

Welcome to the second edition of the newsletter for the BA in Translating and Interpreting at Newcastle University. Here, we showcase some of the exciting activities that have been happening this academic year for both our T&I students and staff.

### Scientific Translation and AI in Granada, Spain

#### ***BA Translation and Interpreting Stage 3 student Anna Hadden talks about her experiences studying at the University of Granada on her Year Abroad.***

During my semester studying Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, I had the opportunity to explore the evolving role of AI and new translation technology in the field. While both were central themes in my studies, the scientific and technical translation module stood out as the highlight of my experience.



In Granada, I chose to specialize in scientific and technical translation from English into Spanish. This course introduced us to specialized terminology and the challenges of translating complex, highly precise texts. We worked with a variety of materials, including medical reports, engineering documents, manuals, and research articles, developing strategies to ensure clarity and precision. Collaborating with both home and international students, we tackled issues such as stylistic conventions in scientific papers, the formatting of figures and measurements, and the accurate translation of technical terms related to illnesses and conditions. This hands-on approach deepened my appreciation for the precision required in scientific translation and reinforced its essential role in both global scientific advancements and the transmission of knowledge across languages.

The AI-focused module provided an in-depth look at how technology is reshaping translation. We explored neural machine translation (NMT) tools, post-editing techniques, Trados Studio software, and the ethical considerations surrounding AI in the profession. Practical exercises allowed us to experiment with different AI-powered translation software, comparing their effectiveness across

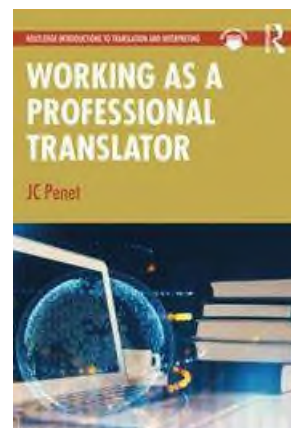
various text types and languages. This helped refine our ability to assess and improve machine-generated output while highlighting the limitations of AI—reinforcing the crucial role of human expertise in ensuring accuracy, nuance, and cultural sensitivity.

One of our projects involved localizing a tourism website, which required not only translating text but also adapting visual elements such as logos and marketing materials using image-editing software. Another project explored the use of AI-generated prompts across different language combinations to create culturally appropriate illustrations for a bilingual edition of a novel. These experiences demonstrated the diverse applications of AI in translation while emphasizing the need for human oversight in maintaining authenticity and cultural relevance.

Beyond academics, studying at the University of Granada was an unforgettable experience. The city is vibrant and rich in history, and the university fosters international collaboration through translation projects and presentations. Looking back, my time in Granada gave me a fresh perspective on the future of translation. It showed me how AI can enhance (but not replace!) a translator's expertise and gave me the confidence to tackle highly specialized texts in my secondary language. I would highly recommend studying in Granada to anyone looking to build a career in translation and develop the adaptability, technical expertise, and professional skills essential for success in the field.

#### New Publication for Dr JC Penet!

Dr. JC Penet, a Reader in Translation Industry Studies in the School of Modern Languages, has recently published *Working as a Professional Translator* with Routledge—a must-read for anyone considering a career in translation. Drawing on cutting-edge industry research and years of experience training future translators, this book goes beyond the mechanics of translation to explore what it really takes to thrive in the profession today. At its core, *Working as a Professional Translator* is about turning a passion for languages into a rewarding career. But professional translation isn't *just* about translating. It's also about understanding the industry, adapting to its evolving demands, and carving out a path that aligns with your own strengths, values, and aspirations. Taking inspiration from career coaching, the book places aspiring translators at the heart of the process, encouraging them to engage with the latest industry insights and reflect on what these mean for their own professional journey. With a focus on sustainability and long-term success, it helps readers build a career that is not only viable but also personally fulfilling. Want to hear more? JC discusses the book and shares valuable advice for aspiring translators on Dot Roberts' podcast 'Meet the Translator'. Just scan the QR code to listen to this episode!



### From favourite TV show to Dissertation!

**2024 BA T&I graduate and current MA Translation student Eva di Micco shares her experience of writing a dissertation on subtitling and how this research inspired her Master's study at Newcastle.**

As part of my undergraduate degree at Newcastle, I chose to write a dissertation on something I genuinely loved and was passionate about- my favourite TV show! The idea of exploring my interests beyond my modules was incredibly appealing, especially as my enthusiasm for audiovisual translation emerged. Growing up in an Italian household, I had always watched dubbed TV, as it's the most popular mode in Italy. However, when it came to my Spanish shows on Netflix, I always opted for the subtitles. My boyfriend, on the other hand, much preferred the dubbed versions. This made me wonder: were we experiencing the same show in completely different ways? Why did he interpret certain characters so differently from me? A quick Google search confirmed I wasn't the only one asking these questions; *Reddit* and *Quora* were full of debates on the same topic, which is better: subtitling or dubbing?

That initial curiosity shaped my dissertation. When I started the module, I had a vast research area in mind- but early group exercises on refining our topics proved extremely beneficial. Many of my first ideas were too broad, or too niche, or just too ambitious. With guidance from my supervisor, I focused on what truly fascinated me and developed clear research questions. I set out to explore Culturally Specific Items, Slang and Swearing in my favourite TV series, *La Casa de Papel* (Money Heist). Since my methodology relied on a comparative analysis of the subtitling and dubbing script, data collection involved rewatching my chosen episodes!

At first, I was apprehensive about the independent nature of the dissertation. I was accustomed to the structure of weekly seminars or lectures, so the thought of managing everything myself seemed daunting. However, the weekly study skills sessions helped me to stay organised, and my supervisor was always available for check-ins whenever I hit a roadblock or felt overwhelmed. It was a really supportive environment.

As the semester progressed, I started to embrace the flexibility of planning my own research. Plus, exploring a topic I genuinely enjoyed and found interesting was so refreshing. The stage I had been most worried about was the actual writing process. I had heard countless horror stories about how demanding it could be, but to my surprise it turned out to be the smoothest step. With thorough research already in place and constant dialogue with my supervisor, the writing came together naturally. The module's structure allowed for three months to complete the main body, which provided ample time to refine my work and receive feedback on certain chapters. By then, I had developed strong self-management skills, which made the process far less overwhelming.

Overall, my dissertation found that subtitles were more likely to tone down swearing, likely due to the spatiotemporal restrictions and the 'shock' factor written vulgarity provides. Culturally Specific

Items were less clear cut, with no discernible trends in either modality, but slang, was consistently removed across both versions. As my dissertation progressed, I wished I had a bigger word count to explore more examples and possible explanations.

Looking back, the dissertation has completely changed my confidence in independent research. It has also shifted how I'm approaching my postgraduate dissertation, with increased confidence and decisiveness. More than anything, it is amazing to know I have researched something unique.



## Researching and Supporting Translator Wellbeing

Working as a translator can be truly exciting, but it can also be more challenging than one would think. Translators can spend long hours in front of a computer screen grappling with complex texts. They often work under tight deadlines. They constantly have to adopt new technologies in a fast-changing industry. In some cases, they may find the content of what they are translating triggering. Importantly, too, the worry of where the next paid job is going to come from is always at the forefront of their mind.

"Freelance translators work in a very competitive industry. Given the nature of the job, they often work in relative isolation meaning they don't always get to share their problems with others. This can lead them to experience high levels of stress. If not addressed, this can even lead some to burnout and leave a career they really love," explains Dr. Penet, whose research focuses on sustainable wellbeing for translators in an industry in constant evolution.

As a certified Lifestyle Coach, however, Dr Penet has long found it important to combine academic research with practical support. This is why he has developed a partnership with the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) — one of the UK's leading professional associations for professional translators — to look at innovative ways to help translators take care of themselves as well as their business. One of his most successful initiatives has been a series of workshops where translators learn to support each other through "coaching-style conversations." Unlike traditional advice-giving, coaching conversations help people discover their own solutions through effective questioning and active listening.

"The workshops teach translators to support each other in a way that builds empathy and perspective taking," says Dr Penet. "Instead of just venting about problems, or giving each other unhelpful advice, participants learn to help the other find their own, unique path towards truly sustainable solutions."

As well as the workshops, Dr Penet works closely with ITI to develop a range of wellbeing resources specifically designed for translators' unique challenges. Based on his research, these include resources on creating translator-friendly ergonomic workspaces, emotion management when working with triggering texts, managing technology-related stress, and maintaining a good work-life balance despite increasingly tight deadlines in a 24/7 industry.



## A Feminist Translation Project

***This academic year has seen the introduction of a new module, the T&I Project. Students now have the option to do a practical project in which they translate, subtitle or interpret material of their own choice and write an accompanying commentary. Final-year student Eve Beer talks about her experience translating a contemporary German novel as a feminist translator!***

My name is Eve, I am a fourth-year student of modern languages, translation and interpreting, and as part of my degree, I have chosen to undertake a translation project within the SML4099 Dissertation/T&I project module. Translation has always interested me, particularly the concept of translator visibility – the idea that a translator’s presence in a text is often deliberately minimised. Traditionally, publishers favour “fluent” translations, where the translator’s influence is erased to create the illusion that the text was originally written in the target language. This expectation disproportionately affects female translators, whose work is often overlooked. Through my project, I am exploring how feminist translation strategies can challenge this norm and make the translator’s presence more visible.

For my project, I am translating *Das Gedächtnis der Töchter* by Irene Langemann. The novel explores themes of memory, intergenerational trauma and female identity, following the lives of multiple generations of women as they navigate their pasts and struggles. Given the book’s focus on women’s voices and histories, it offers an ideal opportunity to experiment with feminist translation theories that amplify the role of the translator rather than suppress it.

In my translation, I am using techniques such as hijacking – where I deliberately emphasise feminist perspectives within the text – and footnotes to highlight my interpretative choices and cultural nuances. These strategies allow me to actively shape the translation rather than passively transmit the original, reinforcing the idea that translation is not neutral but deeply influenced by the translator’s perspective.

One of the biggest challenges I’ve faced in this project is translating Plautdietsch, a dialect spoken by Mennonites that the author renders phonetically. This means the dialogue isn’t just about what’s being said but how it’s being said. The line “*Blout es detja is Wota*” is a good example—what do you think it means? How would you translate it?

I believe Langemann uses languages like this to mimic the feeling of hearing a dialect in your own country that you don’t fully understand—a way of marking cultural distance. But how do I translate that effect for a British audience? Hijacking could mean completely rewriting the sentence or using a dialect of English, but that risks losing the history and culture tied to Plautdietsch. Footnotes would allow me to explain its significance, but they don’t solve the problem of how to translate it within the text.



One possible solution is to include a preface about the Mennonites and the role of Plautdietsch in their history. But even within the text, I need to find a way to convey its foreignness while keeping it understandable. Do I leave some words untranslated? Do I subtly alter the grammar to signal that this isn't standard German? These are the kinds of decisions that make translation so complex—and so fascinating.

This project has been a great chance to explore the aspects of translation that interest me most, especially translator visibility and the impact of feminist strategies. The SML4099 module has given me the freedom to focus on my own research while also developing practical translation skills. It's been really interesting to see how much a translator's choices can shape a text and challenge traditional expectations. Overall, it's made me think more deeply about translation as both a creative and political act, and it's reinforced why I find this field so exciting.

### **Get in touch**

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