



# Multi-Languages Newsletter

Serving the communications needs of Canada's international community



Fall/Winter 2004

## Conference on translation and interpretation for freelancers

We are proud to let you know that we are hosting a conference/seminar for freelance translators/interpreters. This conference will be combined with our annual Christmas party/award presentation.

Date: Saturday November 27th  
Location: University of Toronto  
Victoria College 91 Charles St  
Time: 8:00 am - 8:00 pm

### Program summary

8:00 am - 8:30 am Registration  
8:15 am - 8:45 am

### Video "Best Practices for Working with Interpreters"

9:00 am – 10:00 am

### Managing practices in translation departments and the experience of Localization: discrepancies between market and training.

Effie Fragkou

Master in Technical Translation and translation Theory

10:15 am - 11:15 am

### Tools for Translators

Nelida Chan

Terminologist with the Ontario Government. MA in Translation, teaches at York University

11:45 am—1:15 pm

### Medical interpretation

Nelson Cabral – Manager interpretation services Access Alliance Multicultural Health Services. He is one of the editors of the HIN publication A Handbook for Trainers: Language Interpreting in the Healthcare Sector

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm

### Professional Translation Certificate - University of Toronto

Anne-Marie Brinsmead, B.A. (Hons.), B.Ed., M.A., Ph.D., TESL Certificate  
Designed the curriculum content for certificate courses in Professional Translation

3:45 pm – 4:30 pm

### Translation Traps and How to Avoid Them

Jeffrey Miller  
Lawyer, writer, translator



4:45 pm - 6:15 pm

### Panel – our experience

Jaime Backal Regina Backal  
Adriana Barros Pat Capo  
Tho Nhan Cesar Urrutia

6:15 pm – 8:00 pm

Award presentation and dinner

This event is provided for free to our regular translators/interpreters (at least 15 assignments during the last 12 months) however it is open for a fee for anyone interested.

Fees	Translators registered with us (less than required number of assignments)	General Public
Before Oct 10	\$95	\$125
After Oct 10	\$115	\$145

Fees include full conference, coffee break, lunch and dinner.

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The Healthcare Interpretation Network (HIN) and the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, are launching this fall an intensive 12-day interpreter training program aimed at raising quality standards in the field of spoken-language interpretation.

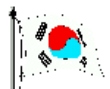
We screened eight of our own interpreters interested in the HIN training; they took the CILISAT during the month of August. Five of them qualified (due to amount of work) for a financial grant from us.

- \* Adriana Barros
- \* Regina Backal
- \* Jaime Backal
- \* Effie Fragkou
- \* Manuel Guerrero
- \* Samy Ramachandran
- \* Laura sa
- \* Suppiah Sokka

Good Luck

If you want to take the CILISAT/ILSAT please contact HIN

"A professional translator **only** accepts jobs that he/she is able to do with the **highest** standard of quality"



### Message to our Interpreters...

#### Please remember....



- You should be:
    - \* Neutral, trustworthy
    - \* Assertive, **Punctual**
  - You shall dress and behave in a business manner.
  - Interpret Language and Culture.
  - Always maintain confidentiality and remain impartial, please don't add, edit or omit anything of what has been said.
  - Don't get involved with the situation. You are an interpreter *not* a counselor.
  - You should interrupt:
    - \* To clarify any word / sentence not completely understood.
    - \* To ensure the family / client is understanding all the information provided.
    - \* When too much information is being given.
  - To report your times within 24 hours.
- Thank you

### Interpreters for SBT !!!!!

Hearings for Social Benefit Tribunal are held in different locations across Ontario that are NOT Board offices (libraries, hotels, civic centres), you **MUST** arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time and bring complete information with you; exact address and room number.

Make sure you have all the information the day prior to the hearing as reception/information desks are not always aware of these hearings.



### News!!!

- \* We moved during the summer to 80 Corporate Drive Suite 305 (only a few blocks away from the previous location), please contact us at the new address.
- \* Yilian Wan will be helping Ann as Interpreter Coordinator.

## IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH OUR PROFESSION? CONSIDERATIONS ON TRANSLATORS' ACCREDITATION PROCESSES AND STANDARDS

*By Effrossyni Fragkou, certified translator; trilingual interpreter*

It is with an enormous sense of responsibility that I endeavor to discuss an issue I take to heart, namely the process of accreditation, and homologation of accreditations in the field of general and specialized translation. As a certified translator and translation theorist, I strongly believe that professional organizations have or should have a clear mission: to promote our profession, the professional status of translators and our professional title; to lay down the translators' and clients' responsibilities and obligations; to offer legal coverage; and, finally, to increase awareness of the work of translators, its importance and challenges, and to work towards improving their financial status.

It is no secret that translators seeking accreditation are mainly aiming to enhance their career. In a globalized market, promoting one's career often means expanding beyond one's national borders. Nevertheless, the current status of certification and homologation of accreditation raises questions as to whether translators are really able to benefit from it, in other words, whether their "certified" status is being recognized and respected beyond their local chapters.

#### *Is accreditation an effective way to promote the status of translators as professionals?*

To answer this question, I will attempt to rely on my personal and professional experience as well as on the official positions taken by the International Federation of Translators (IFT), and the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC). My perspective will be the effectiveness of accreditation and the distinction between typical requirements and real professional skills (aptitude). The discussion evolves around two basic assumptions:

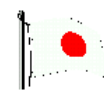
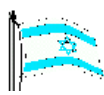
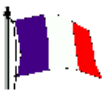
- a) Accreditation presupposes affiliation with a professional association, and professional associations remain a provincial, at best, a national affair.
- b) There is little if any coordination between the various levels of pro-

fessional representation, nationally or internationally and, subsequently, a lack of mutual recognition of accreditations, i.e. homologation.

In North America, professional associations of translators and interpreters seem, at first, to be fairly well organized. In Canada, various provincial associations operate under the umbrella of CTTIC and **appear** to adopt, at least some of them, a standardized system of certification. In the United States, the American Translators Association (ATA) has a number of chapters, which operate locally, and various national divisions based on language and specialization. Both CTTIC and ATA are members of the International Federation of Translators (IFT). This translates into the following: all associations belonging either to CTTIC or ATA are members of IFT's umbrella international association.

Based on this membership affiliation, one would assume that all members of IFT would abide by obligations common to all. (In reality though, every association chooses to its own advantage). This assumption is further reinforced by declarations made by the founders of IFT as to the purpose of the association, namely the need to: "stress the social function of translation; lay down the rights and duties of translators as well as the basis for a code of ethics; improve economic conditions and social climate in which the translator carries out his activity, and, recommend lines of conduct for translators and their professional organizations." Most importantly though, IFT aims at "promoting the recognition of translation as a distinct and autonomous profession".

IFT's intentions are in tune with the general need to provide translators with status and a voice. Does accreditation contribute to shaping a status for translators? One needs only to read carefully the purpose of the CTTIC translation examination leading to a certification, hence giving rise to usage of the certified translator title: "*Translation examinations have been held since 1975. They are intended for professionals who wish to have their competence recognized by their peers.* They seek not to identify mere **aptitude** or **potential**, but rather to attest to a candidate's **professional skills**. In translation, for example, a candidate who can produce a transla-



tion which is *faithful and idiomatic* and requires *little or no revision is deemed capable of practicing the translation independently*". (My emphasis)

Let us review this definition. It seems that, in the translation world, we are only interested in whether our peers will recognize us as translators and not in our clients' opinion and trust in our work. Consider this example: Would any of us like to be represented in court by someone who is not a lawyer? And what do we mean by *lawyer*? A lawyer is someone who holds a law degree, has done his/her practicum and has passed the Bar Examination. The same applies to doctors, chemists, physicians, etc. Would a law firm ever ask a lawyer, holding a university degree and having passed his/her bar exam, to pass an additional, in-house, written test in order to be hired by the firm? I sincerely doubt it! But every day, in different businesses or departments, translation candidates are asked to prove they are capable of translating, regardless of their degrees and/or accreditations. Is this a fair treatment? Why is it happening?

Let us delve further into the matter. Many of us consider that translators, especially certified ones, do not get a fair treatment. We tend to blame the general public for its lack of knowledge and understanding with regards to translation and its challenges as well as deregulation for creating a jungle of a market. I personally think the problem lies within us as translators. Lawyers or doctors do not need to undergo additional examinations to be hired by a law firm or hospital because nobody would ever entertain questioning their professional accreditation. Undoubtedly, there are good doctors and bad doctors. But they all are doctors and while they may work on probation, for a period of time, so as to prove their competence, they enjoy the respect and trust of the public as well as that of their peers. Unfit doctors may see their license revoked and this is where the peer factor comes into play. But then again the general public trusts doctors' associations to abide by and respect their professional decisions.

In translation, things are quite different. Although things are slowly changing, the distinction between certified and non certified translators is not clear-cut, especially as far as the user (general public) is concerned. Most importantly though, any bilingual person may call him/herself a translator regardless of his or her studies, experience in translation and/or accreditation. In other words, professional translation skills lack a comprehensive definition that takes into account today's needs in the translation market (public or private). In an era where translation programs are created in virtually every university all over the world, and translation is considered an independent science, there are still people who use the title "translator" without having either the theoretical/linguistic competence or the professional experience, with our without an accreditation. In this sense, I find CTTIC's explanatory statement on fidelity and idiomatic translation outdated and extremely insufficient.

This brings us back to our main question: Does accreditation respond to translators' needs and the reality of today's translation world? Certification exams leading to accreditation are supposed to evaluate professional skills. If that's the case,

and given the fact that the very definition of professional skills in translation is problematic, one can easily ask: How can accreditation attest competence and sanction quality and professionalism? Are certified translators better than others? Reality and market conditions say otherwise. On the one hand, private companies will continue to administer their own tests to translators, whether the candidates are certified translators or not. These tests will be evaluated in house, based on criteria that vary and by translators who may not necessarily be certified. But who can blame these companies, if translators cannot agree on what constitute a "professional certified translator"? On the other hand, accreditation will remain for some a typical but necessary requirement, but then again the standing remains mainly provincial and not necessarily national or transnational. Two examples will make this point: 1) Ontario Government contracts or positions require mainly an ATIO (Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario) accreditation (sometimes an equivalent). 2) ATA does not recognize ATIO or any other Canadian accreditation, at least for language combinations that they do not support (for which a certification exam is not administered by ATA). Strangely enough, *professional* translators in these combinations may become ATA associate members but they are refused to have their accreditation recognized by ATA, in other words they are not allowed to use the title "certified translator".

*Some food for thought*

Lack of mutual recognition of accreditations makes us wonder about the future of our profession. It is clear that the market requires more and more certified translators who still have to prove they are good enough to occupy positions or be trusted with assignments. At the same time, professional organizations operating under one big umbrella do not see eye to eye, in other words they do not mutually recognize accreditations for various reasons, one of them being the selection criteria or the degree of difficulty with respect to certification examinations. This lack of mutual respect and understanding discourages many of our finest colleagues from joining the associations and seeking accreditation. Others do register for a period of time but then withdraw because of disappointment or because they consider that they do not get their money's worth. Most importantly though, lack of mutual recognition gives translators' a bad name and does not encourage the public to trust translators and consider them as professionals.

Maybe it is time to take a better look at ourselves and our profession and start treating each other with the respect and professionalism that we like others to apply to us as real professionals.



## Healthcare Interpretation Network

### Annual General Meeting and Launch Celebration

As the Healthcare Interpretation Network (HIN) moves forward this year, we invite you to join us for our first Annual General Meeting and launch celebration of our newest publication, 'A Handbook for Trainers: Language Interpreting in the Healthcare Sector'.

Fundamentally, HIN is a not-for-profit organization that strives towards enhancing access to quality healthcare for patient populations with limited English proficiency, by providing education, conducting research, disseminating information, raising funds and developing policies that work towards the use of professionally-trained, standardized language interpreters in the health care sector in Ontario.

Please join us on Tuesday October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 33 Russell Street, Room T321, from 1-4 pm for our AGM and from 4-5 pm for our launch celebration, and help us create a strong foundation for the future. Attendance is open to everyone, but only fully paid members in good standing can take part in elections for the new Board of Directors.

For more information, or to RSVP, contact Kristofer Nielsen at 416-324-0927, ext. 288 or [knielsen@accessalliancemchc.on.ca](mailto:knielsen@accessalliancemchc.on.ca)

*Interpreters... more free professional development resources available to you.*

We purchased the video "Best Practices for Working with Interpreters" developed by the Barbra Schlifer Clinic with the support of the Ministry of Citizenship. It is an excellent source that provides you with valuable information about your role as an interpreter and the skills required for the job. You can come during office hours (please call ahead of time) to watch the video, it is 30 minutes long.

### Memberships



Healthcare Interpretation Network



### October

- \* **ATIO, Court Division.** *Memory, Notes and Pesky Terms.* Note taking. Memory – brief explanation on how it works and what we can do to stretch it. Terminology – Review and discussion of commonly used court and legal terminology. Those pesky terms can become your best friends in court. **Speaker, Yolanda Hobrough:** certified translator, court and conference interpreter President of STIBC and coordinator of the court interpreting exam in 1996. Senior instructor and curriculum writer for the interpreting programs offered at Vancouver Community College. Teacher, community, health care and court interpreting for over 20 years, designed a health care and court interpreting program. **Oct 12** 10:00 - 5:00 pm \$40 Members \$50 Non-members [www.atio.on.ca](http://www.atio.on.ca) Tel: 613-241-2846
- \* The **ATA**, American Translator Association is hosting the annual conference in Toronto **Oct 13-16** [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org) Visit us at booth #54
- \* **ACCTI** Conference **Oct 16 - 18** [www.accti.ca](http://www.accti.ca)
- \* **HIN AGM Oct 19** 1:00 - 5:00

### November

- \* **Multi-Languages** Conference **November 27** 8:00 am - 8:00 pm (See page 1 or for full program visit our website)
- \* **Localization World** Conference **Nov 15-17** San Francisco, California [www.localizationworld.com](http://www.localizationworld.com)

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"Excellence means when a man or woman asks of himself more than others do.

**Jose Ortega y Gasset**