

The Asian Regional Centre of the International Federation of Translators

FIT ASIA BULLETIN

FIT Asia Hosts its Second Global Online Lecture

By Defeng LI (FIT Asia Board Member, University of Macau) & Junhuan Liu (TAC)

The Asian Regional Center of the International Federation of Translators (FIT Asia) convened the second session of its Global Online Lecture Series on the evening of 29 March 2026, bringing together language professionals from across continents for a timely conversation on the future of their craft. The session was chaired by Professor Defeng Li, Distinguished Professor of Translation Studies and Associate Dean of Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Macau, who also serves as Board Member of FIT Asia. Dr. Ravi Kumar, Treasurer of FIT Asia, Founder of Modlingua Learning, and Founding President of the Indian Translators Association, took the virtual stage to deliver

a provocative message: the age of the solitary translator working in quiet dedication has passed. His lecture, titled “Language Skills to Language Enterprise: Building Sustainable Careers in the AI Era,” challenged attendees to fundamentally rethink their professional identity.

“Linguistic fluency alone is no longer enough,” Dr. Kumar asserted. “The market rewards those who can transform language skills into sustainable enterprises.”

Drawing on industry data, Dr. Kumar painted a picture of an industry in transition. While demand for traditional translation services has declined by 2%, the appetite for language technology solutions has surged by 12%.

Rather than mourning the disruption, he urged his audience to seize the opportunity. The professionals who will thrive, he argued, are those who evolve from craftspersons to business managers capable of building teams, managing risks, and creating scalable solutions.

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Global Online Lecture Series

Language Skills to Language Enterprise: Building Sustainable Careers in the AI Era

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Ravi Kumar

Founder of Modlingua Learning
Treasurer of FIT Asia

Founding President of the Indian Translators Association

MODERATOR



Defeng LI 李德凤

Member of Academia Europea
Board Member, FIT Asia

Distinguished Professor of Translation Studies
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Dr. Kumar went on to offer concrete strategies for navigating this transformation. He detailed approaches to value-based pricing, packaging services beyond “translation only,” and integrating AI responsibly through repeatable workflows.

Addressing students and early-career professionals in attendance, Dr. Kumar advocated for a dual-track approach: grounding oneself in theoretical knowledge while actively seeking practical field experience. He stressed the importance of self-branding, client relationship management, and developing entrepreneurial mindsets alongside linguistic expertise. The session was live-streamed via YouTube, Bilibili, and WeChat. Please stay tuned for more sessions to come.

TAC to Unveil its Annual Conference

By the Translators Association of China (TAC)

Hosted by the Translators Association of China (TAC), the TAC Annual Conference 2026 will be held on 25-26 April in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province in Central China. Under the theme “The Infinite Possibilities of Translation in the Era of Digital Intelligence,” the event will explore the transformative impact of translation in an increasingly connected and tech-driven world.



Future event

As one of the most high-profile events in China’s translation and interpreting sector, TAC’s annual conference brings together language professionals, educators and industry leaders both at home and abroad to advance academic exchanges, industrial cooperation, and sustainable development of the profession in China and beyond.

This year, the two-day conference will feature a wide variety of activities, including the release of T&I development reports, issuance of standards and norms, dozens of themed forums and seminars as well. For more details on the conference, please visit <http://en.tac-online.org.cn/> or scan the QR code above.



TAC Annual Conference 2025 (Credit: TAC)

Professional Translation Training at USM: A Malaysian First

By Ummu Salmah Rahamatullah, MATfP Programme Chairperson, SoLLaT, USM.

The School of Languages, Literacies, and Translation (SoLLaT) at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) has established itself as a leading centre for Translation Studies in Malaysia. While the university has long been recognised for its research-based postgraduate programmes in translation, the growing demand for highly skilled professional translators prompted the introduction of the Master of Arts in Translation for Professionals (MATfP).



MATfP Graduation Ceremony, November 2025 (Credit: SoLLaT, USM)

Launched in 2016, MATfP is currently the first and only post-graduate coursework-based translation programme in Malaysia requiring 40 units for graduation. Fully accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the programme is supported by a team of experienced academic staff with strong professional backgrounds in both translation and interpreting. Since its inception, MATfP has attracted a diverse cohort of students from Malaysia and abroad.



Industry Visit 2023 (Credit: SoLLaT, USM)



Industry Sharing Session, International Translation Day 2025 (Credit: SoLLaT, USM)

The programme is designed to produce graduates with a high level of language proficiency and professional translation and interpreting competence. It can be completed within one year for full-time students, while part-time study requires a minimum of two years. Beyond foundational knowledge, students are trained through extensive hands-on practice in various specialised areas, including technical, legal, business, literary, and hospitality translation. The programme offers three main language directions, with English as the source language and Arabic, Chinese, and Malay as target languages.



Translation Practice Class (Credit: SoLLaT, USM)

In addition to academic training, SoLLaT places strong emphasis on industry engagement. Students are regularly exposed to real-world practices through a range of co-curricular activities. These include industry talks, workshops, and site visits, allowing students to gain insights into professional workflows and current market trends. A key annual highlight is the celebration of International Translation Day, featuring a week-long series of academic and professional events that foster collaboration between students, academics, and industry practitioners.

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Translation practice is further reinforced through SoLLaT’s active involvement in publication projects. Students and graduates have contributed to the translation of numerous books across different genres and languages, working alongside academic staff. These initiatives not only enhance practical skills but also reflect SoLLaT’s commitment to bridging academia and industry.

Ultimately, the curriculum synthesises pedagogical rigor with intensive applied practice, cultivating scholar-practitioners who are uniquely positioned to elevate the standards of cross-lingual discourse. Utilising established translation frameworks alongside the multifaceted realities of professional translation, candidates emerge not merely as language facilitators but as critical thought leaders within the discipline.

Through MATfP, USM continues to contribute to the advancement of the translation profession in Malaysia and beyond, producing graduates who are well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the global language services industry.

Member spotlight



Published translation project books (Credit: SoLLaT, USM)

Strengthening the Professional Ecosystem for Translators and Interpreters through Strategic Collaboration

An Initiative by the Association of Indonesian Translators

By Lucia Aryani, Executive Secretary, Association of Indonesian Translators (HPI)

The Association of Indonesian Translators (HPI) is a professional organisation that plays a vital role in developing standards, competencies, and professional networks for translators and interpreters in Indonesia. In recent years, HPI has actively expanded its collaborations with various universities across Indonesia and international partners in language and translation education.

These efforts have been realised through the signing of memoranda of understanding (MoU) and the organisation of various competency development initiatives in professional translation and interpreting. Collectively, these initiatives form part of HPI's sustained strategy to strengthen the professional ecosystem for translators and interpreters at both national and international levels.



MoU signing between HPI and Muhammadiyah University of Malang (UMM) (Credit: HPI, Indonesia)

One of HPI's key initiatives is the East Java Translators' Gathering (Temu Penerjemah Jawa Timur), held in collaboration with with

Muhammadiyah University of Malang (UMM) on January 31, 2026. This collaboration aims to bridge the gap between academia and the evolving demands of the language services industry. The collaboration focuses on strengthening practice-oriented curricula, equipping graduates of foreign language programs to navigate the dynamics of the translation and interpreting sector, and enhancing practitioners' competencies in responding to technological advancements, including artificial intelligence.

In addition, the forum underscores the importance of professional certification, the strengthening of professional networks, and greater attention to the mental well-being of language practitioners.



Dr. Sugeng Hariyanto presenting his sharing session on HPI's 52nd Anniversary (Credit: HPI, Indonesia)

On the international stage, HPI commemorated its 52nd anniversary by organising a cross-generational knowledge-sharing session presenting Dr. Sugeng Hariyanto, Chair of HPI's Competency and Certification Committee. On the same occasion, HPI formalised a partnership with the Instituto Superior de Estudios Orientales (ISEO), a language and translation education institution based in Argentina, through the signing of an MoU.

HPI was represented by its President, Dr. Indra Listyo, while ISEO was represented by Daniel Villalón, Director of International Relations, in the presence of HPI's members, Executive Board, Advisory Board, Supervisory Board, ISEO's Rector, Victor Sajoza Juric, and the Mayor of Las Varillas, Córdoba Province, Mauro Daniele.

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The event was held online on February 5, 2026. This milestone represents a strategic step in expanding HPI's and ISEO's global network, fostering the exchange of knowledge and professional experience, and reinforcing HPI's role in advancing the translation and interpreting professions within the international community. This collaboration also opens avenues for broader standardisation of professional practices and enhances the global competitiveness of Indonesian translators and interpreters.

Furthermore, HPI partnered with the National University (UNAS) to organise a professional translation and interpreting workshop in conjunction with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions. Held at the UNAS campus on March 2, 2026, the workshop featured hands-on training in translation and interpreting techniques, the effective use of technologies such as Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, and practical guidance on developing professional resumes. The MoU signing reaffirmed both parties' long-term commitment to preparing and nurturing future professional translators and interpreters through an integrated approach that combines academic rigor with industry best practices.



HPI and ISEO MoU signing on HPI's 52nd Anniversary
(Credit: HPI, Indonesia)



HPI workshop and MoU signing with the National University
(Credit: HPI, Indonesia)

By strengthening synergies among academia, practitioners, and strategic partners at both national and international levels, HPI positions itself as a key driver in building an adaptive, inclusive, and globally competitive ecosystem for the translation and interpreting professions.

Overall, these initiatives reflect HPI's consistent strategic approach, anchored in three pillars: (1) cross-sector collaboration between professional organisations and educational institutions, (2) the enhancement of competence and professionalism among translators and interpreters, and (3) the expansion of international networks. This approach is essential for addressing the challenges posed by globalisation and technological disruption, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the translation and interpreting profession in Indonesia and beyond.

Beyond the Algorithm

Why Human Translators Still Matter in Preserving Heritage

By Atikah Halim, Board Member, Malaysian Translators Association (MTA)

In an age where artificial intelligence is transforming translation and interpreting, efficiency has been remarkable. With a few clicks, entire texts can be translated across languages. Yet, amid this flood of automation, a quiet shift is emerging. People are searching for something more human, which is something textured, imperfect, and rooted in lived experience.

Language is not just a system of words. It is a vessel of culture, memory, and identity. When we engage with heritage texts, oral histories, and culturally embedded expressions, we are not simply decoding meaning. We are interpreting worldviews. This is where human translators remain irreplaceable.

AI operates on patterns and probabilities. While impressive, it cannot fully grasp the fluid and layered nature of culture. Meaning is often embedded in idioms, metaphors, and context that extend beyond literal translation. A machine may recognise words, but it does not live the culture those words come from.

This is evident in Malaysia, where Malay transcripts, such as *hikayat*, *pantun*, or oral storytelling, are rich with cultural nuances. Take the idiom *bagai menarik rambut dalam tepung*. A literal AI translation, “like pulling hair from flour,” misses the essence: handling a delicate situation diligently without causing disruption. A human translator understands this nuance and adapts it meaningfully for the target audience and translates the idiom as “take care not to rock the boat”.

Likewise, *pantun*, as a literary form, relies on symbolism and cultural depth:

*Pulau pandan jauh ke tengah,
Gunung Daik bercabang tiga,
Hancur badan dikandung tanah,
Budi yang baik dikenang juga.*

While AI may translate each line correctly, it often fails to capture the depth of *budi*, a concept

encompassing virtue, kindness, and moral integrity central to Malay values. A human translator recognises that *budi* is not just “good deeds”, but a reflection of character and social harmony, requiring thoughtful interpretation.

Even everyday Malay transcripts, such as interviews with elders, carry cultural meanings that resist direct translation. Terms like *adat*, *gotong-royong* and *kampung* represent entire systems of belief and communal living. A human translator immersed in the culture knows when to translate, retain, or explain these concepts to preserve their integrity.

Indeed, heritage is not static. It evolves through storytelling and reinterpretation. Human translators are not passive conveyors but cultural mediators who shape how narratives are carried forward. Their choices influence how culture is understood across generations.

Also, there is a growing appreciation for authenticity. In a world saturated with polished, machine-generated content, the subtle imperfections in human translation and the slight shifts in tone or phrasing, signal sincerity and care. These “hiccups” signal genuine human involvement, lending the work a sense of authenticity and credibility.

Relying solely on AI risks flattening cultural diversity. Translation driven by dominant datasets may overlook minority voices and lesser-documented nuances. Human translators act as safeguards, ensuring that unique cultural elements are not lost or misrepresented.

This is not to dismiss AI. It is a powerful tool that enhances efficiency and supports the translation process. However, it should complement, not replace, human insight. The essence of translation, especially in preserving heritage, lies in human connection.

Ultimately, preserving heritage is not just about transferring information. It is about sustaining meaning. It requires empathy, intuition, and cultural belonging—qualities no algorithm can replicate. As we embrace technological advancement, we must remember that while AI can assist, it is the human translator who gives language its soul.

In the end, people are not just seeking accuracy. They are seeking the truth. And truth, in its richest form, is profoundly human.

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