

THE IMPACT OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ON THE E.U LINGUISTIC SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

E.U is currently facing new challenges in the sense that linguists, translators, terminologists cooperate tightly in order to achieve the major goal of the E.U concerning the linguistic sector: the promotion of multilingualism by using the correct terminology. In this paper I focused on the peculiarities of the linguistic sector, and on the dimension of the linguistic industry. Moreover, I made a brief description of the translation process (I outlined some aspects related to translation of labels) in the E.U and I presented a few translation tools including TRADOS which is considered one of the most reliable translation tools. Some companies offered their full support to improve the linguistic sector, that is why the impact of the information technology is obvious because many programs were created to ease the translators' work

Keywords: European Union, linguistic sector, information technology, translation, translators, labels

1. THE PROMOTION OF MULTILINGUALISM

The peculiarities of the E.U linguistic sector show that it has become highly competitive mainly because many linguistic barriers were eliminated as the translating, interpreting process emerged. Furthermore, globalization needs more and more translation and interpreting activities which have to be carried out in many languages, according to the exigencies of the linguistic sector. In other words, globalization requires new language translation and interpretation, and new services in the linguistic field. The linguistic industry was less affected by the economic crisis than other sectors, according to a study made by the European Commission. This study analyzes the dimension of the linguistic industry at the E.U level and contains analysis on translation, interpretation, localization and globalization, subtitling and dubbing, multilingual conferences and foreign language teaching.

I would like to mention that *Communication on Multilingualism* is a policy of the E.U which gives the citizens access to legislation, procedures and information of the European Union (EU) in their own language. This policy also proposes measures to promote the language learning and the linguistic diversity of citizens. Improving the language skills of the workforce will promote the economic growth because the workers can work more easily or study in another Member States.

The Commission serves as a “guardian of the treaties” which establishes the legal basis for the EU. Proposals must be drafted for the widest possible debate at all levels - European,

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national and local, in forms accessible to non-linguists and non-diplomats. This way the citizens and the national courts are able to read and understand E.U law in their own language; for this reason E.U law must be published in the official languages of all Member States. As accurate communication is a vital need in today's multicultural and multilingual Europe, institutions such as the European Commission need to explain European Union policies to the general public in languages people can easily understand. But unclear writing drafted by the Commission can have negative effects: long and badly-written documents take much longer to read, understand and translate. Moreover, a poorly-drafted law or set of instructions may be misunderstood and incorrectly applied, because it is translated differently in different languages and thus applied differently in different countries.

In order to improve the drafting of the E.U law it was launched in March 2010 the Clear Writing Campaign. Its mission was to inform the staff of the Commission about the problems they might face in drafting documents and to help them learn basic techniques for better drafting. Clear language experts were hired to give professional advice both in print and online, and also training sessions for the staff of the Commission were organized and they turned out to be productive and on the right track.

2. THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

I. 2.1. The Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)

It is considered one of the world's largest translation services. Its mission (see the European Commission

online book *Translation and Multilingualism*) is in accordance with E.U needs and the DGT staff carries out many activities in order to:

- - meet the Commission's needs for translation and linguistic advice, considering all types of written communication;
- - support and strengthen multilingualism in the European Union;
- - help bring the Union's policies closer to its citizens.

The individual language departments also take charge of terminology and documentation and are responsible for keeping linguistic standards high and consistent in the DGT's achievement in each of the official languages. The DGT works in all the official languages of the European Union and, as new countries join the E.U, their languages are added in order to support multilingualism (see the European Commission online book *Translation and Multilingualism*, 2012: 2-3)

II. The range of the translated texts

Translators need adaptability, discrimination along with the ability to render varied and often complex aspects.

By intensive training and practicing, they will be able to get the register needed for each type of translation. Also they should focus on the correct use of terminology because there were noticed discrepancies concerning terminology between language versions. If the Member States find these discrepancies and consider the terminology is incorrect they have the right to request a corrigendum which involves the use of the correct terms but it also implies extra costs.

Why is this corrigendum needed? Because a less appropriate term can cause confusion or alienation among Member States and other stakeholders, which is obviously not beneficial for EU image. Sometimes translators have to face challenges because they will have to create new E.U terminology, when the E.U concept is too different from the existing national terms and concepts. There are situations when translators must not be blamed, for instance when the translator of future legal acts is obliged to use a less correct term in a basic legal act. The term does not necessarily have legal consequences, but Member States often request a corrigendum, insisting on using the more correct term, but the correction leads to extra costs.

In order to use the correct terminology, the translators specialize in translating documents about various thematic areas (see the European Commission online book *Translation and Multilingualism*, 2012: 5):

- - speeches and speaking notes,
- - briefings and press releases,
- - international agreements,
- - policy statements,
- - answers to written and oral parliamentary questions,
- - technical studies,
- - financial reports,
- - minutes,
- - internal administrative matters,
- - staff information,
- - scripts and captions for films and other promotional material,
- - correspondence with ministries, firms, interest groups and individuals,
- - all kinds of web pages and publications for opinion-formers and the general public, and much more besides.

Lately it has been argued that there must be a quality in translations. In the book “Translation and Costs” elaborated by The European Commission, the authors consider it is appropriate to explain the syntagm *quality in translation*. According to them quality has two dimensions: quality of the process and quality of the output, which also includes timely delivery of a product or service.

By quoting Joseph M. Juran in his “Quality Handbook” there are two meanings in (*Translation and Costs*, 2012: 4-5) which are very important to the translation process in today’s society:

- a) Quality means those features of products which meet customer needs and thereby provide customer satisfaction. However, providing better quality usually requires an investment and hence usually involves increases in costs. Higher quality in this sense normally “costs more”.
- b) Quality means “freedom from deficiencies” – freedom of errors that require doing work over again or that result in field failures, customer dissatisfaction, customer claims, etc. In this sense the meaning of quality is oriented to costs and higher quality usually “costs less”.

III. Translation tools

Since 1997, the translators have been able to use a computer application enabling them to create local translation memories. It is particularly useful for the translation of highly repetitive texts, since it allows the translators to search for identical or similar passages in other documents translated previously and to incorporate them as and how they wish into their own translations. Since texts drafted in the Commission are often based on previous texts or existing legislation, reusing previously translated words or passages saves a considerable amount of time and makes for consistent terminology, which is very important in legislative texts (see the European Commission online book *Translation and Multilingualism*, 2012:11).

Euramis

Euramis (European advanced multilingual information system) is a system developed at the Commission. It consists of a set of web applications combined with electronic mail to give access to a whole range of services in the area of language processing. Euramis works on a common platform linking together all the DGT’s translation aid systems. One of the most important services is the central translation memory. Whenever a translation request is accepted, the original document is sent automatically to Euramis, and any previous translations are extracted from the central memory. The result can be imported directly into a local memory. Once the translation has been completed, the translator uploads the local memory into the Euramis central translation memory (see the European Commission online book *Translation and Multilingualism*, 2012:12).

Machine translation

The Commission has been using machine translation (MT) since 1976. The system it originally used offered 18 operational language pairs and could produce 2 000 pages of raw translation per hour. Since mid 2010, prototype MT systems have been developed based on more modern statistical MT technology. They are currently being tested and will be available for daily use in 2013. The service will also be available to staff in other EU institutions and to public administrations in the Member States. Depending on its length, the translation will usually be returned to the requester within minutes. In the test phase,

currently ongoing, translators can use machine translation to obtain a rough draft translation which they then edit to the quality of a human translation. The machine translation is principally used to give a basic understanding of the text, but it also serves as a stop-gap when translations are required at very short notice. In the latter case, the raw machine translation should always be corrected. The corrections made can then be fed back to further improve the quality of machine translation (see the European Commission online book *Translation and Multilingualism*, 2012:12).

TRADOS

According to Thomas Wassmer, TRADOS was founded in 1984 by Jochen Hummel and Iko Knyphausen in Stuttgart, Germany to provide translation services for IBM. In the following I present the evolution TRADOS along the years (see the link in the online resources): the first version of one of TRADOS's main components, MultiTerm, was created in 1990, as a memory-resident multilingual terminology manager for DOS; later on in 1992, TRADOS developed the first MultiTerm for Windows; the second main component of TRADOS, the Translator's Workbench, which introduced linguistic fuzzy-matching on translation memories, was established for DOS and in 1994 for Windows.

Microsoft had a great impact on the evolution of TRADOS because the company decided to base its internal localization memory store on TRADOS. Microsoft also acquired a share of 20% in TRADOS. In the same year, WinAlign, a visual text alignment tool, was released as the first fully-fledged 32bit application in TRADOS. In 1998 TRADOS acquired the S-Tagger technology by International Translation & Publishing, Ltd. (ITP). S-Tagger is a conversion tool for converting FrameMaker and Interleaf files into a format that can easily be edited and translated in MS Word using Translator's Workbench. In April 2000, TRADOS Translation Solution Edition 3 was released supporting XML and Bi-directional Languages. It contained the Translator's Workbench, the HTML/XML editor TagEditor, MultiTerm, WinAlign, the S-Taggers, and T-Window for PowerPoint. In March 2001, TRADOS announced the launch of TRADOS 5. Being a multinational corporation, it goes without saying that TRADOS has offices in Germany, France, Belgium, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, China, Japan, Switzerland and the United States (see the link from the online sources).

I am going to present some relevant features of TRADOS as they are presented by Thomas Wassmer (see the link from the online sources). As Wassmer mentions TRADOS specializes in terminology management and translation memory software. TRADOS consists of several seamlessly integrated editors and tools for Translators, Localization Engineers and Project Managers. The software supports a variety of file formats such as: ASCII- and ANSI-Text (TXT), Word documents (DOC and RTF), help files (RTF), resource files (RC), Microsoft PowerPoint Presentations, as well as tagged text file formats, including XML, SGML, HTML, FrameMaker, Interleaf, QuickSilver, QuarkXPress, PageMaker and Ventura. Through a currently free add-on (T-Window for Executables) it is now also possible to translate the text contained in executables (EXE), dynamic link libraries (DLL) and ActiveX controls (OCX). Moreover the features of The TRADOS 5 system are mentioned by Wassmer as follows:

- **WorkSpace:** This is a new feature in TRADOS 5. WorkSpace is the central intuitive interface of TRADOS 5. Thanks to an advanced cross-application integration, WorkSpace serves as a powerful task-based launchpad for the individual TRADOS components. However, its main task goes much further, including a feature-rich project management, distribution of formatted packages to external coworkers and reintegration of packages after accomplished tasks, as well as automated batch tasks for conversion, analysis, pre-translation and statistics (see fig. 1 in the link from the online sources):

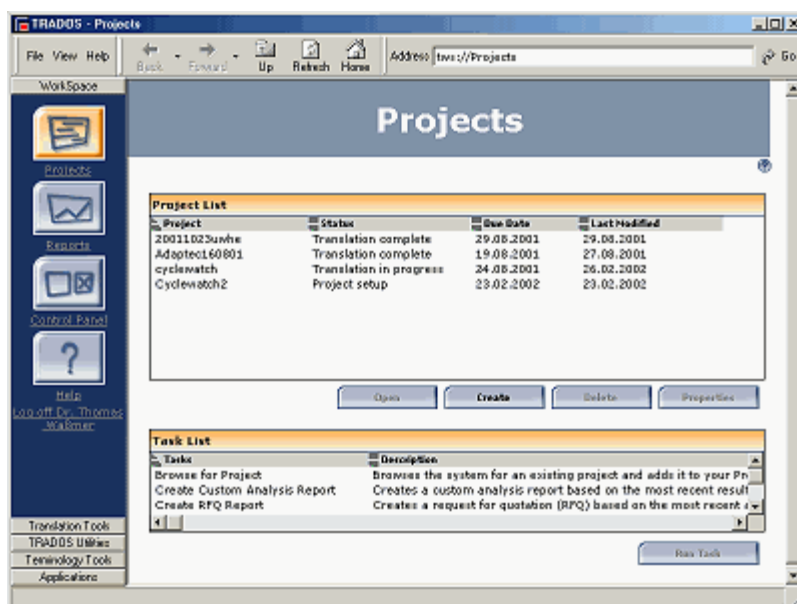


Fig. 1: The TRADOS WorkSpace is the central administration tool for all translation projects (TRADOS WorkSpace Files *.tws) including the folders for source and target files, supplements and analysis reports.

- **XTranslate:** This is another new feature in TRADOS 5, which enables project managers to transfer approved translations automatically from previous versions of bilingual documents into new versions of source documents. Translation Units (XUs) created by XTranslate are not touched during interactive or batch translations. Conversion and filter components for processing the most widely-used DTP and tagged text file formats, including XML, SGML, HTML, FrameMaker, Interleaf, QuickSilver, QuarkXPress, PageMaker and Ventura. These components are accessed through WorkSpace tasks (see fig. 2 in the link from the online sources):

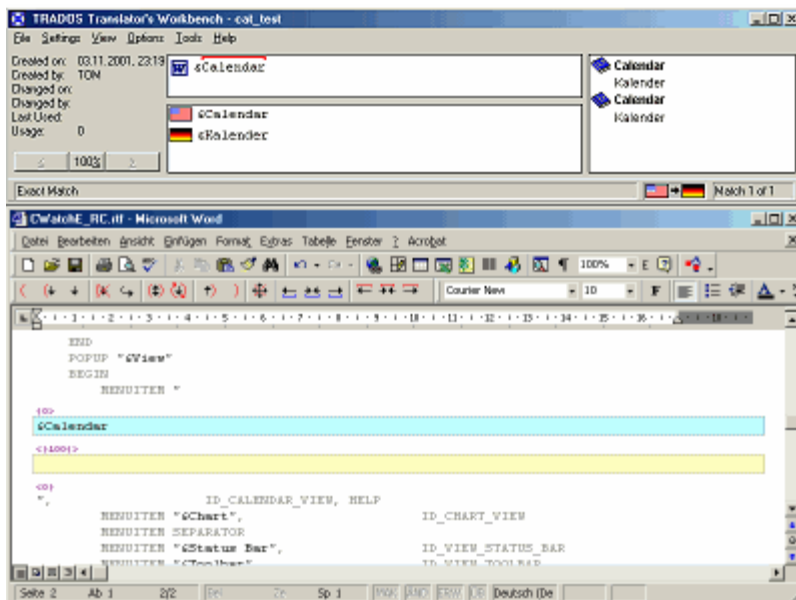


Fig. 2: Translating a RC file using the TRADOS Translator's Workbench (upper left) and MultiTerm (upper right) together with the MS Word Front-End (2nd row).

- **Translator's Workbench:** Being networkable, The Translator's Workbench is TRADOS' professional translation memory (TM) system. It can be fully integrated into a word processing environment (Microsoft Word) using a toolbar and several macros inside the word processor. The TM shows advanced, customizable fuzzy-match functionality with color-coded highlighting of all deviations to identify similar (and not just identical) entries in the translation memory. In addition, it can be run cross-linked to the terminology base MultiTerm (see the link in the online sources).

- **MultiTerm:** it is networkable and it represents a concept-oriented terminology database and management system. As with the TM, a powerful and robust fuzzy-index engine ensures that similar (and not just identical) phrases are found. Translations using the Translator's Workbench combined with MultiTerm allows a high terminological consistency and quality. In addition, MultiTerm helps translators and terminologists to store and manage their terminological knowledge in flexible, customizable databases. MultiTerm can be accessed from within the word processing environment. Through the XML conversion utility for termbases: MultiTerm Migration Tool (part of the TRADOS system), one can easily publish his/her terminology database over the Internet or Intranet using MultiTerm Web Access or any other XML-aware application and publishing system (see the link in the online sources).

3. THE TRANSLATION OF LABELS

Translation of labels and packaging definitely has a significant impact on any business and if the translator successfully translates and locates the labels and

packaging, the company will attract more customers. But there may be problems of compliance with most of the labeling legislation in E.U. For this reason, translators are carefully selected not only for their linguistic experience, but also for their specialized knowledge and experience. This major requirement is the translator's consistent use of terminology. I would like to emphasize that translators should collaborate with terminologists who are familiar with the meaning of legal, technical terms. Moreover, any translator must take into account the following:

a) Respect the source format

The general rule is that translators should try to maintain the format and style of the original text, thus creating an image of the clients' needs.

b) Specific rules concerning languages

Some of the language rules may vary from one language to another. For example, in French there is always a space before punctuation. In Spanish for example, inverted question marks and exclamation marks are at the beginning of the relevant phrase.

c) Display numerals

Often there are different conventions for writing numerals. Even things such as format times may vary, for example, in American English, the rule for writing numerals is month-day-year, so 05/12/2010, whereas British English uses day-month-year format. So the same example above will be 12.05.2010. There is a big difference, right? Well, for example, with medicines or food products which have a shelf life, using numerals not taking into account the American English or the British English could lead to many problems: the products, medicines will not be sold or they represent a serious risk to human health.

d) Capitalization

Capitalization is also an important aspect in translation. In English, capitalization is different from German (all nouns are capitalized) although they are Germanic languages.

e) Use of lists and numbered lists

It is important for the translator to know how the text will be used, including the use of lists and lists. For example, if the translator wants to use points to save space, all translations require verification to ensure their correct reading. If the obtained translations do not correspond to the original, it is important to find out why, as there may be some linguistic rules or conventions specific to a certain language (Latin languages versus Germanic languages). Many E.U companies give priority to brand image and for this reason the role of translation in branding is very important in the E.U.

f) Style and tone

It is very important to understand the purpose and the audience of a translation, such as a national sales promotion. For instance, the translator will adopt a different style and tone concerning external sales promotions for end users. It is also important for translators to understand the target country or the countries concerned.

g) Different types of translations

Different types of translation require a different approach. For example, legal translation must be the very image of the original. When they provide certified translations, translators have to mention that the translation is identical to the original text. However, when dealing with marketers, translators establish with the marketers some translation rules. Often translators are required to use *catchy language* in marketing slogans in order to attract more customers. In other cases, for instance when translating labels the *catchy language* must be avoided, in the sense that the translation of food labels, medicines must be clear, accurate because a translation which does not confer the message of the original text might have a negative effect on the company's turnover and reputation.

h) Agreed working methods

When translators work regularly with clients with whom they communicate efficiently, they can solve many linguistic problems and develop agreed working methods. The language use is provided by various provisions of the Community law which gives a special attention to the use of potentially dangerous products. Legislation on the use of languages aimed at:

- translating the labels in a professional manner by double-checking the translated labels (in this case other translators are involved),
- informing consumers adequately about the use of the products and promoting multilingual approaches,
- guaranteeing at the same time, the freedom of Member States concerning language use.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The digital age and globalization have triggered intensification of exchanges which changed the European business environment and at the level of the E.U the concept English - *lingua franca* is denied, whereas the concept of multilingualism is praised. Multilingualism is considered an important asset in today's business environment because companies adopt innovative business practices to deal with the multilingual trends.

These practices are based on multilingualism as a competitive advantage and the permanent use of the information technology (machine translation) as a method of eliminating the national and the linguistic barriers. The information technology

contributes to the improvement of the E.U linguistic sector in the sense that the drafting and the translation of documents are achieved very quickly, the E.U citizens, workers, clients being up-to-date with the E.U legislation.

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