



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

ITIA Bulletin

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Editorial

The start of a new year brings new energy and the CPD Committee are focusing on finances for the first workshop of 2019 – on financial translation, which we hope will appeal to both members and translators keen to widen their skillsets– details below. ITIA energy is also expended with representation at European level –FIT Europe, EULITA and CEATL– watch for updates in coming issues.

We are organizing the Secondary School Translation competition again this year for the third consecutive year, with texts in Chinese, French, Irish, Italian, German, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish being sent out to schools, language teachers' organisations and cultural institutes. Any members or readers who are interested in encouraging a new generation into our professional field, please let them know.

Anne Larchet, Editor

Members' Corner

Our contributor for this issue, James Pelow, is the ITIA's first ever ITIA English-Irish/Irish-English Certified Legal Translator and his love of Ireland's first language, as well as his business nous, shine through.

Describe yourself professionally in a few lines.

I am an English-Irish/Irish-English translator with nearly 10 years professional experience. I specialise in governmental, IT and legal translation, and am currently the only ITIA Certified Legal Translator for English-Irish and

Irish-English. I run Snasta (a kind of Irish language SLV) with my partner, and together we manage the work of approximately 10 freelance Irish translators.

When and why did you decide on a career in translating/interpreting?

I fell in love with the Irish language while attending Newpark School in Blackrock, Co. Dublin and always wanted to continue with the language after leaving school.

Early and Modern Irish in Trinity College, Dublin gave me that opportunity and I was particularly taken by the Early Irish element of the course. It was extremely technical and focused heavily on the translation of early texts into English.

Towards the end of the four-year course I came to the realisation that I wanted to continue with the language professionally. Knowing from the Early Irish course that I enjoyed translation, a career in translation in the modern language seemed like a natural fit and I found the technical, even solitary, nature of the work particularly appealing.

At the time, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge were starting to run more and more post-graduate courses on their campus in An Chearthú Rua in Galway. I went with their H.Dip. in Irish Translation Studies, which allowed me to experience true Gaeltacht life and also hone my translation skills.

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

Achieving the Séala Fhoras na Gaeilge (Foras na Gaeilge Accreditation for Irish language translators) is probably the single most important thing for an Irish translator. Without it, many

government bodies will not consider you for work. Being on the panel also results in a steady flow of work.

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

In the case of Irish translation specifically I would say that qualifications are a means to an end, but they are not the be all and end all. If a translator can achieve Foras na Gaeilge Accreditation without formal training then he should be more than able for a career in translation.

That being said, the particular skillset required for interpreting written language, including all its various idiosyncrasies and nuances, and then reinterpreting it in another language is not something that comes naturally to most people. Irish grammar rules are also particularly cumbersome. In the vast majority of cases those skills can only be developed with tuition, study and, above all else, practice.

Computer skills are also incredibly important these days and ongoing professional development in the use of modern CAT tools is a must for anyone serious about a career in translation – you can't bake a cake without knowing how to use your oven.

How do you find clients?

When I started out I registered with all the usual agencies and work started to trickle in. I would have been quite happy to continue on that basis, but certain agencies then started pushing my rate down, asking for tighter turnaround times and paying invoices late. These agencies push the rate so low that they are unable to produce a product fit for purpose, and I wanted no part in their race to the bottom.

Keen to offer quality at fair price, I developed a brand and a website to market myself directly to clients. This website started to move up the Google results and I started building my direct client base. Being on the Foras na Gaeilge Panel also brought in more clients.

Now we also tender for larger public contracts and are on the Office of Government Procurement's framework for Irish translation. This kind of work can be financially rewarding, but the tendering process is arduous and often seems futile.

Do you think it is necessary to specialise?

Irish is such a small market that it's not really possible to specialise in the same way as other languages, however desirable that would be. Generally speaking, an Irish translator is expected to be a jack of all trades. Excellent online resources, such as Tearma.ie (The National Terminology Database), Gaois.ie (Parallel English-Irish corpus of legislation), Foclóir.ie (The New English-Irish Dictionary) and Logainm.ie (the National Placenames Database), make that possible.

Computer skills are also incredibly important these days and ongoing professional development in the use of modern CAT tools is a must for anyone serious about a career in translation – you can't bake a cake without knowing how to use your oven.

What is your favourite type of text/assignment?

I love translating legislation, funnily enough. I have a very methodical approach to translation and the formulaic and technical nature of legal translation seems to suit that approach. The quality of the source text is also always excellent, having been properly drafted, edited and proofread, which further aids the translation process.

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

Best thing: Working for myself. Worst thing: Working for myself. I love the freedom of working for myself and the feeling that I am creating value in my own business rather than in some anonymous company. The problem is that the

lines between work and life become blurred and I find myself picking up the laptop in the evening and on weekends when I should really be relaxing. It's also incredibly difficult to get anything more than a couple of days off at a time. While getting time off is tough, working online with no physical ties has given me the opportunity to travel a bit, which resulted in my living in Andalucía in Spain for 2 years. It also gives myself and my partner the freedom to visit family in Spain for extended periods, something which wouldn't be possible with a conventional job.

There will always be downwards pressure on your rate from your customers, especially agencies. Strongly resist that pressure. If you're offering a quality product, pricing yourself higher than the competition can work in your favour.

Is it possible to have a good standard of living?

In the case of Irish translation, where the unit rate is still relatively high, absolutely. There is money to be made.

I would not expect this to change in the short to medium term. The Irish translation market is relatively sheltered from external influences due to its size and the small pool of qualified translators. Other potential concerns, like machine translation, have not progressed far enough in Irish to affect the status quo.

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

You need to make sure that translation is the right choice for you. Try to take on a few smaller freelance assignments at first to make sure you like it. Working for yourself from home requires discipline — will you be able to get up early every morning, work alone for long periods of time, meet deadlines and maintain professionalism at all times? Great, you'll be a natural. If not, maybe an in-house role would suit you better.

When you start, you need to set a reasonable rate and stick with it. There will always be downwards pressure on your rate from your customers, especially agencies. Strongly resist that pressure. If you're offering a quality product, pricing yourself higher than the competition can work in your favour.

Always be realistic about the deadlines you set yourself, allow yourself extra time in case something goes wrong, and never promise the world to clients if you can't deliver. Always, always, always meet your deadlines.

If you subcontract work to other translators, remember how you like to be treated. Always pay a fair rate, set realistic deadlines, and pay ahead of time if at all possible.

James Pelow james@snasta.ie

Microsoft AI-powered translation tool to be used in House of the Oireachtas

Speaking of technology and the ever increasing/encroaching role of AI in our profession, this article from the Irish Times reflects current activity at state level.

AI is being deployed in the Houses of the Oireachtas in ways that aim to bring greater transparency and accountability to the democratic process. "We are opening up the good work being done in the Houses of the Oireachtas. We are using AI to make it more accessible to the public. We are on a digital transformation journey," says chief information officer Finn de Bri. "We are working on a number of areas at present. In some cases, we are actually using the technology, while in others we are still in exploratory mode."

Publishing the written transcripts of debates online is one area where AI is going to be looked at. At present, the objective is to have all debates online within two hours. However, each 10-minute recording can take up to two hours to transcribe.

“We are investigating the use of AI for speech recognition to assist this process,” says chief technology officer Ciarán Doyle. “We are using it for natural language processing. Over time we can train the technology to learn the lexicon of the Irish parliaments and understand the dialects and accents of different speakers. It will deliver a significant saving in time and effort .”

“We are using this assistive technology to make the publishing process more efficient,” says de Bri.

If someone from Poland is looking at an Irish parliamentary debate on an EU treaty they will be able to have it translated into Polish in real time.

The next stage of the project will see every piece of speech and video digitally tagged. “If you search for words in a speech it will be able to find the text and the video.” Facial recognition software could be used to tell precisely who is speaking and when. “We also plan to use the Microsoft AI-powered translation tool. People will be able to translate the debates into the language of their choice. Our ultimate aim is to have all European languages, including Irish, available to people. If someone from Poland is looking at an Irish parliamentary debate on an EU treaty they will be able to have it translated into Polish in real time. Microsoft has a suite of other cognitive tools and our goal is to use them all.”

“We are opening up the good work being done in the Houses of the Oireachtas,” says Doyle. “We are using AI to make it more accessible to the public. This is a big opportunity for the members, for democracy, and for citizens. It’s very important for citizens to see what they are getting for their vote.

“It will enhance the democratic process by creating much greater transparency and offering people real-time access to their parliament and elected representatives. This is very important in

the age of fake news, when people need a way of knowing what is true and what is not.”

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<https://www.irishtimes.com/sponsored/microsoft/exploring-ai-s-potential-for-public-services-1.3722303>

Obituaries

Eileen Battersby 1956 - 2018

Just two years before her sudden and untimely death, Eileen had been made Honorary ITIA member and spoke at length in a public interview with ITIA Chair Mary Phelan about how important translated works were in opening up other worlds to readers. She really was a voracious reader as well as a champion of translators.

Neil Belton, editor in chief at Head of Zeus, publisher of the paperback edition of Eileen’s novel *Teethmarks On My Tongue* said that “Literature for her was world literature, a ceaseless process of discovery, translation and humane communication in a world without borders. She took more delight in discovering a Croatian or Japanese writer than she did in the latest treading of well-worn themes by eminent Irish or British figures. Eileen was sometimes the only critic in these islands who reviewed truly deserving novels ignored by her peers in England, fixated as many of them are on the already fashionable.”

Eileen would be happy that her legacy prevails at the Irish Times, where she worked for many years - literature in translation continues to be reviewed, and the translator named.

Snippets

ITIA has just heard that a translation of *Cúirt an Mheán-Oíche* to Italian has recently been published in Milan. (Il tribunale di mezzanotte).

The translator (Enrici Brugnattelli) has translated a number of works from Irish into Italian, including the iconic *Deoraíocht* by Pádhaig Ó Conaire, which is now being prepared for publication. The *Tribunale* is his first publication.

Some questions being asked as part of the Transnational Organised Crime and Translation (TOCAT) project, run by Dr Joanne Drugan at the University of East Anglia are:

How can police work more effectively to understand and fight transnational organised crime such as people trafficking when it is conducted across different languages? In particular, how should police work with translators when victims, witnesses or suspects don't speak the same language as investigators? Is the planned police approach effective in practice, and, where it is not, what can be done to enhance it?

Research findings will be shared as widely as possible with police, translation providers, researchers and others.

For more information:

<http://www.paccsresearch.org.uk/transnational-organised-crime-and-translation/>

Something that might be of interest to recent graduates:

Applications are now open for **three fully funded PhD studentships** within the ERC-funded project, "The Dark Side of Translation: 20th and 21st Century Translation from Russian as a Political Phenomenon in the UK, Ireland, and the USA" (RusTrans), under the supervision of Dr Muireann Maguire and Dr Cathy McAteer at the University of Exeter, UK, starting in September 2019. The studentships are for 3.5 years and are open to students of any nationality. Each studentship will cover University tuition fees with a stipend equivalent to the Research Councils UK national minimum stipend (£14,777 in 2018/19). Candidates will be expected to have completed a Master's degree by the time of starting the

studentship; they should not yet have formally commenced a doctoral project. The closing date for applications is April 15, 2019.

These studentships are funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 802437)

Please direct any queries by email to rustrans@exeter.ac.uk or on Twitter: @Rustransdark.

... And more great opportunities at the European Commission for people with excellent Irish. As the advertisement states, no third language is required nor is there a requirement to undergo psychometric tests.

<https://www.facebook.com/aistritheoir/photos/rpp.166447866708870/2282696821750620/?type=3&theater>

CPD

In this introduction to financial translation on 25th May 2019, Tara will examine real-life examples of financial texts ranging from auditing and accounting to company law and taxation. Also up for discussion will be practical considerations such as client acquisition, scheduling and pricing. In groups, different types of financial texts will be translated from English, exploring the challenges these pose and the resources available to financial translators. There will be a Q&A session, and participants are also invited to submit their questions in advance of the event. The event will be held in English and is suitable for new or experienced translators translating into or out of English.

Tara Russell has over 20 years' experience in the field of professional translation. After graduating with a B.A. in Applied Languages in French and German from the University of Limerick, Tara spent many years in Germany, working initially at an LSP and later as an in-house translator at a 'Big 4' auditing firm. She returned to Dublin to complete an M.A. in Intercultural Studies from

Dublin City University in 2008 and has since been working as an independent translation professional, primarily in the area of finance.

She is a state-examined sworn translator for German, a member of the BDÜ and a professional member of the ITIA.

What's Hot, What's Not

What's HOT...

Canada's federal government and first nation representative bodies are working together to pass legislation which would recognise indigenous languages as a constitutional right. This would mean First Nation representatives being able to address parliament in their native language through interpreters. Translation services would also be provided. UNESCO has declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

...What's NOT

A survey carried out by Crosscare showed that the State is failing to provide interpreter services to support non-English speakers in urgent need of access to social welfare offices, despite Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection policy to do so. Not on.

Worth-A-Click

Just so you know – low standards in high places continue to prevail:

Translators were 'not qualified' for police interview work

<http://tinyurl.com/yykdsogb>

And just so you also know – Translators are a waste of space – imperative to watch to the end:

<https://youtu.be/UGYL5sUwr2Q>

New ITIA Members Jan - Mar 2019

New ITIA Associate Members

Lucy Murphy

French to English

Irish to English

Melanie Schmutz

French to English

Claire Menton

Italian to English

French to English

Karolina Sutton

Polish to English

English to Polish

Martina O'Leary

Italian to English

Ireneusz Nagor

Polish to English

Md Mamunul Islam

Bengali to English

Sylheti to English

Tim Webb

French to English

English to French

Tetyana Voloshyna

Russian to English

English to Russian

Ireneusz Nagórny

Polish to English

English to Polish

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
- 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.

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 Executive Committee to persons in Ireland or abroad who have distinguished themselves in the field of translation or interpreting.



Contacting the ITIA

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