Translating Idiomatic Expressions from English to Irish Sign Language (ISL)

Theory and Practice

Sarah Sheridan

Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Abstract. *This paper discusses the challenges of translating idiomatic expressions and the strategies available to translators/interpreters (T/Is) when undertaking this task. It draws on both the literature as well as practical examples observed in a video entitled Time for Change. Analysis of the data explores the challenges encountered and strategies used by two Irish Sign Language (ISL)/English T/Is when seeking equivalence in the target language. This offers the opportunity to examine the issues present when translating this form of figurative speech into a visual modality and the choices that qualified T/Is decide upon when tackling the issue. What is particularly interesting is that there are many similarities in what the literature states and in the examples observed in this data, leading the author to suggest that translators of all languages, spoken and signed, encounter the same challenges. This suggests that these processing issues are independent of modality, though clearly, the TL content is affected by the TL modality.*

This paper discusses the translation of idiomatic expressions from oral English to Irish Sign Language (ISL) in an informative video entitled *Time for Change*. This piece was developed as part of the public information process in the run up to the introduction of the Euro in Ireland. Two versions were prepared at two different points in time by the Euro Changeover Board of Ireland. The Source Language (SL) is English, while the Target Language (TL) is ISL. Subtitles are also provided. Each version is translated by a different ISL/English Translator/Interpreter (T/I), both of whom were amongst the first cohort of trained interpreters in Ireland. Both versions of the recording are extremely similar, particularly at the beginning of the piece. Before turning to examine the data, I situate the development and emergence of the ISL translation/interpreting profession in Ireland. This is followed by an overview of the *Time for Change* data.

In Ireland there is a scarcity of translated material available to ISL users. Thus, one of the things that makes the material analyzed here interesting is that there are differing T/Is for each version of the data, offering a rare opportunity to compare and contrast strategies and techniques used by qualified ISL T/Is in practice. Given the small community of T/I practitioners in Ireland, of which I am a member, I am aware that for both T/Is, English is their first language.

The analysis and discussion focuses on specific examples of idiomatic SL expressions, i.e. the language in which the message originates, which in this case is English, and how these items were translated into the TL, namely Irish Sign Language. There is also occasional reference to additional examples for the purpose of clarifying or substantiating points, thus enabling us to explore whether aspects of translation studies literature can be applied to translation between different modalities.

1.   Setting the scene

The establishment of the Centre for Deaf Studies at Trinity College Dublin in 2001 was a crucial development for signed language T/I training standards in Ireland. Prior to this, there had only been three separate one-off courses: (1) a joint venture between Trinity College Dublin and the University of Bristol in 1992; (2) a programme run between the National Association for the Deaf (now DeafHear) and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (1994); and (3) between University College Cork and, again, the University of Bristol in 1998 (Leeson 2003, Leeson and Lynch, in press). Demand for interpreters outstripped supply, with the result that many untrained family members or friends carried out the task of interpreting and translating. With the expanding cohort of ISL interpreters, this now occurs less frequently.[1]

Within the scope of Ireland's Disability Act (2005), it is required that "reasonable accommodation" be made in providing accessible services for disabled persons (National Disability Authority), making it possible for Deaf people to refer to this Act when calling for the provision of an interpreter. However, because the definition of "reasonable accommodation" is open to interpretation, requests for interpreter services are sometimes denied.

At present there are approximately fifty to sixty ISL/English T/Is in Ireland (Leeson and Lynch, in press). This number includes both full-time and part-time interpreters. In addition to this there are five Deaf interpreters.[2]

---

[1] However, this problem has not disappeared. A recent court case in Kanturk District Court was thrown out due to the use of an unqualified interpreter (16/10/2008) (*The Corkman Newspaper*).

[2] Deaf interpreters work alongside ISL/English interpreters in a variety of situations, such as interpreting for non-national Deaf people whose native sign language would not be ISL.

The majority of demand is for simultaneous interpreting, although there is an increasing demand for translation services.[3]

1.1   Time for change

As mentioned earlier, the focus of analysis is on the translation of idiomatic expressions in the *Time for Change* video, which was originally produced on VHS in 1998 to provide general information to the public regarding the introduction of the Euro. It was commissioned by the Euro Changeover Board of Ireland. The source language (SL) is English and the target language (TL) is ISL. English language subtitles are also provided. In 1999 a second version was produced, adding new information and amendments to the original data, as by 1999, the Euro changeover process had already begun. Each version is translated by a different T/I, both of whom were amongst the first cohort of trained interpreters in Ireland. Both SL versions of the recording are extremely similar, particularly at the beginning of the piece. My aim is to investigate strategies that the two T/Is used in seeking to achieve equivalence, primarily in the potentially problematic area of translating idiomatic expressions, offering examples from each T/I and consideration of the effectiveness of the strategies employed.

At first glance it may appear that this piece is simultaneously interpreted rather than translated. However, following Stone (2005, 2007) I argue that the T/Is are engaged in a form of translation: Stone refers to the rendering of English to British Sign Language (BSL) within television settings as a type of translation and the professionals that carry out this task as translators/interpreters (T/Is). He argues that Frishberg's (1990) definition of the difference between translation (i.e. written texts) and interpreting (i.e. live and instant rendering) does not consider translation into signed languages. In Stone's study, the T/I generally receives the full script in advance of the TL production and has adequate time to prepare and rehearse. The translation may occur immediately (after it has been thoroughly rehearsed) and has a "performance element in the output process very similar to interpreting" (Stone 2007:56), however it is not actually 'live', given the preparation and consideration that take place prior to the actual event (*ibid*.). Stone thus proposes that the definition of translation should extend to include this type of prepared performance .

These definitions and the term T/I are also used in this paper. I contacted one of the T/Is who translated the *Time for Change* piece and she reports receiving the script prior to filming and that she had adequate time to prepare.[4]

---

[3] Translation services include the translation of websites into Irish Sign Language, e.g. www.deaf.ie or www.slis.ie, or the preparation of ISL versions of health information materials on DVD.

[4] The second interpreter is no longer resident in Ireland and has not actively interpreted for some years.

On the actual day of filming, she recalls that certain parts were repeated several times, although, at the same time, there was pressure regarding the time available for completing the filming, as the studio was booked for a limited period. I propose viewing the material produced in the *Time for Change* videos as a hybrid of interpretation and translation. It is also possible that the second T/I had access to the first T/I's version, although the second T/I has made significantly different TL output choices in terms of TL vocabulary, mouth-patterns, non-manual features, use of space and certain stylistic characteristics. One other important point to note is that the TL community is not homogenous: ISL makes quite extensive use of gendered and generational variation in ISL at a lexical and phonological level (LeMaster 1990, 2002; Leeson and Grehan 2004; Leeson 2005; Leeson *et al.* 2006, Leeson and Nolan 2008), which serves to challenge the T/Is and, at the same time, offer them options when deciding how to formulate the translation.

2.   Translating idiomatic expressions

The definition of what is idiomatic varies from source to source; one description (Abu-Ssaydeh 2004:114) suggests that:

> A piece of discourse is described as idiomatic if it sounds "natural"
> or native like; lexical combinations, which occur as grammatical
> units in the language; a general term equivalent to multi-word units
> or phrasal expressions.

Various theorists discuss the potentially problematic area of translating idioms and fixed expressions. Baker, in her discussion of equivalence above word level, states that when interpreting idioms and fixed expressions the translator must first identify or "recognize that s/he is dealing with an idiomatic expression" (1992:65). This is not always an easy task as some idioms are more obvious or familiar than others. She suggests that the more familiar expressions are generally ones that "violate truth conditions". The examples given include "it's raining cats and dogs" and "storm in a tea cup" (*ibid.*). Therefore, if spotted, the translator can make the necessary decision on how to tackle the idiom. Abu-Ssaydeh (2004) suggests that recognition of an idiom limits the possibility of a literal translation, and that the translator can then opt for a particular strategy. The choice of strategy depends on a number of factors: how close the two languages are, the amount of contact between them, the competence of the translator and the type of idiom in question. Patrie (2001:157) states that each lexical unit that makes up an idiom cannot be analyzed in isolation. Therefore, if the expression is analyzed in its entire form it can then be paraphrased, "restated in the source language and then translated" or interpreted literally. She also points out that if the TL has a similar expression, which captures the essence of the SL message, this can be

used as a substitute. Nida and Reyburn (1981:41) refer to figurative speech as being "semantically exocentric" and suggest that this form of speech is rarely translated literally, resulting in a loss of impact even if the referential meaning is kept intact. The translator must then choose wisely when making such semantic adjustments.

The difficulties in achieving equivalence with reference to idioms have also been discussed by Bassnett (1991:23), who refers to the untranslatability of such items, which in many instances are "culture bound". She argues that how the translator actually deals with such expressions may not tie in with what is traditionally proposed in the discussion of formal or dynamic equivalence (Nida 1964, Munday 2001, Hatim and Munday 2004). Therefore, she notes, the notion of equivalence is problematic. She continues by saying that translation involves foresaking basic linguistic fundamentals of the SL in order to obtain "expressive identity" (Bassnett 1991:25) as well as replacing items at a lexical and grammatical level between languages.

In the case of interpreting, the actual process of finding an equivalent TL rendition differs from that involved in the translation of written texts due to the instant nature of the interpreting task, coupled with the limited time the interpreter has at his or her disposal to decide how to formulate the TL information. Santiago and Barrick (2007:8) state that interpreters must consider the form and meaning of the message, the intention of the speaker and the purpose of the idiom in the discourse. They draw on Isham (1986) regarding the translation of English idioms into American Sign Language (ASL), noting that "content, style, contextual force, affect, function, and register" are vital. Interestingly, they point out that five of the six parameters do not specifically relate to literal or figurative interpretation but to "what is said… [and] … also how it is said" (*ibid.*). They believe the ultimate goal for an interpreter is to find a corresponding TL idiom, although they point out that this may not be possible, noting that it is particularly challenging to do this in a "culturally appropriate way".

Also on the subject of cultural mediation, Venuti (1995) makes reference to two types of translation strategies: domestication and foreignization. The former involves replacing SL features or cultural references with TL ones, whilst the latter highlights the 'foreignness' of the SL even if the TL audience does not share the same cultural references. It is important to note, however, that some Deaf people would possibly understand the *Time for Change* data in its original (written) SL form; particularly given the everyday exposure many Deaf people have to written English literature and print media, though literacy is also an issue to consider. At a basic level, the lack of functional literacy on the part of many Deaf people entails a lack of familiarization with cultural points of reference (Conama and Grehan 2002, Conroy 2006). We should also consider that the depth of exposure to cultural experience is mediated by language (Mindess 1999). Therefore, our culture influences

how messages are encoded/decoded and how messages "may or may not be sent, noticed or interpreted" (Samovar and Porter 1982, cited in Mindess 1999:20).

For all of these the reasons it is probable that the ISL/English T/Is working on the *Time for Change* data would aim to look for an equivalent TL idiomatic expression if it exists. Alternatively, if this was not possible, the SL expression could be literally translated whilst also explaining the meaning of the idiom, following Patrie's discussion of paraphrasing as outlined earlier (Patrie 2001). Therefore, both theories of 'foreignization' and 'domestication', highlighting the SL culture or making the shift to fit in with the norms of the TL, are also applicable to the discussion on translating idiomatic expressions into a signed language.

3.   Data analysis

In this section, several examples of idiomatic expression observed in the *Time for Change* data are analyzed. The examples were selected on the basis that they occurred in the SL of both renditions and that they met the definition of idiomatic expression previously offered, thus omitting reference to other kinds of figurative speech such as metaphor, etc. In each example, the SL is noted along with the first and second T/Is TL rendition. Back translations (the target language translation translated back into the norms of written English) are also transcribed. Here, the T/Is are referred to as T/I 1 and T/I 2, respectively.

Example (1) demonstrates the first instance of an idiom observed in the SL text, 'the pound in your pocket':

Example 1

SL: "for as long as anyone of us can remember, it's been the *pound in your pocket*".

T/I 1: FOR LONG TIME PAST-UP-UNTIL-NOW ALL HAVE POUND IN-POCKET
(for a long period of time we have all had the 'pound in your pocket')

T/I 2: FOR LONG TIME ALL US REMEMBER USE IRISH POUND
(for along time we can all remember using the Irish pound)

From (1), we can see that the two T/Is used differing strategies to tackle this first instance of idiomaticity. The idiomatic expression has been transferred literally by the first T/I and it works in the TL as the idiomatic content is expressed visually on the body, i.e. the pound has been physically in your pocket. The second T/I decided to paraphrase, whereby the expression is made explicit in the TL. The wordplay used in creating this witty expression

has been omitted in the second translation; although the information is correct it does not quite have the same reminiscing effect on the TL audience as was originally intended.

Example 2

SL: " … *it just won't stretch* like it used to"

T/I 1: CANNOT SHOP SAME BEFORE
(we cannot shop/buy as we have done in the past)

T/I 2: MONEY SLIPS-AWAY QUICK
(money slips away quickly).

In Example 2, the T/Is again use different techniques. In both instances the SL idiomatic expression has not been translated literally into the TL. In the first rendition (T/I 1), one could argue that 'SHOP' has been inserted to make the phrase maximally clear. In T/I 2, the TL idiom is used as a substitution in order to achieve equivalence – this works well in the TL and the semantic meaning has not been distorted in any way. Both translations are effective in the TL and the concept is maintained without interference from the SL.

Example 3 shows the use of personification in the SL:

Example 3:

SL: … *the pound will have passed into an honourable retirement.*

TL 1: AND POUND DISAPPEAR
(the pound will no longer exist)

TL 2: IRISH POUND WAVE-BYE-BYE RETIRE
(we will say goodbye to the pound as it retires).

Here, T/I 1 decided not to use the SL idiom and instead paraphrases the expression whilst also making it more explicit in the TL. T/I 2 personifies the pound, and it then makes sense that those wishing it well in its retirement are also animate. Given the modality of ISL, this entails the inclusion of an animate actor who bids the pound a physical farewell (WAVE-BYE-BYE). The use of foregrounding/backgrounding strategies (Leeson and Saeed 2007) for animate/inanimate references makes the point maximally clear. It is interesting that both T/Is have set up areas in space (loci) when referring to the Irish Pound (it is situated on their left side in front of their body) whereas the Euro is located on their right side. From that point onwards, if they refer back to a specific area, they angle their body toward that direction, and it is then known whether they are referring to the Irish Pound or the Euro

and there is no need to reiterate the full referent. Such use of placement, the establishment of loci, and referent tracking strategies is common in signed languages (for example, see Sutton-Spence and Woll 1999). The T/Is use this same set of semantic spaces for the rest of the piece.

Example 4:

SL: as we look ahead to *the dignified passing of the familiar pound.*

T/I 1: SEE FUTURE TO POUND DISAPPEAR+sl
(the future will see the pound disappear).

T/I 2: NOW LOOK FORWARD TO RETIRE PASS-ON IRISH POUND
AWAY +sl
(we look forward to the pound passing into retirement)

Example 4 shows again how the TL information can be structured differently depending on T/I strategizing. T/I 1 does not translate the SL phrase literally or by means of an equivalent. Interestingly, T/I 2 refers to RETIRE again (from the previous example) even though it was not mentioned in the SL at this point. This technique involves referring back to something already mentioned, instead of introducing numerous new concepts. Therefore the TL audience does not need to give extra attention to figuring out something that does not seem right in the TL. It also adds to discourse level cohesion across the TL piece.

Example 5 demonstrates how both T/Is decide *not* to follow the SL in the translation of "new coin on the block":

Example 5:

SL: *new coin on the block*

T/I 1: CAN SAME TIME PREPARE FOR NEW COIN ARRIVE+sr
(at the same time we can prepare for the new coin to arrive)

T/I 2: READY FOR NEW COIN EUROPE+sr
(we get ready for the new European coin).

The familiar expression in English – 'the new kid on the block' – has been changed to refer to 'coin' in the SL, and both T/Is retain 'coin'. In English it is possible to decipher the wordplay involved, although in ISL this would not be the case for this expression, as the same culture is not shared. The unconventional approach to language used in the SL (using the word 'coin' instead of 'kid') would simply not work in ISL. In this example, both T/Is decided instead to paraphrase the expression.

Example 6:

SL: *may follow suit*

T/I 1: FOLLOW DO SAME
(may follow and do same)

T/I 2: MAYBE SEE-IT-WITH-THEIR-OWN-EYES+sr SAME PROCESS
(maybe they will see it with their own eyes and do the same)

In Example 6, neither T/I decided to articulate the SL expression 'may follow suit*'* literally. The first T/I paraphrases, whilst T/I 2 introduces an alternative TL idiom, namely, SEE-IT-WITH-THEIR-OWN-EYES. Although it allows the message to be maximally clear, this may be classed as an addition since it would be sufficient to say 'and do the same'. However, culturally, this TL choice is highly appropriate as Deaf people regularly refer to the world in terms of vision and seeing. For example, Leeson (2007) talks about the encoding of a Deaf world-view and the embeddedness of the 'SEEING AS KNOWING' metaphor. In this sense, what is 'unseen is unknown'. Thus, the concept of 'seeing something with your own eyes' is frequently used in ISL, and T/Is are likely to use this underlying metaphor in their translations and interpretations.

During a role play section on the *Time for Change* recording, the slang expression for cheque, "chicken's neck" was used.

Example 7:

SL: I hope she's got that *chicken's neck* ready

T/I 1: INDEX-1 HOPE CHEQUE SOON READY
(I hope my cheque is ready soon)

T/I 2: INDEX-1 HOPE INDEX-1 CHEQUE SOON READY
(I hope my cheque is ready soon)

It is extremely difficult to translate slang or colloquial speech, and in this instance both translators omitted this reference. As this is an expression that is never used in ISL it would be meaningless if it were included. Although the phrase was not translated, the meaning, i.e. 'cheque', was. Therefore we can note that both interpreters paraphrased this expression, a strategy used again in Example 8.

Example 8:

SL: It's true that the U.K. won't be joining the EMU from the start but they haven't *ruled out* joining at some stage.

T/I 1: TRUE u.k. NOT INVOLVE BEGINNING NO, MAYBE FUTURE
WILL GET-INVOLVE
(It is true that the UK are not involved from the beginning, although
they may join in the future).

T/I 2: TRUE RIGHT u.k. NOT INVOLVE IN-THAT-COLLABORATION
EUROPE FROM BEGINNING BUT MAYBE FUTURE WILL
INVOLVE TOGETHER
(it is true that the UK are not involved in the European money col-
laboration, although they may join in the future).

The idiom, 'ruled out', was not included in either TL translation. Both transla-
tors seem to have decided that the equivalent 'MAYBE/ WILL' was the best
alternative, therefore paraphrasing the expression.

In Example 9, our final example, the difference in how time is marked in
English and in Irish Sign Language is evident.

Example 9:

SL: *in the meantime*

T/I 1: NOW-UNTIL-THEN
(from now until 2002)

T/I 2: BUT FOR NOW
(but for now/the moment)

The expression 'in the meantime' does not exist as a lexical phrase in ISL. In
seeking semantic equivalence, the first T/I makes use of a time-line. O'Baoill
and Matthews (2000) explain the use of time-lines/zones in their discussion
of how time is marked in ISL. They say that time can be marked by explicitly
referring to the past, present or future using specific time reference. Follow-
ing from this, a signer should then locate events on an imaginary line close
to or extending outwards from the body (i.e. these are physically articulated
metaphors). In this example, the year 2002 is first located at a point in front
of the body and then T/I 1 indicates the space between now and then as an
equivalent for 'in the meantime'. The use of a time-line by this T/I is at least
as figurative as 'in the meantime', and I consider it a TL idiom. In the second
rendition the expression was paraphrased by signing a lexical alternative,
namely, BUT FOR NOW.

4. Discussion

What we find from the analysis of the two T/Is' performances is that in 18
possible translations (9 examples, 2 translations per example), paraphras-

ing is prevalent (it was used as a strategy 13 times). On three occasions an equivalent idiomatic expression was substituted in the TL. Literal translation of an idiomatic phrase occurred twice – once by each T/I (although not for the same example). The strategies suggested by Baker (1992:71-78) are: "using an idiom of similar meaning and form …using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form …translation by paraphrase … translation by omission". All of these strategies, except for translation by omission, have been identified in this analysis. A possible reason for this is that both T/Is' first language is English and both could recognize that they were dealing with an idiom and could identify how to best reformulate it in the TL. This concurs with Baker's discussion of the importance of recognizing that you are dealing with an idiom as a first step to successfully translating it.

The high frequency use of paraphrasing correlates with Santiago and Barrick's (2007) findings regarding the translation of English-ASL translation and Abu-Saydeh's (2004) work regarding the translation of English idioms into Arabic. Abu-Ssaydeh raises two points: firstly, the reason for the high usage of the paraphrasing strategy is that the 'genealogies' of the two languages are different, and thus idiomatic expressions would differ somewhat between them. The same could also be said of translation between English and ISL, given the difference in modality (i.e. translation entails working from a spoken language into a signed language). Secondly, he mentions that in paraphrasing, the "unique nature" of the SL is lost in the TL. The result is a "diluted but accurate rendition" (*ibid.*:121) in which culture and scope of the SL are lost in translation. It is possible that this argument could be made with respect to the *Time for Change* content too as the unconventional use of English and extensive wordplay are not as visible in the TL. On the other hand, the use of paraphrasing potentially allows for easier understanding and processing by the TL audience. The implicitness of some SL expressions has been made more explicit.

Katan (1999:131) discusses the concept of explicitation within the context of translating as an acceptable technique, providing it is achieved "through unobtrusive manipulation of the text". Thus, in this situation, when explicitation is used for maximum clarity and not in an invasive fashion, it could be argued that it is a worthy adjustment, where the valuable components have been transferred to the TL. This is a frequent strategy employed by the T/Is in translating *Time for Change* into ISL.

In the English/ISL translations, the T/Is transferred idiomatic expressions literally or by an alternative TL phrase where possible. It is interesting to note that when the SL phrase is identifiable in the TL, it is generally a phrase that can be reflected in a physically visible way on the signer's body, as in Example 1, where we saw the translation of the 'pound in your pocket'. Other examples which are similar in nature include the phrase 'my jaw dropped', which can be translated literally into ISL by means of using a classifier

handshape representing a jaw dropping open, co-occurring with a shocked facial expression. In this instance, the idiomatic content is maintained. In contrast, 'to kick the bucket', if translated literally, would be mistaken for a person literally kicking a bucket – it just would not work. Therefore, if the SL phrase creates an image which is isomorphic with or highly visually representative of the idiomatic semantic meaning, it is easier to translate into ISL. In contrast, in the majority of the examples discussed in this paper, the degree of visual representation encoded in the SL content is insufficient to adequately render a visually striking TL equivalent which has similar impact as the SL message. In such instances, the content is typically paraphrased.

The data analyzed here has shown that each of the T/Is reformulate the TL message in a different way, suggesting that the range of strategies outlined in the translation theory literature for idiomatic expressions also apply to the translation of English idioms into Irish Sign Language.

5.   Future analysis

There are many other areas that could be explored in the *Time for Change* data. From an interpreting and translation perspective, the future development of a corpus of further renditions of the same body of data would allow for comparison of the various strategies used by a broader range of T/Is, therefore creating a more representative sample to draw conclusions/trends from. Whilst doing this, the use of translation technology could be incorporated to further enable the adoption of a 'process-oriented' approach. This would be useful to highlight areas in which a translator experiences particular difficulties or encounters items that demand extra attention. For example, 'Think Aloud Protocols' (TAP) could be used to record the T/Is' immediate thoughts in the preparation stage of the task.

Mossop *et al.* (2005:151) suggest the concept of 'translational language' as a possible "distinctive form of language production". Based on this hypothesis, it would be interesting to involve Deaf T/Is and/or T/Is who are hearing but for whom ISL is a first language to see if the kind of TL a native user of the language produces differs from that produced by a second language user. Stone (2005, 2007) found differences between the way Deaf T/Is prepared a BSL translation in contrast with non-Deaf T/Is. In analyzing TAPs, Stone found that when preparing for a task, Deaf T/Is render their TL message immediately into signed British Sign Language (BSL) and repeat it many times "until it makes sense", before actually translating it into a final BSL TL. In contrast, non-Deaf T/Is reformulate the message in English when preparing and render it in BSL only once before producing the BSL TL translation. The result is that the Deaf T/Is achieve a better "ownership of the [signed language] message" (*ibid.*:67). Given the context for learning ISL as a second language in Ireland, it is likely that second language users of a signed language would also potentially show a certain amount of

interference from English, and therefore it would be interesting to see how the structure and linguistic features of TLs produced by Deaf and non-Deaf T/Is compare.

6.   Conclusion

This paper briefly outlined the development of the signed language interpreting/translation profession in Ireland before turning to consider the *Time for Change* data. My focus was the translation of idiomatic expressions from English into ISL, and I looked at several examples, commenting on the strategies employed by two non-Deaf T/Is. The difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions were discussed with reference to the translation and interpreting studies literature. Cultural adjustments made by the T/Is support the suggestion that translation into ISL is not solely a linguistic activity but also an intercultural communicative activity. What is particularly interesting is that there are many similarities in what the literature states and in what I document here, leading me to reflect that translators of all languages, regardless of modality, seem to encounter the same challenges, suggesting that these processing issues are independent of modality, though clearly, the TL content is affected by the TL modality.
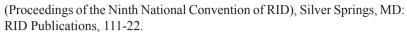
SARAH SHERIDAN
Centre for Deaf Studies, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin, 40 Lwr. Drumcondra Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, Ireland. sheridan_sarah@yahoo.com

References

Abu-Ssaydeh, Abdul-Fattah (2004) 'Translation of English Idioms into Arabic', *Babel* 50(2): 114–31.

Baker, Mona (1992) *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, London: Routledge.

Bassnett-McGuire, Susan (1991) *Translation Studies*, London & New York: Methuen.

Conama, John Bosco and Carmel Grehan (2002) *Is There Poverty in the Deaf Community?*, Dublin: Irish Deaf Society.

Conroy, Pauline (2006) *Signing In and Signing Out: The Education and Employment Experiences of Deaf Adults in Ireland*, Dublin: Irish Deaf Society.

Frishberg, Nancy (1990) *Interpreting: An Introduction*, Silver Springs, MD: RID.

Hatim, Basil and Jeremy Munday (2004) *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book*, London: Routledge.

Isham, William (1986) 'The Role of Message Analysis in Interpretation', in Marina McIntire (ed.) *Interpreting: The Art of Cross-Cultural Mediation*
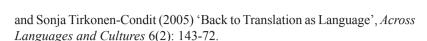
(Proceedings of the Ninth National Convention of RID), Silver Springs, MD: RID Publications, 111-22.

Katan, David (1999) *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators*, Manchester: St Jerome Publishing.

Leeson, Lorraine (2003) 'Sign Language Interpreters: Agents of Social Change in Ireland?', in Michael Cronin and Cormac O'Cuilleanain (eds) *The Languages of Ireland*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 148-64.

------ (2005) 'Vying with Variation: Interpreting Language Contact, Gender Variation and Generational Difference', in Terry Janzen (ed.) *Topics in Signed Language Interpreting,* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 251-92.

------ (2007) 'Do You See that I Am Deaf? Eyegaze and the Encoding of a Deaf World View in the Use of Space in Irish Sign Language'. Paper presented at the International Cognitive Linguistics Conference, Krakow, Poland, July 2007.

------ and Carmel Grehan (2004) 'To the Lexicon and Beyond: The Effect of Gender and Variation in Irish Sign Language', in Mieke Van Herreweghe and Myriam Vermeerbergen (eds) *To the Lexicon and Beyond: The Sociolinguistics of European Sign Languages*, Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press, 39-73.

Leeson, Lorraine, John Saeed, Cormac Leonard, Alison Macduff and Deirdre Byrne-Dunne (2006) 'Moving Heads and Moving Hands: Developing a Digital Corpus of Irish Sign Language: The 'Signs of Ireland' Corpus Development Project'. Paper presented at the IT&T conference, Carlow.

Leeson, Lorraine and John Saeed (2007) 'Conceptual Blending and the Windowing of Attention in Simultaneous Constructions in Irish Sign Language', in Myriam Vermeerbergen, Lorraine Leeson and Onno Crasborn (eds) *Simultaneous Constructions in Signed Languages – Form and Function*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 55-72.

Leeson, Lorraine and Teresa Lynch (in press) 'Three Leaps of Faith and Four Giant Steps: Developing Interpreter Training in Ireland', in Jemina Napier (ed.) *Signed Language Interpreter Education and Training: A World Survey*, Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Leeson, Lorraine and Brian Nolan (2008) *Digital Development of the Signs of Ireland Corpus in Elearning, Proceedings of the Language Resources in Education Conference (LREC)*, Marrakesh, May 28-June 2, 2008.

LeMaster, Barbara (1990) *The Maintenance and Loss of Female and Male Signs in the Dublin Deaf Community*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Los Angeles: University of California.

------ (2002) 'What Difference Does Difference Make? Negotiating Gender and Generation in Irish Sign Language', in Sarah Bunin Benor, Mary Rose, Devyani Sharma, Julie Sweetland and Qing Shang (eds) *Gendered Practices in Language*, Stanford: Centre for the Study of Languages.

Mindess, Anna (1999) *Reading Between the Signs: Intercultural Communication for Sign Language Interpreters*, Maine, USA: Intercultural Press.

Mossop, Brian, Ernst-August Gutt, Jean Peeters, Kinga Klaudy, Robin Setton

and Sonja Tirkonen-Condit (2005) 'Back to Translation as Language', *Across Languages and Cultures* 6(2): 143-72.

Munday, Jeremy (2001) *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Application*s, London: Routledge.

Nida, Eugene A. (1964) *Towards a Science of Translation*, Leiden: E.J. Brill.

------ and William Reyburn (1981) *Meaning Across Cultures: A Study on Bible translating*, Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis.

O'Baoill, Donal and Patrick A. Matthews (2000) *The Irish Deaf Community, Volume 2: The Linguistics of ISL*, Dublin: ITE.

Patrie, Carol (2001) *Translating from English*, San Diego: Dawn Sign Press.

Santiago, Roberto R. and Lisa Frey Barrick (2007) 'Handling and Incorporation of Idioms in Interpretation', in Melanie Metzger and Earl Fleetwood (eds) *Translation, Sociolinguistic, and Consumer Issues in Interpreting,* (Studies in Interpretation Series 3), Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 3-44.

Stone, Christopher (2005) *Towards a Deaf Translation Norm*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bristol: Bristol University.

------ (2007) 'Deaf Translators/Interpreters' Rendering Processes: The Translation of Oral Languages', *The Sign Language Translator and Interpreter* 1(1): 53-72.

Sutton-Spence, Rachel and Bencie Woll (1999) *The Linguistics of British Sign Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Venuti, Lawrence (1995) *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, London & New York: Routledge.

Websites

Irish Deaf Society: www.deaf.ie. Accessed December 2008.

National Disability Authority: http://www.nda.ie. Accessed November 2008.

Sign Language Interpreting Service: www.slis.ie. Accessed September 2008.

The Corkman Newspaper (October 16th 2008): http://www.corkman.ie/news/bitter-anger-as-charges-in-kanturk-assault-case-dismissed-1501611.html. Accessed November 2008.