

Editorial

The New Europe

We noted, at the time of writing *The Interpreters' Newsletter* N° 2, that the world was witnessing the breaking down of borders in Eastern Europe and that this political change was very much reflected by new contacts and new interest on the part of our East European interpreting colleagues. Now, although the political change is at least partially on the way to completion, we certainly cannot say the same for the changing face of our own profession, for we are right at the start of a new and stimulating problem-solving process involving the training of interpreters who will be able to keep the channel of communication open with Eastern European countries. This need was, for example, expressed by not only the massive presence of Yugoslavian interpreters at the 12th World Congress of F.I.T. in Belgrade in August but also and more importantly by their interest, enthusiasm and desire for a clear and open exchange of ideas. Here we feel that *The Interpreters' Newsletter* could be a marvellous forum for the discussion of interpretation problems posed by the new political situation in Europe as a whole and hopefully be an instrument through which solutions can be found.

The New World

It must be said, however, that it is not only Europe that is changing but the whole world. Hi-tech communications are increasingly making the world a smaller place to live in and political crises such as the one we are witnessing at the moment in the Gulf tend to bring peoples closer together. Hi-tech communications are clearly going to radically affect the interpreting profession in the not too distant future, a cause of great concern for many of us, as was made quite clear by Freddie Hurdiss-Jones during our Symposium in 1986 and also by the questionnaire referred to by Helen Altman in this current issue of *The Interpreters' Newsletter*. As for the Gulf crisis we can only wish for a speedy and peaceful solution as soon as possible. But both factors, obviously together with business interests as well, seem to be bringing East and West closer together as was reflected in our own profession at the ESIT Conference in June for Korea, the F.I.T. Congress in Belgrade for Taiwan and through various contacts made with colleagues in Australia and Japan for whom *The Interpreters' Newsletter* has become a very important means of staying in touch with the rest of the world. What is more, we are seriously considering the

offer of a joint venture involving a special issue of *The Interpreters' Newsletter* on the problems of Japanese interpreting and this could well be the beginning of a series of special issues on specific problems or areas such as, for example, interpreting in Eastern Europe. Perhaps we could have some feedback from you on this possible initiative or perhaps with some other concrete ideas.

The New Contributions

Now, as you have probably noted simply from the size of this issue, the number of papers sent for publication has been increasing to a most amazing (and for us quite alarming) extent every year. Though this response to our initiative indeed means much more work for the Editors, especially as they are working in a Faculty environment which is reasonably but not abundantly provided with staff and financial means, we cannot but express our satisfaction and gratitude for the continuing interest and support on the part of our readership, and it is especially gratifying considering the quality of the papers we receive. So keep on sending in your contributions, for they are after all what keeps *The Newsletter* going - and the Editors and editorial staff will find a way of surviving all the same, but more about that later on. One obvious and immediate way of relieving us of some of the workload is to give us more time between the moment we actually receive your articles and the publication date and so we are forced, once again, to fix **June 30th 1991** as the absolute deadline for next year's issue. Sorry about this, but we really do need a full four months to read, transcribe, format and proof-read your contributions before publication.

As you will see in this present issue, the range of subjects discussed has widened further as well. Some theoretical and professional themes have been touched upon by two or more authors, which proves that the need to discuss certain specific themes is felt, at this particular point in time, in all the areas of the world where our publication is read. Here in brief, then, is a list of the main themes discussed in this issue, some of which are in response to articles and letters published in the first two issues of *The Newsletter*.

- Shadowing as an introductory exercise to simultaneous interpretation: this time two other views are expressed on this very controversial issue. Nancy Schweda Nicholson's article and Ine van Dam's letter illustrate differing views on the subject and make a contribution to a deeper insight into the technicalities and implications of this

particular exercise. As you will recall, Christopher Thiéry in Newsletter N° 2 had already expressed strong feelings about the potential dangers of shadowing. More contributions on the subject are welcome, especially reports on research being carried out on the subject.

- A most interesting topic concerns the evaluation of interpretation by the audience, a subject of crucial importance which had not really been studied carefully until quite recently. Daniel Gile and Lidia Meak have both conducted experimental inquiries into the audience's reactions to simultaneous interpretation in scientific conferences and also into the requirements of these conference participants. In his paper, Masaomi Kondo also discusses the possible effects of the 'interpreting filter' on communication between speaker and listener, which may be of considerable consequence in talks between heads of government and state. He also illustrates problems of professional ethics which are particularly delicate when considering, for example, the enormous cross-cultural differences between the Japanese and Anglo-Saxons. As Daniel Gile pointed out in a paper presented at the Round Table Conference on "Applied and Experimental Research on Interpretation" held at the Trieste School in November 1989, experimental case-studies acquire scientific and statistical value if confirmed by other similar studies or, better still, through replication by using the same material and comparable samples. We feel this may be yet another function of our publication in the future, that is, to act as a stimulus for further co-operation and coordination on research projects in different countries and continents.
- Besides users' evaluation of interpretation, awareness and assessment of communication effectiveness by the interpreters themselves is also a crucial subject worth inquiring into. Janet Altman discusses this and other closely related problems (among which evaluation of speaker quality by interpreters) in her analysis of questionnaires sent out to practising interpreters of varying experience.
- Various aspects of consecutive interpretation are also discussed in this issue. Cristina Palazzi offers strong arguments, based on her long experience as a conference interpreter and teacher of consecutive at the Trieste School, demonstrating the essential role of this interpreting technique as a preliminary exercise to SI. Other opinions are welcome! In an experimental study, Anna Giambagli compares transformations in the surface structures of source and target languages through a linguistic analysis of consecutive interpretation from a Neo-Latin language (French) and a Germanic language (English) into Italian. Serena Alessandrini describes the findings of an experimental study on the influence of numbers on the accuracy of consecutive interpretation.
- With regard to the strictly linguistic aspects of interpreting, Maria Antonietta Fusco analyses specific problems between cognate languages (Spanish and Italian) in interpretation. Ljiljana Avirovic reports on the changes introduced in Croatian and Serbian political language following recent events in Yugoslavia and the repercussions on the interpretation of political texts.
- Interpretation problems regarding institutional and political terminology and jargon are discussed by Stefano Marrone. Davide Reinert devotes his paper to the organizational nightmare in a nine-language organization such as the E.C. and writes a humorous and wise letter on the false myths regarding the profession which might be useful to future interpreters.
- An almost unexplored field, simultaneous interpreting of films, is discussed by David Snelling with a profusion of witty thoughts on the real function of the interpreter, of which some colleagues probably need to be reminded! Eva Paneth introduces us to the future of projected interpretation and reminds us that conference interpreting, as all other human activities, is bound to be influenced by technological innovations and, therefore, by new requirements, new rules and new constraints.
- Another contribution is added to our studies on neurophysiology and neuropsychology. Valeria Darò describes an experiment on voice frequency according to the languages spoken by the same person. The findings provide some insight into the non-verbal emotional messages that interpreters send to their audience through the characteristics of their voices.
- The reliability of aptitude tests is analysed by John Dodds, who refers in particular to the hitherto not too efficient but unique

"laboratory" of the Trieste School where aptitude tests for interpreting are not binding. This, therefore represents an ideal opportunity for assessing the validity, or possibly, the non-validity of the methods adopted so far. A very significant contribution to the relative importance to be attached to "aptitude" and training is provided by the experimental study presented by Mike Dillinger on comprehension during interpretation. Here, a comparison is made between comprehension during interpreting on the part of interpreter and non-interpreter subjects, in other words, the age-old question as to whether interpreting ability is acquired by training or is a natural skill. Since this constitutes another long-debated issue, it is felt that greater knowledge on the subject may be achieved only through experimental research.

As can be seen, this issue offers a great variety of subjects. Our experience, albeit limited, has shown that an article on a new topic always raises interesting responses and then other papers are sent in with differing and therefore stimulating views on the matter. We do hope this trend will continue as this is, after all, the real purpose of our Newsletter.

The New Name

This now brings us on to a rather practical question that has been raised by several of our readers, namely whether *The Interpreters' Newsletter* is actually a newsletter at all and whether it should continue to go under that name. Certainly, *The Newsletter* has evolved very rapidly and virtually uncontrollably into something rather different from what our Director, Franco Crevatin, envisaged four years ago in his concluding remarks to our Symposium in Trieste on the teaching of interpretation. At that time, this publication was to be a simple vehicle for "news and information regarding research projects, new teaching methodologies and ideas for theses", as well as information about courses, seminars, conferences, articles, books and the like. In short, a newsletter. Our Newsletter has, on the other hand, virtually all by itself, or rather through the contributions of our readership, evolved into a vehicle for that very research that Franco Crevatin mentioned. This, we feel, is extremely positive in that we have tried very hard not to prescribe the way we think the Newsletter should develop but to let it evolve in the way that you interpreters, teachers and researchers want it to by catering for publishing needs that perhaps are not catered

for elsewhere quite so specifically.

Having said this, however, it has also been pointed out by several of you that if it is not a newsletter, then really it should not be called one and that if it is a vehicle for research proper, then it should have a new, more fitting name. We have given some careful thought to this and agree that the Newsletter in its present form is really a review or journal for conference interpreters and teachers of interpretation and that, as such, it should really go under a different name. What that name should be exactly will need a lot of further thought but we have time before the next autumn issue to think of something appropriate.

What is more, while we are in the mood for change, we would also ask you to consider a further possible change that would almost certainly save the lives or at least sanity of your editors (not to mention Anna Dodds whose formatting experience has once again proved to be invaluable). Given the enormous workload that the Newsletter (*Review/Journal*) now involves, we would very much like to be able to hand it over to professional publishers so that we would be saved all of the transcription, composition and formatting work, leaving us more time to do a better job as editors. However, we are leaving the decision entirely up to you, as increased publishing efficiency and professionalism will mean having to pay for it. One publisher has said that \$10 per issue or \$25 for a three-year subscription would be realistic if guaranteed a certain number of sales. What we would ask you to do, therefore, is kindly to fill in the coupon on the next page indicating whether you would be interested in such a subscription scheme and then post it to The Editors, *The Interpreters' Newsletter*, Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne, via D'Alviano 15/1, 34144 Trieste. Whatever happens next year - new name, new publishers or old - remember it is your contributions that count in order to maintain quality, to keep in constant touch with colleagues and to keep conference interpretation research moving forward. Buona lettura and a happy New Year to you all.

Laura Gran and John Dodds

Dear Laura and John,

(tick where appropriate)

We would be interested in a subscription scheme for the Trieste publication

We would prefer the publication to continue as it is now

Name

Country.....