



**Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association**  
*Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Ateangairí na hÉireann*

# ITIA Bulletin

**2017 / 5**

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## Editorial

The ITIA 31st AGM took place mid-October and was preceded by two events - the first, a top level talk from Prof. Fernando Prieto on spectacularly in depth research into quality and terminology in legal translation, in particular in EU institutions as well as the UN and WTO. His research unveils, amongst many other highly detailed issues, considerable unevenness in the use of terminology. The second event involved translators at the other end of the spectrum - secondary school students who were brave and hardworking enough to put themselves through the rigour of a translation competition. The ITIA were delighted with not only the number of entrants (as well as the inclusion of Japanese and Chinese) this year but also the quality of the entries. The turnout of winners (and highly commended), with their families and teachers, for the prize giving ceremony, was really heartening. After the formalities, young and seasoned had the opportunity to mingle and hopefully no one was put off about pursuing a career in translation!

The AGM itself consisted, in the main, of the Executive Committee giving an account of all the activities carried out over the year - PM exams, Legal Translation Certification exams, CPD, submissions and representation at international conferences of FIT Europe, FIT Mundis, EULITA and CEATL. The Chair of the Marketing Sub-Committee, Susanne Dirks, gave a presentation of the new website which we hope will go live very soon.

The AGM also heralded two goodbyes and one hello - Lichao Li, our first (but hopefully not the last) Chinese Ex Comm member, is leaving due to

pressures of work and we are also losing Marina Balik, who was with us since our last AGM. We wish both of them every success in their futures and hope we will still see them at ITIA meetings and events. A welcome hello to Christine O'Neil, originally from Switzerland, English to German freelance translator and writer, who has volunteered to rebalance the ranks!

Indeed, there is another hello to Rosemary Kratschmar, our new administrator, who also attended the AGM. A minor reshuffle to note - Susanne Dirks will take over from Miriam Watchorn as Honorary Secretary - leaving Miriam more time to concentrate on her work as Chair of Certification Sub-Committee. The role of Secretary will include more emphasis on marketing of the ITIA whilst the admin part of the role will be covered by Rosemary.

Just before going to press, we have learnt that Annette Schiller, former ITIA Chairperson, and current Chair of Professional Membership Sub-Committee, has been elected President of FIT Europe at their annual congress in Barcelona. The highest congratulations to her - an Irish FIT Europe President is a first and should raise Ireland's profile as well as the ITIA's - good for our profession all round!!

The ITIA annual party will take place at 6pm on Friday 1st December at our home at the IWC, 19 Parnell Square. We look forward to seeing you all there for Xmas cheer and fare!

Anne Larchet, Editor

## MEMBERS' CORNER

*Ken Waide, an Associate member since 2013, is a freelance translator working from Japanese and French into English, mainly in patent translation and other technical fields*

### **Q. Describe yourself professionally in a few lines.**

I am a freelance translator working from Japanese and French into English (with ambitions to expand my language combinations in the future). After completing an MA in Translation Studies at DCU in 2014, I was accepted to a three-month translation fellowship programme in the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in Geneva, which was extended for an additional three months. Upon returning to Ireland, I set up as a freelance translator and have been working busily since then, with WIPO being my most regular client. In view of this experience, I consider myself as being specialised in patent translation.

### **Q. When and why did you decide on a career in translating/interpreting?**

Since early adolescence, languages fascinated me more than any other subject, and I used to compile lists of words in the languages I was learning at school as well as furtively writing notes in German to an exchange student at the back of English class (at the time, the English language didn't seem as interesting to me because I felt I already knew it well enough). I also invented two languages that I hoped to one day spread around the world in order to enable universal communication.

Around that time, a classmate asked me what I wanted to do after leaving school, and without thinking, I said I'd like to become a translator. His response was that he couldn't think of anything more boring and, impressionable as I was, I seriously questioned whether it was worthwhile pursuing, and forgot about it for several years. In college, I studied English and Film Studies, but

became frustrated at how difficult it was to find a steady job after graduating. It was at some point in the following year, while poring over lists of possible careers and finding nothing that I could imagine myself doing, that it suddenly occurred to me that the answer had been there since secondary school. I immediately started looking for university programmes and was thrilled when I found the MA in DCU, which had a great reputation.

### **Q. Name the most important thing you did that helped you launch your career.**

For me there were two important things. The first was enrolling in the MA at DCU, which has in many ways led me to where I am now in my career. This is not to say that simply doing a Master's will teach you how to translate, because translation is a very personal challenge, but it was being at DCU that enabled me to apply for the WIPO fellowship, which has a history of accepting DCU graduates.

*I also invented two languages that I hoped to one day spread around the world...*

The second important thing was naturally the fellowship itself. At WIPO, I received intensive training in translating patent abstracts and patentability reports, without which I would be unable to do my job today. After a gentle induction giving me and the other fellows a grounding in patents and intellectual property in general, we were thrown in at the deep end and began translating abstracts destined for publication. The texts were dense and challenging and progress was slow in the beginning, but I received very detailed feedback on all my translations, pointing out any errors I had made and where I could go to find the correct answers. By the end of the fellowship I had reached a sufficient level of quality and output to be considered viable as a patent translator.

**Q. How important are training and qualifications for a career in translating/interpreting?**

A qualification such as a postgraduate degree in translation is very useful and perhaps necessary in today's market merely in order to match the competition. Firstly, taking a postgraduate course in translation demonstrates your commitment to the profession as well as your capabilities, and secondly, it can provide great contacts and opportunities to work with clients in the real world. With regard to training, nothing can beat learning the ropes while working as an in-house translator. Prior to the fellowship, I had next to no knowledge of patents, but the close supervision and detailed feedback I received allowed me to grow very quickly as a translator. Without this intensive training, I certainly wouldn't have the confidence I now have in my work.

*I am constantly aiming to grow as a translator and am pleased whenever I notice an improvement in productivity.*

**Q. How do you find clients?**

Before my Master's, I had it in mind that I needed to apply to as many translation agencies and attend as many networking events as possible. However, of all the emails and phone calls I made at that time, I can't recall getting a single job as a result. In reality, apart from the fellowship, which entailed a formal application process, I have found that most of the clients I work with have come to me very informally through word of mouth. It works in my favour that being a Japanese translator in particular is quite a rare and memorable fact that tends to stay in friends' and acquaintances' minds. One large agency which I have done some work for contacted me only after a recommendation from a neighbour whom I met while out walking my dog. I have also been contacted by prospective clients who found

me through the ITIA register of members, LinkedIn and the like.

**Q. Do you think it is necessary to specialise?**

I think it is more satisfying and rewarding to specialise, because the greater the depth of your knowledge in a given area, the better and more efficient your translations will be. Patents have a style of writing all of their own, with sometimes impenetrably long sentences that would bring tears to the average reader's eyes. However, the more patents you read, the more familiar you become with the style, and the easier it becomes to predict the kinds of things that are likely to be said. Because the documents I work with are relatively short and great in number, I have to translate patents from almost all technical fields. This is great in terms of the variety it provides, but I would not rule out specialising further in the future.

**Q. What is your favourite type of text/assignment?**

It might be a predictable answer, but I would have to say patents! The more familiar I become with them and the further I develop my knowledge in specific fields, the more satisfaction I get from translating them. Last week, for example, I started translating a document about a torque converter before realising that I didn't know what on earth a torque converter looked like or was used for. A quick Google search brought up two Youtube videos – one in English, one in Japanese – giving an introduction to torque converters, complete with voiceovers and animations. After watching the videos, I felt I had gained a good basic understanding of what a torque converter looks like and how it works, as well as gleaning a lot of the relevant terminology in both languages. Though I may never use this information in the real world, my innate curiosity was satisfied, and when I went back to the source text it felt like I was reading it with fresh eyes. This kind of daily learning is something that appeals to me a lot about working with patents.

**Q. What is the best/worst thing about being a translator/ interpreter?**

The best thing is being able to wake up without an alarm! The freedom of working as a freelancer is fantastic, and having experienced it, it would be very hard to go back to an office job. For the most part, I try to work regular working hours since it is harder to find the motivation to work when everyone else is off, but the convenience of being able to adjust my schedule freely would be hard to give up. Being able to do all my work from my laptop also allows me to take my work with me when I travel, meaning that I can go away for longer and combine business with leisure. The worst thing about being a translator might be the isolation of working alone. After a year working from home and in various libraries, I decided to rent a desk in a coworking office which is shared with other freelancers. Having an office away from home gives me some work/life separation as well as a feeling of being part of a work community, which can be sorely lacking for a freelance translator (although the ITIA is a great help in that regard!)

*I am lucky to have ended up with a language combination that has one of the higher average rates per word*

**Q. Is it possible to have a good standard of living?**

This depends on several factors such as the language combination and subject field, but at least in the case of Japanese, the answer is yes. I am lucky to have ended up with a language combination that has one of the higher average rates per word, although in general, I would say that translating a Japanese text takes slightly longer than translating a similar French text due to the more numerous translation difficulties that arise (for example, since Japanese does not usually distinguish between singular and plural, it

can be gruelling having to scour the source text for evidence of how a given noun should be rendered). One of the great things about working freelance is that if you put in the time and effort to become more knowledgeable in your language and your field, you can be financially rewarded for this by becoming more efficient. I am constantly aiming to grow as a translator and am pleased whenever I notice an improvement in productivity.

**Q. What advice would you give someone thinking of embarking on a career as a translator/interpreter?**

I am happy to say that despite my classmate's comment, I have found translation to be thoroughly engaging! If you are passionate about languages and think it would give you satisfaction to use them every day, go for it. If you are in a position to get a qualification, do so as it will certainly up your employability. Have a go at translating whatever you can get your hands on. When I was starting out, I contacted several associations in Japan with connections to Ireland to volunteer my translation services. The associations were appreciative because it allowed them to get some of their website content translated for free and broaden their readership, and meanwhile I had the opportunity to cut my teeth on real texts for real clients. Doing this confirmed for me that translation was something I enjoyed and gave me some experience setting and keeping to deadlines.

And of course, keep honing your language skills as all the work you put in will pay off in the long run!

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**Aurélia Nana Gassa Gong** is a qualified French/French Sign Language (LSF) interpreter and an active member of the Association of French Sign Language Interpreter (AFILS), working for a better recognition of that profession in France and abroad. In this article she tells us about deaf translation, her research interest, and in particular the specificities of spoken languages to signed languages translation through deaf translators.

## From deaf language brokering to French deaf professional translation

The past ten years have seen increased professionalization in the emerging profession of the translation of written French/recorded French Sign Language in which written French is translated by deaf translators into their main language, i.e. French Sign Language (LSF), in a recorded format. Formerly, deaf people were accustomed to functioning as language brokers in their own community, without any recognition or academic training. In France, a law in 2005 concerning the recognition of LSF as a full language and the development of associated technology, led to the creation of Websourd, a bilingual written French/recorded LSF website. This was the beginning of deaf translators' training and recognition.

Prior to 2005, deaf people working as professional translators in France were not officially recognized. Nevertheless, they often worked as translators, interpreters or language brokers without any training or recognition. The earliest documentation of deaf people acting as interpreters and translators dates back to the 17th century in France and the UK and to the 19th century in the US. The contexts were varied: church services, classrooms, legal procedures, family issues, etc. In all these situations, the assistance was informal and no remuneration was received. Of course, it is easy to imagine that deaf people, like interpreters and translators,

were used to acting as language brokers, interpreters or translators, from the beginning of civilization and the evolution of its different languages.

In France and worldwide, most deaf parents give birth to hearing children. They are commonly named (hearing) Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs) and from their childhood have generally served as language brokers in their family and the deaf community. In the case of deaf children born to hearing parents, the situation is similar. 95% of deaf children are born to hearing parents. They live in a hearing family and more broadly in a hearing community. Apart from the physiological difference, the main difference is linguistic. A minority linguistic community (SL) emerges within the predominant one (Vocal Language or VL). Deaf children act early as brokers in their own community and this continues when they become adults. It begins early and informally. For example, one French DT interviewed remembers how he often translated the rules to his classmate at school because he was better at reading. Another relates how, becoming an adult, she would translate letters into SL for some of her friends. It is also not uncommon to know two Sign Languages and to translate from one to another. Eventually, all these language-brokering acts were formally categorized into three main translation activities

- two-way interpreting between two SLs
- one-way translation/interpreting text to SL
- intra-lingual modification

This formalization codifies the realities of daily life and how deaf people are accustomed to acting as language brokers. They are commonly called 'Deaf Interpreters'. This is the main path to the professionalization of Deaf Interpreters (DIs) in the US, in Canada and in most European countries... except France.

In France, the first step of DTs' recognition is the recognition of SL interpreting as a skill and a full-time profession. In France, this occurred in the

late 1970s with an 'awakening' of the deaf community. The French deaf community realized their SL was a full language and asked for more professionalization of people acting as 'interpreters'. This was the beginning of SL interpreting as a profession which required training. Paris 8 university started a one-year training programme which was not a success. The SERAC training centre then offered a course for SLI in the late 80s, but it was not recognized by academics. The first university academic training for SL interpreters was offered in 1993 by Paris 3 university, called ESIT. At that time, ESIT was already well-known in the field of Translation Studies and served as a reference, mostly in Western Europe. The profession's framework therefore followed the framework of that university based on VL interpreters. The main philosophy of ESIT is the separation between interpreters and translators, and the importance of interpreting/translating towards one's mother tongue or first language. Regarding SL interpretation, this is impossible as interpreters between hearing and deaf people have to be hearing people. Except for CODAs who have SL as a mother-tongue, most SL interpreters have their national VL as their mother-tongue. SL interpreters are therefore an exception in the field of interpretation, as they translate to their language B and not to their language A (their mother-tongue).

Later, in 2005, the second stage in DTs' recognition took place, concomitant with the democratization of new technologies. Jacques Sangla, a deaf person working for the recognition of 'Deaf Culture', wanted to create an information website that was completely accessible to deaf people through videos in SL: 'The purpose of WebSourd is to contribute to deaf people's involvement in the community by promoting Sign Language. The WebSourd Internet site is totally bilingual, i.e. presented in SL-video and written French'

Related to this project, a programme for the

translation of written texts into recorded-SL was launched at Toulouse II university (now called CETIM) influenced by the approach of translating to one's first language or mother-tongue and by the SL interpreter's experience. Initially, hearing SL interpreters carried out the task. They translated from texts into recorded-SL, but they did not feel like it was their role. They realized interpretation and translation are two different things, and that special training was required. Training to learn translation principles, and how to fully understand the recorded part of the translation (recorded-SL). Hearing interpreters who were involved at the beginning of that project, despite being both CODAs and having LSF as their mother-tongue, did not feel comfortable with the translation task. The main issue was that the cultural element was missing. Only a deaf person, from within the deaf community, could fill this cultural gap.

The logical result was the creation of Websourd which occurred at the same time as the creation of the ever first training for DTs in France and in Europe. This initial training was at first a certification and not a full diploma at Master II level. Deaf students could not attempt English classes (no interpretation was provided), so they were not able to validate the full diploma. The training lasted two years, and was a combination of work and training, at Websourd and the University of Toulouse II. The certification was fully recognized by the French Association of Sign Language Interpreters (AFILS) which updated its name to the French Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Translators (but retaining the AFILS acronym) in 2009. In 2011, the training programme for DTs changed. It is now longer than before (three years), and the work-training combination is no longer available. It results in a bachelor's degree with no work-training period (only a short internship) while former DTs had a Master's degree level, which included a long work-training period. Websourd, the sole employer of DTs until 2011, had some

financial issues and was forced to close in 2015. It was no longer able to employ new generations of DTs and other interpreting agencies were either not yet familiar with DTs or did not have a sufficient budget to offer full-time employment.

While this new generation of DTs is fully recognized by AFILS, the DTs themselves (former and new ones) are cautious about their qualification, being well aware of the limited previous practice.

Meanwhile, deaf interpretation developed as a profession across Europe and elsewhere, with the inclusion of the three main activities listed previously (two-way interpreting between two SLs, one-way translation/interpreting text to SL, intra-lingual modification). Having little idea of these developments, the two SLI founders of Websourd (Patrick Gache and Alain Bacci) did not draw any inspiration from what was going on elsewhere abroad.

In fact, in France, the broadly acknowledged conception of DI has been divided into three different activities, with two already professionalized. First, the task of intra-lingual modification is associated with the profession of deaf 'intermediator'. In 2002, a new role emerged in France in medical contexts: deaf intermediators. These are deaf people acting as language brokers between a deaf patient and their doctor through an SL interpreter. The deaf patient using a deaf intermediary is often intellectually limited, or foreign. Their SL is poor or foreign, and they cannot understand the SL interpreter who translates everything at the same linguistic level as the doctor. Furthermore, the SL interpreter cannot understand the patient as their SL is not the same, or not appropriately academic. A deaf intermediary is therefore required, who goes from the SL interpreter to the deaf patient, explaining and reformulating the language so that everyone can be properly understood. They are not called interpreters, but their task can be considered as intra-lingual

translation (reformulation). Then, there is two-way interpreting between two SLs, known as DI in France. The profession is not yet official, as no training exists in France, for the moment. However, an association was created and some of its members have participated in EFSLI workshops. Finally, the activity on which we focus on is one-way translation/interpreting of English text into SL. This is what DTs do and only do.

On the one hand, the international context seems to codify the reality of the terrain, while on the other, France follows VL interpreters and translators and tries to separate the different translation activities of the broadly called DI. Apart from business considerations, the risk of one 'super-DI' (three translation activities) might be a lack of specialization, and a corresponding decrease in expertise. Furthermore, the ethics are not the same in all these activities. One is neutral and does not modify the form of the discourse to be translated (French DT or French DI), while another is part of the interaction and can, or may even have to, modify and reformulate the discourse (intermediator). And while translation to and from a written form of language (DT) has a permanent aspect, the other (interpretation from and to the oral form of the languages) is an ephemeral task. That point influences translation strategies. On the other hand, eminent DIs work for the existence of DI without its being colonized by VL perception, which necessarily involves hearing. The word 'colonize' is strong and reflects the deep divisions in the current debate in the field of deaf translation.

In France, the professionalization of DTs and DIs is different from other countries in a good way. Even if some recognition and professionalization have already been achieved in many countries, we should note that France stands apart in its conception of DT and DI. The current focus is on the harmonization of practices. With this objective in mind, a major DI survey and study was launched in 2015 throughout Europe. The

initial results were presented at the first Deaf Interpreters Seminar in Copenhagen in October 2016. This study aims to discuss and harmonize the DI practices in order to smoothly develop DI all over Europe. Since SLs have changed the field of linguistics studies, are we now heading for another change in the field of SL Translation Studies, with the continuation of DI as it predominantly exists in Europe and elsewhere? The conclusions and recommendations of the European study are expected in a final conference in Hamburg in May 2018.

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## NEW!!! Snippets

As part of the ISLA Festival 2017 ITIA Chairperson Mary Phelan moderated a talk entitled 'Translator and Machine' with guest speakers Matías Battistón - The Bridge in Between Machines and Carlos Teixeira - The Role of Technology in the World of a Professional Translator. Matias, an Argentine translator and academic, has featured on the Bulletin pages on a number of occasions and never ceases to amaze with his deep and broad analysis of every possible angle of translation. Technology seems rather dry in comparison.

ITIA attended the Launch of Language and Migration report on 7th November at the RIA. The Minister for Integration and Diversity launched the report which looked at the linguistic landscape in Ireland in 2017 and demonstrated how language plays such a major role in the immigrant experience. One of the twelve key recommendations was that "Interpreting services in Ireland need to be professionalized with training, testing and quality controls put in place". Hopefully, will and resources will be applied in an

area much highlighted by ITIA over many years.

The Law Reform Commission's Annual Conference concerning the preparation of Fifth Programme of Law Reform was held on 1st November, 2017 at Dublin Castle and the ITIA were invited to attend.

It featured a keynote address from Mr Justice Frank Clarke, Chief Justice of Ireland and two further speeches from Ms Dearbhail McDonald, Group Business Editor and former Legal Affairs Editor of Independent News and Media and Senator Michael McDowell SC, former Attorney General and Minister for Justice.

The floor was opened for attendees to put questions to the panel and to make proposals for projects for inclusion in the Commission's new Programme of Law Reform, which will be submitted to the Government early next year. This part of the Conference forms a crucial part of the Commission's consultative process in drafting its new Programme of Law Reform and is an ideal opportunity for professional bodies such as the ITIA, and others, to highlight areas of the law and/or its implementation which need to be improved.

## Worth-a-Click

*The Guardian view on translation: an interpretative and creative act*

<https://tinyurl.com/ydb7vonq>

*First English language translation for award winning Lithuanian writer*

<https://tinyurl.com/ycjvrjxr>

*Refugees face 'significant' language barrier in maternity services*

<https://tinyurl.com/ybjb5dzq>

*Traducir "wubba lubba dub-dub" tiene premio*

<https://tinyurl.com/ybs45s3o>

## What's hot, what's not

### What's HOT...

Eileen Battersby, our ITIA Honorary Member for her work in promoting translated works, was nominated for critic of the year in the NewsBrands Ireland Journalism awards.

### ...What's NOT

Eileen Battersby, our ITIA Honorary Member for her work in promoting translated works, has been noted by the absence of her reviews of translated - and indeed original language - books. What is going on??!!

## New ITIA Members Sep - Oct 2017

### New ITIA Associate Members

#### Simon Solomen

German and French to English

#### Zhang Xueting

English to and from Chinese/Mandarin

#### Zeki Guler

English to and from Turkish

#### Andrea Murphy

German to English

#### Adelina Syms

German and French to English

### New ITIA Affiliate Members

#### Justyna Tulidzinska

## Joining the ITIA

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* is pleased to welcome new members to the association. We currently have the following categories of membership:

- Professional
- Associate
- Affiliate
- Institutional
- Student
- Honorary

*Professional Membership* is awarded to translators or interpreters who meet the strict criteria of the ITIA based on qualification and level of experience.

Applicants must also achieve a PASS in the annual Professional Membership Examination (translator or interpreter) set by the ITIA.

*Associate Membership* may be granted to holders of a third level qualification in translation and/or interpreting and/or languages or to holders of a third level qualification with relevant experience.

*Affiliate Membership* is generally availed of by people with a professional interest in translation and interpreting, by those with a general interest in these professions or by professionals from other sectors who wish to work in the area of translation or interpreting and do not currently have a specific qualification or experience in the area

*Institutional Membership* is available to bodies that do not function as commercial agencies, for example university centres for translation and interpreting studies or cultural institutes. Application documents for Institutional membership are currently being prepared.

*Student Membership* is available to persons undertaking undergraduate studies in any discipline or those undertaking postgraduate studies in translation or interpreting.

*Honorary Membership* is awarded by the ITIA AGM to persons in Ireland or abroad who have distinguished themselves in the field of translation or interpreting.

## Contacting the ITIA

### Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association

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### ITIA Bulletin

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### ITIA Executive Committee: 2016–2017

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