T&I Report of Activities (July 2025)

1. Major international conference

Congratulations to colleagues at the University of Leeds who hosted the 11th EST Congress. Organised on behalf of the European Society for Translation Studies (https://est-translationstudies.org/), the international event brought over 700 T&I scholars to the UK to discuss "The Changing Faces of Translation and Interpreting Studies": https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/languages/events/event/2764/11th-est-congress-the-changing-faces-of-translation-and-interpreting-studies

2. Continued collaboration with professional associations

Colleagues in T&I have continued to collaborate closely with the three main professional associations, namely the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL), the Institute of Translation (ITI) and Interpreting and the Association of Interpreters and Translators (AIT). Close collaboration with professional associations has continued to pursue two main aims: 1) to identify and deliver on the main CPD needs for professional translators and interpreters by matching academic expertise to CPD needs and 2) to work on outreach in order to ensure continued recruitment on T&I programmes.

ITI is particularly keen to further strengthen this collaboration for their CPD offer (based on a successful model they have developed with the University of Surrey to deliver AI-related training). They would also like research to inform more directly their policy making. To that aim, I am chairing an initial conversation on future collaborations between ITI and university partners with around 15 colleagues from various institutions on 4th July 2025.

3. Feedback from the T&I community

As T&I representative for UCFL, I work closely with APTIS (Association of Programmes in Translation and Interpreting Studies) and sit on its executive committee. As such, I sent APTIS members an email before this meeting to gather their insights into what is going on in the UK T&I scholarly community. Here are some of the **trends colleagues have observed** that are relevant to the whole UCFL community and that UCFL could seek to address:

- In times of budget cuts, where staffing levels have been reduced, **the view that anyone can teach translation and/or interpreting** is becoming ever more common. Colleagues with a PhD in literature may be well equipped to teach literary translation but Translation and Interpreting Studies are fully developed academic fields which require specific expertise. If, for staffing reasons, colleagues are expected to engage with T&I teaching, then they should be appropriately supported so they can develop the pre-requisite expertise.

- Undoubtedly because of the current financial difficulties most foreign languages academic units encounter, **the view that Translation and Interpreting Studies can be a cash cow and a lure for international students** is also becoming more common. For instance, it is positive that translation is being retained at Cardiff while Italian, German, and Portuguese are being sacrificed on the altar of neoliberalism. However, colleagues there have been told categorically that they have to grow their already very healthy cohorts while working with reduced staff numbers. Concretely, this means staff run the risk of burnout. Again, this trend has been observed elsewhere in modern languages departments. An increasing number of them rely on postgraduate programmes in T&I to recruit big numbers of international students but 1) do not hesitate to shed the staff as soon as numbers drop (as it happened at my own institution) and/or 2) increase pressure on staff to recruit even greater number of student. This puts undue pressure on T&I colleagues and reinforces the perception that T&I programmes are mere money spinners in modern languages departments.

Both the misguided view "I can do that!" (*à la* Catherine Tate) and the conception of T&I programmes as money spinners *de facto* devalue the expertise of colleagues who specialise in T&I, and also undermine T&I as a field of academic enquiry in its own right (including and beyond literary translation).

We believe UCFL must support T&I colleagues by raising awareness of these issue among colleagues in general, and heads of academic units in particular.

Dr JC Penet

UCFL T&I Representative.