

## Editorial

At the preparation stage of this editorial, we decided we would have a rather nostalgic look back to our very first editorial and then to those of Numbers Two and Three. What struck us most about these first three issues was that, without actually having done a word count, there is a very high recurrence of words like 'new', 'initiative', 'innovation' and the like. But, apart from one notable exception that we shall be coming back to shortly, there is very little that is new in the present issue. What we have today instead is a rather more in-depth consolidation of research into the 'burning' issues of interpretation theory and practice, a response to the 'gauntlet' thrown down by us in Number Two asking for serious work to be carried out in certain areas and also in response to Franco Crevatin's request in Number One to have the help and contributions of colleagues from all over the world to achieve an aim that is bound to be of an interdisciplinary nature. Indeed, many questions have been asked in a variety of areas like, for example shadowing, clozing, aptitude testing in general, neurophysiological research, the application of text linguistics, to name but a few. Now, however, the discussion is becoming more intense and more consolidated, albeit very diverse in some cases, in our search for answers for which we thank you all. Thanks must once again go to all of you, (especially our 'regulars', Daniel Gile, Sylvie Lambert, Nancy Schweda-Nicholson, Sergio Viaggio and others) who have contributed over the years either with articles, bibliographies, reviews, comments or advice - the success of The Interpreters' Newsletter is mainly yours.

Now, however, let's have a look at what we have for you this year by starting with what is new and then moving on to the continuation of previous discussions. There are, in fact, two changes to The Interpreters' Newsletter - the first of which is, we feel, extremely important and a very positive development in interpretation research, namely the introduction of Special Issues of The Interpreters' Newsletter that deal with highly specific and restricted problems of

interpretation theory and practice. The other piece of news is rather less happy and so we have decided not to include it in this Editorial but rather as the first letter in the Letters to the Editors section.

### The Special Issue

The editors are very pleased to announce the beginning of a new series of special issues of The Interpreters' Newsletter on specific problems related to our profession, the first of which, as you will have doubtless already seen, accompanies this present number. Number One of the Special Issue of The Interpreters' Newsletter is entirely devoted to problems of language, translation and interpretation both to and from Japanese. We must say that we are most happy to welcome such an initiative (and in future other similar ventures) especially in today's ever-shrinking world in which cross-cultural communication is of fundamental importance. We feel that this Special Issue gives our readers particular insight into an area which for many Western researchers and interpreters alike is quite unknown.

Apart from the obvious unique aspects of Eastern languages such as Japanese, particularly problems of expression, intonation and register quite foreign to languages that we are familiar with here in the West, what we found most interesting in the various contributions to this Special Issue was the fact that the Japanese also have many problems similar to those we have in the West, particularly with certain language combinations (for example, one thinks immediately of having to wait for the end of the sentence in German in order to catch the main verb, etc.).

Similarities and differences apart, we feel that this initiative is a most important one in the process of widening our horizons and of increasing our knowledge of the multiform aspects of simultaneous interpreting. From a purely non-linguistic point of view, it has also given our colleagues in the Far East the opportunity to air their views and to talk about their own problems and, at the same time, we can learn much more about our fellows on the other side of the world. Once again, a special word of

thanks to Daniel Gile for having arranged this contact for us with our colleagues in Japan and at Queensland University, Australia and also very special thanks must go to Dr. Ng Bee Chin for her invaluable and painstaking work as editor of this Special Issue as well as to all its contributors.

### **The Present Issue**

We are particularly pleased to see that The Interpreters' Newsletter is increasingly becoming a vehicle for scientific research and analysis, as indeed is exactly what it was founded for in the first place, rather than simply a means for airing personal, subjective views on the profession, no matter how picturesque or amusing these anecdotes might be. Of course there will always be a place for personal opinion, especially if based on personal experience, but the shift in emphasis away from the impressionistic towards objective observation is most welcome. We strongly feel this means that The Interpreters' Newsletter is fulfilling its original aim as outlined in Franco Crevatin's declaration of intent expressed during the Trieste Symposium in 1986 and in the Editorial of our first issue, namely that it should represent an exchange of information, a forum of discussion on testing theories, replicability and the observation of practical experience compared and contrasted to pure theory.

The interaction between theory and practice, as both John Dodds and Catherine Stenzl were at great pains to stress during the Trieste Symposium, should never be neglected. An excellent example of just this has been provided by Susana Malchik in her article on the difficulties a translator has to face in trying to become an interpreter. From her own experience, she throws light on various factors that we professional interpreters tend to neglect or even forget. Her article is indeed most enlightening and we are sure that readers will appreciate it as much as we did.

Even though some colleagues still strongly resist research and the academic side of the profession, or at least consider these as less than 'top priority', the professional associations and particularly AIIC, the most prestigious among them, are re-elaborating their views on research and training. Of course not all colleagues are

interested in the academic side of the profession, as was sardonically pointed out by one colleague at the recent AIIC conference which aimed at a redefinition of the aims and objectives of the Association in view of the extremely rapid changes taking place in the profession today. In fact, AIIC, apart from its traditional role of protecting the conference interpreter's conditions and status, has now set up a Training Committee and a Research Committee of which Jenny Mackintosh is convenor and Laura Gran member. This clearly shows awareness on the part of AIIC of the need to pay much greater attention to these aspects of the profession that up until recently were considered of minor importance or of no importance at all. Of course, ideally research into the field should be carried out in a university environment but the fact that a professional association like AIIC is showing interest can only be considered very positive.

### **Contributions to this Issue**

There are two of the 'burning' issues that we mentioned before that come up in every number, namely Aptitude and Shadowing. Clearly feelings are still very strong over these two questions and the fact that every year we have new observations and new objections, more evidence for as well as more evidence against show that these are probably the most controversial issues to have been dealt with in the Newsletter - and we suspect we still have more to come. Each year, objections are raised but it is no longer enough simply not to be in favour of shadowing when faced with the scientific rigour with which Sylvie Lambert presents the case in favour of it. Next time round, those against shadowing are going to have to show every bit as much rigour based on scientific testing in order to be at all credible.

As regards questions of teaching methodologies, we have included in this issue two articles by Sergio Viaggio, Chief of the Interpretation Section of the United Nations, Vienna. Both articles seemed to us to be of the utmost interest for teachers and trainers of interpreters, especially over the whole question of redundancy, and written in such a lively, light-hearted way that it is a distinct pleasure to read

them. The message, of course, is very serious and the approach scientifically rigorous and his discussion of cognitive clozing is most instructive. Coincidentally, this year for the first time, the entrance examination for the SSLM in Trieste consisted of, among other components, a C-test which is one of the tests recommended by Sylvie Lambert for testing interpreting aptitude.

Very much in line with our principle of *The Interpreters' Newsletter* involving multi- and interdisciplinary factors in the interpreting process, Edith Spiller Bosatra and Valeria Darò, in collaboration with the School of Otolaryngology of the Faculty of Medicine here in Trieste, have presented interesting paper on the importance of certain acoustic conditions affecting the interpreter's performance and also on the effect of the feedback of the interpreter's voice into the ear. Considerations these which may well have not only repercussions on training conditions but obviously also on our professional working conditions.

Silvia Cellerino, a graduate from the Trieste School, outlines the basic approach of her research on the "theory of terminology".

Sandra Gallina, another graduate from the Trieste School who is now a permanent interpreter at the EC Commission in Brussels, gives us a short account of her lengthy and in-depth study (see *Bibliography of Theses in N°2*) of the problems of cohesion and coherence in political speeches. In spite of the rather technical sounding title, Gallina explains clearly the concept of textual cohesion, ranging from ellipsis through to repetition and synonymy, and how its various forms are relevant in the interpretation process, for any theory for interpretation must surely draw heavily upon the techniques of text linguistics.

In an article on her research on bilingualism in interpreters, another regular contributor, Anna Giambagli, lecturer at the SSLM in Trieste, has carried out an interesting survey on professional interpreters at the EC Commission in Brussels and has come up with some very thought-provoking data regarding the sort of interpreting to be expected depending on which language the interpreter is working into. The question of bilingualism still remains a very controversial

issue but Giambagli has succeeded in contributing to the little we know about the phenomenon in interpreters.

Another lecturer and indeed regular contributor is Maurizio Viezzi who takes up an article from last year's issue by David Snelling on the simultaneous interpretation of films. Viezzi prefers to equate this form of 'simultaneous' to a sort of sight translation of subtitles. The difference between film sight translation and sight translation proper is of course the extra element of the film itself, the images and the sounds of the original.

Last but by no means least, we have as always included the bibliographical update, which also includes the latest degree theses presented at the SSLM in Trieste. Once again we repeat our invitation to readers to keep us informed about new works on interpreting (even if unpublished) so that we can all have as complete as possible a bibliography on interpretation at our disposal. Once again, we thank Daniel Gile for his invaluable personal help in the compilation of this bibliography as well as having the availability of his *International Interpretation Research and Theory Network Bulletin*. This initiative, our own and that of the AIIIC Research Committee represent the full spirit of cooperation that characterizes our profession and offers a service to professional and student interpreters that is uncommon in other professions.

Many thanks also go to Silvia Cellerino, Valeria Darò and Alberto Severi for their assistance in the editing of this issue.

### **The Subscription Fee and New Name**

Over the last year, we have had numerous replies to our enquiry about having a subscription fee for *The Interpreters' Newsletter* and as to whether we should change the name since some people (John included) feel that the term *Newsletter* is a misleading misnomer for what is or at least has become a professional journal of research and training methodology. Some alternative titles were suggested (that of Ng Bee Chin we thought particularly fitting - *The Trieste Journal of Interpretation Research*) but the vast majority of readers who responded to our enquiry felt that the old name should remain as that is the

*name it is known by and any change may be confusing and is certainly unnecessary, despite the semantics of the word Newsletter.*

*So, in line with the views of the majority and hopefully with the consent of the minority, The Interpreters' Newsletter keeps its name and remains free of charge, at least for this year!*

***The Deadline***

*As always, we are forced to set an irrevocable deadline by which date we must **receive** your contributions. The date for this year, as indeed it was last year, is the **31st of August 1992**. We hope very much to have as many letters and contributions as possible (on either Macintosh, IBM or IBM compatible diskette) and until then we both wish you all a happy and prosperous new year.*

*Laura and John*

*January 1992*