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## **Introduction: A Note from the Editors on *FULGOR* Special Issue on Intercultural Aspects of Translation, Interpreting and Communication**

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In the contemporary world where communication takes place beyond national, cultural and linguistic borders on a daily basis, the work of translators and interpreters occurs in sociocultural contexts that go beyond the mere linguistic transfer between two languages. Translators and interpreters participate in intercultural communication exchanges where different identities, beliefs and attitudes coexist. To discuss the complexities faced by contemporary translators and interpreters, the two-day Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) 2018 National Conference was held at Flinders University, South Australia, on 16 and 17 November 2018.

The conference was opened by Associate Professor Eric Bouvet, Dean (Education) at the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University, to explore intercultural communication in different fields of expertise by translation and interpreting scholars as well as practising translators and interpreters. In the first keynote plenary, David Moore, a NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) Champion Award winner, delivered his new vision for the profession of interpreting and translating of Alyawarr, Arrrente and Walpiri languages in Central Australia that he developed as a community leader. Courses in Applied Language at Certificate II and III levels were developed in conjunction with Ripponlea College for secondary school students in the government and non-government sectors. These programs give indigenous students confidence and an appreciation of their own language and culture, as well as inspiring them to become interpreters and translators. The second keynote speaker, Professor Rita Wilson from the School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics at Monash University, presented the complexities of cultural contact and the relationship between language, culture and social inclusion. She spoke on what understandings could be brought to the term ‘intercultural’ and how the shifts in the professional identities of translators and interpreters as mediators increasingly necessitates effective intercultural dialogue. The conference was concluded by the Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture, presented by The Honourable Ms Jing Lee MLC, Assistant Minister to the Premier of South Australia, whose portfolio includes government responsibility for the state’s multicultural affairs.

In her lecture, Ms Lee first paid a tribute to the late Jill Blewett, who played an important role as playwright and Chairperson of the State Theatre Company of South Australia as well as in the interpreter-translator profession by assisting in establishing a regulatory framework. It is through Jill’s advocacy and efforts that Australia has become recognised internationally as a leader in the field of community-based interpreting. Ms Lee also thanked delegates of the conference as follows:

By being here, you are demonstrating the respect you have in your profession and you are keeping a keen interest to recognise the valuable work of translating and interpreting professionals. All of you are the bridge, the connector, to crossing cultural and linguistic hurdles on a daily basis, and at every level of life in Australia and our global village!

Ms Lee then made reference to Celine Dion's song "Because You Loved Me":

*You were my strength when I was weak  
You were my voice when I couldn't speak  
You were my eyes when I couldn't see*

According to Ms Lee, these words exactly describe someone facing a language barrier, when they rely on interpreting or translating services. Not being able to understand English and not being able to communicate in English are not only very frustrating, but can place a person at risk in many circumstances. Interpreters are certainly a valuable asset to Australia's multicultural community, as they become the voices and eyes of Australians who have limited English skills in a country where almost one in four people are not native English speakers. In Australia, language barriers too often still exist between health-care providers and patients (Zhou 2016). Even though the use of qualified interpreters is proven to be important in minimising communication breakdown that can lead to negative clinical consequences (Flores *et al* 2012), a study conducted in 2014 and 2015 in a Sydney hospital found that only 3.7% of patients were provided with an interpreter, despite 15.7% of those who were in the hospital requiring an interpreter (Ioannou *et al* 2018). A lack of interpreters has been evident, particularly in rural Australia where "immigrants do not reach the critical mass that would warrant the development of specialist services" (Fuller & Ballantyne 2000). However, as the settlement patterns have changed with the government's policy that requires many immigrants to live in rural areas in order to reduce the population increase of major cities, a drastic change may soon be required so as to avoid medical mishaps.

The South Australian government recognises that the needs of its multicultural community are ever-changing. Ms Lee said that she is aware of the difficulties Aboriginal and ethnic communities and individuals are facing. Many Aboriginal and overseas-born Australians are confronted by substantial barriers in accessing and engaging with essential support and service providers. For instance, many senior citizens from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, even though they spoke English sufficiently well when they were younger, are reverting back to their native language as they age. Without quality translation and interpreting services, many would not be able to participate in activities that they previously took for granted, such as seeing a doctor, and accessing government services in health, legal and social welfare. This is vital work and it should be acknowledged that most of the interpreting work occurs in the community, at hospitals, government agencies, police stations, courtrooms, schools, etc.

Despite the importance of interpreters and translators in the Australian community, there is a general lack of appreciation of these professionals. Many have expressed the view that their line of work is undervalued and under-appreciated by users of translating and interpreting services, as well as the broader community. A person born to a non-English speaking parent or in a country where a language other than English is dominant does not automatically qualify to be an interpreter or translator, but it is largely believed that such is the case. Certainly, the vast majority of translators and interpreters are first- if not second-generation Australians, however, they have studied to become specialists in their language, and under the new NAATI certification system, they need to be proactive in maintaining and developing their knowledge and skills. Due to a lack of professional

recognition, pay rates are as low as those of hospitality and retail workers that necessitate a much lower level of certification and accreditation. Even though there is an increasing demand for language services, career pathways continue to be limited and the profession attracts few new practitioners. To improve the situation, AUSIT SA's committee members (led by Tets Kimura and Joe van Dalen) have commenced face-to-face discussions with the SA Government. It is our hope that other states and territories will soon start developing a communication platform with local government representatives.

The 2018 AUSIT National Conference is not solely directed to practitioners, as it includes presentations and studies by academics and postgraduate students researching in the area. With the support of AUSIT President, Dr Rocco Loiacono (Curtin University), Vice-President, Dr Erika Gonzalez (RMIT University), and Flinders University staff, this special issue of *FULGOR* (Flinders University Languages Group Online Review) was created to welcome post-graduate research. Four papers from the conference have been accepted for publication.

Luisa Conte, from RMIT University, presents a self-reflexive piece related to a case study of the translation from Italian to English of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century legal document that posed a number of challenges. The original document is a notarial deed dealing with the legal management of the estate of a deceased property owner in Pisa (Tuscany) for family history purposes. The translator and author of this article took great care in assessing the document, its multilayered *skopos*, and the theoretical considerations underlying what was already in itself not an easy task at hand. The translation is not included in this study, yet the questions the translator had to pose, and of course answer, on the nature of the source text, its audience, the language, the legal complexities and differences between cultures that needed to be addressed will prove to be useful for similar future ventures.

Maho Fukuno, from the Australian National University, focused on the neglected theme of gender in studies assessing ideology and background of translation. Her quantitative case study goes beyond a theory and review of relevant literature. It employs social science methodology, with the specific focus on an Australian community translation setting, involving 15 Japanese language translators who work on "an NGO informative text dealing with the sex industry". This paper is of potential interest and use for those outside academia who work as translators in community settings, while also aiming for a scholarly readership. The extreme gender polarities within Asia, as exemplified in the Japanese language, in contrast to European languages, makes this paper particularly valuable to large research fields including gender and Asian/Japanese studies.

Yu Hao, from the University of Melbourne, has looked to bridge translator training and practice. This paper presents interesting research on the value and need of translation theory in translation courses, a topic that is constantly under discussion by translation educators. Hao's focus is on participants from Australia and China – a crucial case study to Australia as Chinese is now the second most spoken language in Australia after English. She has concluded that theoretical training should be included in practice-based educational programs, but it cannot be taught on its own as it is difficult to understand theories without practice in translation. In her own words, "Real-life examples offer students a glimpse of what the translation market looks like and, most importantly, overtly show the connection between theory and practice". Hao's research thus strongly advocates a review of present practices and a stronger connection between theory and practice, one that would ultimately support better outcomes for all translators.

Junko Ichikawa, from the University of Queensland, discusses the challenges of sight translation from a community interpreting perspective. She presents examples of morphosyntactic features of languages pairs, e.g. French-English and Japanese-English. Where the features differ

greatly, word for word interpreting is typically not adequate and the emphasis requires the effective conveying of meaning. The focus on application to community-oriented sight translation such as in medical settings is particularly useful for those who work as interpreters. Ichikawa hopes that further research will be conducted in sight translation as it currently falls between translation and interpreting, and many practitioners are unsure of this practice and in need of more direction.

To conclude, we would like to thank the *FULGOR* editors, Emeritus Professor Diana Glenn and Associate Professor Eric Bouvet, for their ongoing support, AUSIT for hosting their conference at Flinders University and acknowledging the work of budding researchers in Translation and Interpreting, and all the contributors and reviewers for their efforts and participation. *FULGOR* is an open access online journal so it also belongs to the people beyond academia, those who practice and/or study translation and interpreting, those who use the services, and those who live in and appreciate the diversity of a multicultural community in Australia and beyond. Ultimately, the theme of ‘Intercultural Aspects of Translation, Interpreting and Communication’ asks people to think how we want to live, support and overcome the challenges of a diverse contemporary multicultural society. We hope the conference and the research gathered here have added food for thought to this ongoing conversation.

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**Tets Kimura** teaches Creative Arts and International Relations at Flinders University. He is a Japanese language interpreter and has worked for media for almost 20 years. Recently, he reported on the 2019 Australian federal election in Japanese. He won the Flinders University 2018 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Best Higher Degree by Research Student Publication for his article “Heroes and Villains: A Discourse Analysis of Australian and Japanese Whaling Reports in Newspapers” (*Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 32.3) that he co-wrote with Dr Sandra Egege. He chaired the 2018 AUSIT national conference with Joe van Dalen, Chairperson, AUSIT SA/NT Branch.

**Luciana d’Arcangeli (PhD Strath)** is Cassamarca Senior Lecturer in Italian at Flinders University. She is the co-ordinator of the Australasian Centre for Italian Studies Visual and Performance Studies Research Group that is working on the project “Indelible (Eng)/Indelebile (It) – The representation of (in)visible violence against women and their resistance”. The author and editor of books and special issues of journals, Luciana has published in contemporary Italian theatre and

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