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Community Interpreting at Greek and International Level: A Step Towards Professional Autonomy



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Community Interpreting–oriented Terminology Management Tools.

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Abstract

Unlike translators, who have a great variety of computer-assisted tools for terminology management, interpreters have not benefited from the same level of innovation. In fact, the task of community interpreter is to allow people who do not speak the official language(s) of the country to communicate with the providers of public services so as to facilitate full and equal access to legal, health, education, government and social services. Thus, having taken into account the special needs of community interpreters, in this paper we establish a set of parameters from the conclusions drawn from the literature review to assess to what extent terminology management tools meet these needs. Then, a selection of terminology management tools are analysed. From the results, conclusions are drawn which might suggest a need to take into account new proposals in order to implement terminology management in computer-assisted tools from the view of community interpreting as well as to inform new searching procedures used by trainees and community interpreters.

Keywords: *terminology management, computer-assisted tools, community interpreting, assessment, parameters.*

1. Introduction

Community interpreting is a service that is invariably rooted in the communities and societies that require and provide it. Thus, the role of community interpreters is “to enable people who are not fluent speakers of the official language(s) of the country to communicate with the providers of public services so as to facilitate full and equal access to legal, health, education, government and social services” (Roberts, 1994: 127).

Alternative terms have been used to describe this activity, as Mikkelson (2004) pointed out. For example, in the United Kingdom the preferred term is “public service interpreting”, while “cultural interpreting” is often used in Canada. Other designations include “dialogue interpreting” and “ad hoc interpreting”. However, “community interpreting” seems to be the term most widely accepted in the literature.

Community interpreting is distinguished from other types of interpreting, such as “conference interpreting” or “escort interpreting”, in that the services are provided to the residents of the community in which the interpreting takes place, not to conference delegates, diplomats or professionals travelling abroad to conduct business. In fact, the role of community interpreters differs in many aspects from the task undertaken by conference interpreters.

First of all, community interpreters primarily serve to ensure access to public services, so they are likely to work in institutional settings. In addition, they are more likely to be interpreting dialogue-like interactions than speeches, so they routinely interpret into and out of both or all of their working languages. Likewise, the presence of the community interpreter is much more noticeable in the communication process than is that of conference interpreter. Last but not least, community interpreters are often viewed as advocates or cultural brokers who go beyond the traditional neutral role of the interpreter. They do not merely carry out a

linguistic transfer, but also coordinate, mediate and negotiate cultural or social meaning (Valero Garcés, 2014: 28). In some cases, they serve as liaisons between two languages and two cultures, so they must have a high level of emotional stability in order to successfully perform their task as intermediary. Moreover, they must deal with service providers, many of whom do not know how to work with community interpreters and tend to ask them to perform tasks that are not directly associated with their profession but are more appropriate for social workers, e.g. making phone calls, explaining technical terms related to illnesses and treatments, filling out forms, writing reports, etc.

The current mass migration to Europe is raising the requirement for even more community interpreters to solve the barrier of interlinguistic communication among refugees and immigrants who need to have access to public services. Although the interest in community interpreting is growing in education and research (Valero Garcés, 2014: 27)—as demonstrated by the increasing number of published papers on this type of professional activity, international conferences organised and new initiatives developed, such as the establishment of an international standard (ISO, 2014)—a problem has arisen in relation to “a lack of adequate training and knowledge on the ethics of the profession as well as legal or other specialized terminology” (Valero Garcés, 2014: 29). Hence, the aim of this study is to establish the parameters from the conclusions drawn from the literature review to assess to what extent terminology management tools meet community interpreting needs.

2. Terminology for interpreting

Much attention has been devoted to terminology management for translators. However, the issue of terminology in interpreting has scarcely received the attention it deserves, especially if one considers the fact that interpreters are called upon to work in very different thematic scenarios in which they are given the task of transmitting highly specialized knowledge.

In fact, the first reports of discussions on terminology in interpreting date from the second half of the 1980s (Gile, 1985; 1986; 1987), and the topic resurfaced in the early 21st century (Rodríguez & Snell, 2009: 22).

Therefore, interpreters should, as other professionals do, benefit from the development of technology, which should bring about a considerable improvement of their working conditions (Costa et al., 2014a). However, language technology developments require more systematic research. To date, a limited number of studies have focused on the needs of interpreters regarding terminology (Gile, 1985; 1986; 1987; Moser-Mercer, 1992; Rodríguez & Snell, 2009; Bilgen, 2009; Costa et al., 2014a; 2014b; 2015). In these studies, it is commonly agreed that these tools that have been tailored to interpreters’ needs are few and need to be improved. In fact, they are described as insufficient and unable to fulfill all the necessary requirements (Costa et al., 2014a). Yet, at the same time, they are orientated toward conference interpreting. For example, Costa et al. (2015) present a ranking of terminology management tools based on conference interpreting needs.

| Terminology management tool | Score |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| SDL Multiterm | 77/100 |
| Acrolinx | 74/100 |
| Flashterm | 78/100 |
| Glossary Assistant | 53/100 |
| The Interpreters Wizard | 39/100 |

Chart 1: Terminology management tool score (Costa et al. 2015).

For any interpreter, the workflow begins the moment the contract is signed. Some years ago, interpreters used to read the material provided or pertinent literature if no material was provided in order to establish terminology, abbreviated forms and lists of proper names in the source language as well as in the target language. Although the use of the Internet and the introduction of computer-assisted interpreting tools have changed this procedure, interpreters still have limited time to prepare for new topics. In this regard, Stoll (2002) acknowledges that terminology research with tools tailored for interpreters frees up short-term memory and promotes the retrieval of more syntactic structure due to the fact that concepts in the database become quasi-active vocabulary for the interpreter.

Kutz (2003) distinguishes four stages of preparation for interpreting: theme-based preparation, linguistic preparation, translation preparation and interpreting preparation.

During theme-based preparation, interpreters become familiar with the subject field while defining the fields the records of the database and extracting terms specific to the subject field in order to compile a term database. As linguistic preparation, the interpreter analyses the compiled material and retrieves domain-specific terminology, for instance with an automatic term extractor such as *TermoStat Web 3.0*. (Drouin, 2003), as well as other data, such as synonyms, hyperonyms, acronyms and other abbreviated forms. During the translation process, interpreters transfer terms into the target language using data extracted from corpora in the working languages. For the interpreting process, the interpreter eliminates redundancies and highlights verbs, key words and important concepts. As for the terminology work done afterwards, it should be pointed out that the glossaries compiled beforehand are not finished products but active tools that may need corrections and additions at the end of the interpretation session to prevent any substantial loss of information. Consequently, this procedure demonstrates that the preparation for the interpretation is a careful task that involves, above all, good preparation with respect to terminology. It should not be forgotten that priority should be given to semasiological and associative principles because onomasiological structures may slow down the interpretation process, as stated by Rodríguez & Snell (2009: 27).

Having explained the essential role of terminology in interpreting preparation, we would like to focus on the particular characteristics of terminology management for community interpreting.

2.1 Terminology management for community interpreting

As we have previously detailed, creating a record of terms in a database is an essential task not only for translators but also for any type of interpreter. The question which arises at this point is related to the sort of information a community interpreter needs. Some of the fields are identical to those used in translation; for example, any entry in a terminological database needs to include the subject field, the subfield, the term in the source language and the equivalent in the target language, the definition and an example. However, the community interpreters also need other elements related to the concept, such as hyperonyms or synonyms, or the use of term in its context, e.g. abbreviated forms, proper names or names of products. Indeed, the community interpreter must record complete information on the register and preferences of the client, the pronunciation, and the phraseology units and verb-noun collocations that will make it easier to reconstruct the message.

Regarding the visual format of the entry, it should help the interpreter to locate information at a glance. It is essential to consider the possibility of developing small databases that vary according to the area of specialty or according to the situation and the client, as well as to avoid macro-databases at all costs. Mini-databases should be multilingual and include an option allowing the interpreter to switch the source and target languages.

In terms of software requirements, Rodríguez & Snell (2009: 27) distinguish five attributes that terminology tools for community interpreting must include among their features:

1. Fast speed of consultation.
2. Intuitive navigation.
3. The possibility of updating the terminology record while interpreting or just after the interpretation.
4. Considerable freedom to define the basic structure.
5. Multiple ways of filtering data depending on the interpreter's needs.

In order to carry out the terminology work preparation, several tools and applications have been implemented to fulfil the requirements of different interpreting contexts and modes. Even though some interpreters still store information and terminology on scraps of paper or Excel spreadsheets, there are some tools specially tailored for storing, managing and searching terminology. They are called terminology management systems. They are specifically designed to help the interpreter collect, maintain and access terminological data. According to Bilgen (2009: 28-35), they can be classified as stand-alone tools or integrated tools which work within a translation environment.

A huge number of tools are available to address the workflow and needs of community interpreters, some of which we have selected to assess in relation to community interpreters' needs.

3. Methodology of analysis

3.1 Terminology management tools for interpreters

First of all, we need to define the tools to be assessed in our research. In this regard, we have found multiple tools available to help interpreters manage terminology. For example, Costa et al. (2014a, 2014b, 2015) analyse some standalone terminology systems from a general interpreter view.

Due to the fact that a large number of terminology management tools are available on the market, in this paper we limit the analysis to the terminology tools that are most used by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) (Rütten, 2014a; Rütten, 2014b). We would have liked to use the results given by an international association of community interpreters, but unfortunately, no such international association has been created yet.

A short description of each of the tools that will be analysed is provided as follows:

- Glossary Assistant is a free intuitive tool available from Google Play that provides intuitive search. It covers multiple alphabets, enables large glossaries, and is only limited by the memory available on the device. Existing glossaries in other formats

can be imported. It relies very much on short-touch, long-touch and swiping, and viewing and sorting it is really intuitive.

- Interplex is a multilingual glossary management program for interpreters and translators that can be used easily and quickly while the interpreter is working. Glossaries in other formats can be imported into Interplex, and the user can search them all at once (or search selected glossaries) as well as edit them. It does not, however, allow for classifying and filtering terms by customer, subject field, project, date, etc. It also runs on iOS devices, but in these cases the version is simpler and is named Interplex Lite for iPhone and Interplex HD for iPad.
- InterpretBank is a terminology management tool specifically designed for interpreters. It supports easy glossary sharing with colleagues, synchronization on more computers, import and export functions and automatic translation. It has a powerful conference modality, called ConferenceMode, for looking up glossaries while working and an easy-to-use tool to memorize terms. To help the interpreter prepare for a new assignment, it can interact with the web to search for translations and definitions or look up terms in interpreter reference texts.
- Interpreters Help is a browser-based web application which works on any device. For Mac OS users, there is an additional program called Boothmate which works offline as well. It is organised in glossaries with straightforward editing functions, an unlimited number of language columns and a limited number of additional columns: comment, category, definition, acronym and other. It enables the user to keep the terminology up to date on all devices: cloud, PC, tablet and smartphone. It is also possible to share it with colleagues. The search function is very swift, with the hit list being narrowed down with every additional character the user types.
- Lookup is a web-based tool that has a great quick-search function: when the user types the first few letters of a word, the hit list appears. It is limited to four languages, of which only three can be displayed at a time. It has many data fields: customer, subject, project, etc., and even semantic relations.
- Terminus is a multilingual terminology management system designed by interpreters for interpreters. Among its key features, it includes fast search, easy importation and exportation to other formats and the possibility of classifying data into different glossary, company or subject groups. In addition, when searching for terminology, the search can be limited to a particular subject field.

Now that the tools have been presented, we are going to apply the assessment criteria to these tools.

3.2 Analysis parameters for terminology management tools

Taking into account the needs of interpreters and community interpreters in particular, we have designed our own parameters of assessment based on previous papers (Bilgen, 2009; Rodríguez & Snell, 2009; Costa et al. 2014a, 2014b, 2015).

First of all, we decided to classify the parameters into four groups depending on the aspects they are related to; that is, whether they are part of the software features or are related to the tool's usability, the search engine or the database design and the recording features.

Regarding software features, we verify whether interpreters are included among the intended users of the tool. In addition, we determine whether they are standalone or integrated tools. We consider standalone tools to be more practical because they can be used without a suite of products. The price of the product and the possibility to use it offline are also interesting, given that on some occasions community interpreters must work in public places where no Internet connexion is available. The last parameter in this section corresponds to the operating system requirements. A good terminology management system for interpreters should work not only with Windows and iOS but also with Android, because in some cases, the only device the interpreter can work with in a public establishment is a tablet or a smartphone.

The second section is related to usability; that is, the tool should be easy to use because community interpreters cannot spend much time trying to learn how to use a new tool, as their efforts should focus on preparing for interpreting.

As regards the third section, it is devoted to the tool’s search function. On the one hand, the search engine should be fast and give results in a short period of time. In addition, it should enable different possibilities of filtering data depending on the community interpreter’s needs, e.g. only the term and the equivalent, the equivalent and hyperonyms, etc.

The last section is related to the database. Its structure should be defined by the community interpreter according to the needs of each project. It should allow the possibility of updating the record once the interpreting has taken place. In addition, it should allow importing and exporting records to different formats, such as .TXT, .PDF, .XLSX, .XML and .TMX.

4. Analysis and results

In order to describe the results with accuracy, we present the selected parameters in a table to indicate whether the terminology management tools selected fulfil each of the requirements.

| TMS | Software requirements | | | | | Use | Searches | | Database | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | For interpreters | Standalone or integrated | Price | Online/Offline | OS | User friendly | Fast search engine | Data filtering | Structure design | Record update | Import/Export |
| Glossary Assistant | Yes | S | Free | Offline | Android /Windows | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Interplex UE | Yes | S | \$75 | Offline | Android/Windows/iOS | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| InterpretBank | Yes | S | 89€ | Both | Android/Windows/iOS | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Interpreters Help | Yes | S (web) | 19.99€/month | Online | Android/Windows/iOS | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Lookup | No | S (web) | On request | Online | Android/Windows/iOS | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Terminus | Yes | S | CHF 148 | Both | Windows | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Chart 2: Terminology management tool assessment.

The chart indicated that some of the tools are more fit for use by community interpreters than others. Although the terminology management tools are said to be the most popular among interpreters, one of them, Lookup, does not include interpreters among its potential users.

Regarding availability, only one of the selected tools, Glossary Assistant, is free. The five other tools need to be purchased, and some of them are affordable, but others are pricey.

In addition, we found that two of the selected terminology management tools (Interpreter Help and Lookup) are web-based, which means they do not work if the user is offline. Hence, these tools are not really useful for community interpreting, as the interpreter does not know in advance whether the Internet will be available on-site.

Another constraint that we detected is related to the operating system. Those community interpreters with Apple devices will not be able to manage terminology with tools such as Glossary Assistant or Terminus.

On the other hand, it must be said that the interfaces of the analysed tools are friendly enough that anyone can use them. Nevertheless, Lookup does not provide a high-speed search engine or data filtering options. In two of the assessed tools, Glossary Assistant and Interpreter Help, it is not possible to filter data.

Moreover, Interpreters Help does not have the option to design the structure of the database, so community interpreters cannot create fields they consider to be relevant according to the community interpreting project.

One positive feature that every tool fulfils is the fact that the database can be updated at any moment, which means that the community interpreter can modify the content whenever he or she wants to add or improve the existing data. Besides, all of the assessed software allows importing and exporting data from and to other formats.

To sum up, the obtained results are encouraging. Community interpreters have tools in the market which can partly meet their needs when they are dealing with terminology. However, some improvements need to be carried out.

Conclusion

Translation management tools have become essential to community interpreters in their work. They contribute to storing, classifying and quickly retrieving expert knowledge, so they help community interpreters work more efficiently.

Hence, in the near future, new versions of the assessed tools or even new terminology management tools should fulfil each of the requirements previously described in order to meet community interpreters' needs: they should be affordable; enable use in different devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops; be user-friendly, be able to import and export data; and have quick search engines that allow different query possibilities. In addition, community interpreters should be able to create their own database designs and update the records at any time.

Lastly, among our plans for the future, we would like to analyse other translation management tools available in the market as well as contrast the needs and results of other types of interpreters, such as conference interpreters.

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InterpretBank: www.interpretbank.de

Interpreters Help: <https://interpretershelp.com/>

Lookup: <http://www.dog-gmbh.de/software-products/lookup.html?L=1>

Terminus: <http://www.wintringham.ch/cgi/ayawp.pl?T=terminus>