This should allow members to attend at least one session. We chose locations close to public transport and/or with ample parking. This is a new approach to decentralised member networking, so we welcome your feedback! Moreover, we plan to hold similar get-togethers on university campuses around Sydney in the new academic year to support T/I students and new graduates. These events are free and offer fantastic opportunities to network with fellow practitioners and find new ideas to help your business. For newcomers to the industry, they are also a great way to pair up with a language colleague or even a mentor.

We are also organising PD events for 2013. Plans are already underway for a session on NAATI revalidation and one on the revised Code of Ethics. Details will follow. Contact us with new PD suggestions or to get involved. We are always looking for energetic people to help us plan our PD program!

#### Member Networking Sessions/Get-togethers:

**Venue 1:** Bluewater Café, Manly – Wednesday, 20 February 2013 at 10:30 am (Coordinator: Michele Miller 0408 164 134)

**Venue 2:** Mars Hill Café, Parramatta – Saturday, 2 March 2013 at 10:30 am (Coordinator: Michele Miller 0408 164 134)

**Venue 3:** MCA Café, The Rocks – Sunday, 10 March 2013 at 11 am (Coordinator: Nathalie Ramière 0466 340 868)

#### Professional Development Events:

NAATI Revalidation (with Gary Harkins, regional NAATI officer) – details TBA  
 Revised Code of Ethics (with Christian Schmidt, AUSIT Code of Ethics' Project Leader) – details to be announced.  
*Nathalie Ramière (Principal Delegate)*

**STOP THE PRESS!**  
 JubilaTIon 25 2012 conference photos online now!  
 See [www.facebook.com/OzTandI](http://www.facebook.com/OzTandI)



Marcel Weyland

### Western Australia

#### Translator Marcel Weyland Graces the WA ranch:

The branch's first professional development session for 2013 was 'Marcel Weyland and Translation – The Love of a Literary Classic'. Weyland is a noted translator of Polish literary works living in Sydney. His translation of Polish national epic *Pan Tadeusz* is recognised worldwide. AUSIT WA funded his visit to Perth in collaboration with PolArt 2012 Perth – Festival of Polish Visual and Performing Arts. The session at the Polish consulate was well-attended despite being held very early in the new year. Weyland talked about his life and work, and gave an oral presentation of some of his beloved poetry. A video of Mr Weyland reciting a Polish poem can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIEopfSopjY>

#### Professional Development:

Encouraged by the success of this first PD session, the WA branch is planning further sessions throughout the year. There will be one on AUSIT's new Code of Ethics, another for health and court interpreters and one on NAATI revalidation. These events will be announced closer to the dates via our new, splendid-looking website as well as by e-flash and other methods. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding future PD events, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Branch Committee members.

**New Delegate Elected:** There has been a change of Branch Delegate for WA. Jean Deklerk resigned from the position at the Branch AGM in September, but remained on the National Council pending the appointment of his successor. On 1 February, the Committee appointed Yutaka as the new delegate for 2013. The Branch Delegate is the communication channel between members and AUSIT's decision-making body, the National Council. If you have any suggestions, constructive criticism or praise regarding the running of your organisation, please do not hesitate to contact your branch delegate. For WA residents, the email address is [wa@ausit.org](mailto:wa@ausit.org). *Yutaka Kawasaki, Branch Delegate*



## Room with a view

**W**hen I decided to make the move to the countryside six years ago, most of my colleagues thought I wouldn't last long — after all, what is there to do in a small country town? I braved the then seven-year old drought, and bought a large house on an acre and a half of gum trees, sitting pretty above the surrounding hills and paddocks. The house had a double garage with amenities, which I duly converted into my office.

This photo shows what I see from the back window on a typical late afternoon. Yes, there isn't much to distract one from a life of contemplation and reading here, that is true. Nothing much, really, if you don't count the red-tailed black cockatoos in the morning, the frogmouth at night, the various reptile species, the endless number of moths of all colours and shapes, the butcherbirds, mynas, galahs, lorikeets, palefaces and babbler that entertain me during the day.

Nothing louder than a humming ride-on and the coucal on the next property trailing into the heat of the afternoon. What of it if I ambush two male dragon lizards fighting over their territories, feed magpie babies, watch in amazement butterflies emerging from their pupae, or the bazas teaching their young to fly. Nothing really much, just the odd wedge-tailed eagle doing circles in a cloudless sky, a scream of red on the horizon at sunset, nature's own fireworks during electric storms, and a blanket of stars at two a.m., when the Milky Way comes alive in all its glory. So please excuse me if sometimes I find it hard to concentrate — it must be the total lack of entertainment! *Sam Berner*

**Photos of AUSIT's JubilaTION 25 celebration available at [www.facebook.com/OzTandI](http://www.facebook.com/OzTandI)**

*Professor Jemima Napier*



*From left: David Colmer, Annamaria Arnall & Barbara McGilvray*

