IAMLADP University Contact Group special session in China

The Translation Centre was invited to participate in the ‘IAMLADP University Contact Group special session in China’ hosted by the Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU). The meeting took place between 24 and 26 September 2019.

Thierry Fontenelle, the former head of the Translation Department, attended the meeting, where he outlined the activities and the mission of the Translation Centre. He then taught alongside a SISU translation professor for the benefit of a few dozen Chinese translation and interpretation students, with representatives from various universities and from UN, EU, WTO and OECD translation and interpretation services also in attendance. The teaching session proved to be a successful and interesting interactive exercise for all.

Thierry Fontenelle also provided a brief overview of the field of terminology for translators and explained the new features of the IATE interinstitutional terminology database, which is managed by the Translation Centre on behalf of the IATE partners.

The representatives from international organisations, which included both translators and interpreters, were invited to present the activities of their respective organisations and to reflect upon how universities can adapt their curricula to the new needs and competence profiles of contemporary translators and interpreters in international organisations. The SISU hosts also organised a mock conference on the topic of food safety, which allowed the local Chinese students to provide interpretation in various languages (Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian), after which the representatives from international organisations were able to provide the students with useful and constructive feedback on their performance.

The third day was devoted to a visit to the Chinese company iFlytek, which specializes in the development of artificial intelligence software and which is recognized as one of the world leaders in the field of automatic speech recognition (ASR) and machine translation. iFlytek has more than 12,000 employees and those employees devote impressive financial and human resources to collect masses of speech and textual data in dozens of languages to improve their linguistic technology. They also apply artificial intelligence techniques and neural technologies to different types of fields that go beyond speech recognition and machine translation that cover other domains such as face, image and pattern recognition (e.g. in the medical field).

The SISU organisers concluded that the special session of the University Contact Group, which they had organised, marked a crucial milestone in the Translation and Interpretation education in China and highlighted the essential role of the IAMLADP University Contact Group as the linchpin of employers in international organisations and university educators of language professionals.