

WORK PACKAGE 4: MEDIATION

General description, March 2014

WP 4 looks at the ways different forms of mediation between languages can enhance mobility and integration in Europe. The innovative aspect of the project is that all four forms (translation technologies, public-service interpreting, intercomprehension and lingua franca) are modelled as *complementary* ways of solving language problems, and are further considered to be complementary to language learning as a general strategy. Almost all previous studies deal with these various strategies in isolation, often as mutually exclusive strategies, resulting in blind policy assumptions like, for example, the notion that the provision of translation and interpreting services will curtail rather than enhance language learning, or that the use of intercomprehension and a lingua franca will lead to a lowering of language competence. We seek to uncover strategic relations that are rather more subtle and less antagonistic.

The methodological steps common to the four tasks are: 1) synthesis of data from previous research (particularly working from projects financed by DG Translation since 2008 on the translation industry, the translation profession, volunteer translation, intercomprehension, lingua franca, and translation in language learning – a good part of which were authored by scholars involved in the current project), 2) remodelling of the various solutions, with special attention to standardizing terms and concepts for the purposes of the project, 3) longitudinal case studies of mobile subjects engaged in process of integration, using interviews and narrative analysis, and incorporating attention to the *affective values* of different languages and different communication solutions, and 4) extraction of strategic relations from these accounts, along with estimates of variable efforts, benefits and optimal solutions, which can then feed into the economic modelling of the MIME project as a whole.

In addition to reconsidered “best practices” and commentated glossaries for each of our communication strategies, the deliverables will include a compendium of very readable, narrative accounts of real longitudinal experiences of mediated multilingualism, framed in such a way that they can assist in making policy-making more context-sensitive, as well as a new conceptual model of how mediation can enhance rather than hinder social integration and mobility.

The WP will work closely with WP 6, which deals with “frontiers of multilingualism” (our cases will necessarily be more restricted to mainstream situations and public services), and with WP 3 “education”, since we seek to challenge the assumption that mediation is in some way the opposite of language learning.

Task 4.1. Language technologies and industries

Recent developments in language technologies make rough machine-translation (MT) solutions available to all, in both spoken and written forms, and might thus appear to

solve numerous problems of multilingual communication. The first aim of this task is to identify the situations in which this kind of solution is likely to prevail, both through promoting volunteer mediation (“crowdsourcing”) and through enhancing professional mediation (translators who become posteditors of machine-translation output). The second aim, however, is to recognize that the technologies are also producing new forms of mobility, where cultural experiences and language learning come in the same virtual environment as the mediated experience of multilingualism – the technologies create the site for new forms of multilingualism, even as they appear to mediate between the old forms.

The task will review the existing studies of situations where MT is cost-effective, both in companies and in social media. Any quantitative data, however, have a short use-by date in this fast-moving field. Our more substantial concern must thus be to identify deep-seated trends, leading to predictions of the ways MT mediation is likely to interact with the other forms of mediation.

The methodological steps will involve: 1) a much-needed review of concepts and terms, 2) case studies of younger subjects, who are more likely to use MT solutions in planning and negotiating mobility, 3) dialogue with stakeholders, including representatives of the language industries, on the ways in which technologies can contribute to social objectives, as well as financial profits, and 4)

Identification of logics of success, where MT is most likely to replace professional mediation, where it is an aid to the work of professionals, and where it merely diffuses false ideas of what mediation is (the abundance of mistranslations that are infiltrating many databases). Longitudinal case studies in conjunction with the other tasks in this WP should also help identify the causes of institutional *resistance* to MT technologies.

Literature:

European Commission. (2012): Crowdsourcing translation. Directorate General for Translation.

García, Ignacio. (2010): Is Machine Translation Ready Yet? *Target* 22 (1): 7-21.

Pym, Anthony. (2004): *The Moving Text: Localization, Translation and Distribution*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Task 4.2. Translation and Interpreting

The recently increased need for Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT) has given rise to an increase in studies on this field. Intense scholarly interest in PSIT has revealed that standards and training principles valid for conference interpreting have often been uncritically transferred to the field of public service interpreting. For example, healthcare interpreters are portrayed or taught as mere conduits or ghosts in the interpreted interactions. Further, the differences between the roles of translators and interpreters in different areas of PSIT (whether working in court, healthcare, state administration or for police, for example in asylum procedures) are considerable (Angelleli 2008). Clarifying the concept of PSIT is thus of crucial importance, requiring attention to each specific field.

In a first stage, we will critically re-read and review data from previous research in order to make a preliminary inventory of potential problems and strategies. In a second stage, selected codes of conduct, standards of practice and codes of ethics will be contrasted to the findings and positions in scholarly work, in order to define the points of convergence and divergence. This survey will also provide an insight into the variety of practices and demands of different areas of PSIT. Then, a case study guided by this will be carried out with selected users of PSIT services, particularly in hospitals and the courts. The analytic focus will be on the challenges faced by people who do not understand the language of the host country and the specific moments in which PSIT services are required.

In PSIT the areas that have received most scholarly attention up to now have been the interaction and the role of the interpreter (more than that of the translator) in the interpreted situation. There has been some research done on training public service interpreters and translators, but there is still a lack of scholarly attention given to how such services are perceived by the user. Finally, some practical solutions will be suggested regarding PSIT provision, training for PSIT and strengthening the status of public service translators and interpreters, since we believe that the training and public recognition of interpreters and translators for public services would both increase the employability of migrants and decrease the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Literature:

Angelelli, Claudia. (2008): The role of the interpreter in the healthcare setting: A plea for a dialogue between research and practice. In Valero-Garcés, Carmen and Anne Martin (eds). *Crossing Borders in Community Interpreting: Definitions and dilemmas*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 147-164.

Edwards, R., Temple, B., & Alexander, C. (2005): Users' experiences of interpreters: The critical role of trust. *Interpreting* 7 (1), 77-95.

Pym, Anthony, François Grin, Claudio Sfreddo, Andy L. J. Chan. (2012): *The status of the translation profession in the European Union*. Luxembourg: European Commission.

Task 4.3. Intercomprehension

Intercomprehension combines comprehension skills in a language related to the speaker's mother tongue (or potentially any language known by them) and expression skills in the mother tongue, in an asymmetric multilingual context. So it could prove a particularly stimulating strategy to meet the "multilingual challenge" because it encourages the speaker to adopt a different behavior when speaking their mother tongue when in interaction with speakers of other languages. However, even if intercomprehension seems to be naturally integrative, its potential in many sectors of human society remains to be specified. A first aim will thus be to evaluate the operational capability and efficiency of intercomprehension in terms of responses to the challenge of mobility and inclusion. In parallel, recent studies have begun to explore the conditions of

dissemination of intercomprehension in the context of related languages (for example, Scandinavian languages) or neighboring languages (for example, between Romance and Germanic languages), even beyond the neighboring languages (for example, between Romance and Slavic languages). So a second goal will be to identify operational practices leading to efficient dissemination of intercomprehension in European language policy.

The methodological approach will be integrative. In a first phase, we will collect fundamental and empirical data on intercomprehension and its links with three other axes listed in WP4 thanks to information supplied by WP3 and WP4 to elaborate a representative corpus. In a second phase, we will evaluate the prospective potential and efficiency of IC in multiple sectors and circumstances, and compare the potential of the four practices selected. In a third phase, we will identify the interdisciplinary practices (linguistic, sociolinguistic and behavioral) previously described, leading to efficient dissemination of intercomprehension, by studying the dynamic cross-linguistic and intercultural flows about approaches in intercomprehension. For the duration of the research, sociometric data and multiparametric statistics will be reassessed and adjusted continuously by feedback to the best mobility/inclusion trade-off.

Literature

- Blanche-Benveniste, Cl. et al. (1997). *EuRom 4: método do ensino simultâneo das línguas românicas - método para la enseñanza simultánea de las lenguas románicas - metodo di insegnamento simultaneo delle lingue romanze - méthode d'enseignement simultané des langues romanes*. Scandicci (Firenze): Nuova Italia.
- Börestam Uhlmann, U. (2002). Interscandinavian comprehension and scandinavian commutivity : ideal or real ? In Caduc & Castagne (eds.) 99-112.
- Castagne, Eric (2012). “ Intercompréhension et dynamique des inférences : des langues voisines aux langues non voisines ”. In Bonvino, Caddeo et Pippa (eds.) *Intercompreensão-Redinter* n°3 (LLP Multilateral NETWORK) pp. 81-94.
- Conti, V., & Grin, F. (2008) *S'entendre entre langues voisines : vers l'intercompréhension*. Chêne-Bourg : Éditions Georg.
- Gooskens, Charlotte, Sebastian Kürschner and Renée van Bezooijen (2011). “Intelligibility of Low and High German to speakers of Dutch”. *Dialectologia*. Special Issue II, pp. 35-63.
- Svenonius et al. (2003). *Intercomprehension in Germanic Languages Online*, www.hum.uit.no/a/svenonius/lingua/

Task 4.4. Lingua franca

The most cursory review of the literature reveals, first, that there is limited agreement on the definition of lingua franca (LF) and, second, that research on it has been restricted to the study of one language, namely English. Clarifying the concept of LF is therefore of crucial importance. In MIME, LF is regarded as the use of a common language between people with different linguistic repertoires. It is seen as one of several strategies for meeting multilingual challenges, while the range of languages used as LF is not restricted

to one particular language (e.g., English). In designing the research methodology we have to consider the fact that lingua franca communication is extraordinary diverse and heterogeneous in terms of its participants, modes and purpose of communication, as well as levels of language proficiency. Case studies, therefore, have to envisage a broad continuum of lingua franca terrains, ranging from an international cookery course for tourists in Italy to top-level business conferences.

Research on English as a lingua franca has produced a large number of results on the micro-level (mainly with regard to oral communication), which provide insight into a number of linguistic features. Empirical studies on lingua franca have to go beyond this by challenging the conflation of communication with oral communication and, above all, by studying macro-sociolinguistic realities, including psychological aspects of language use, identity-building in lingua franca contexts and the socioeconomic implications of using a lingua franca. Comprehensive data will be gathered through qualitative interviews to discover the extent to which various mediation strategies complement each other, for example, by focusing on the specific challenges of translating lingua franca texts and the use of intercomprehension techniques and language technologies in LF interactions.

Literature:

Jenkins, Jennifer (2007): *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: OUP.

Jørgensen, J. Normann (ed.) (2011): *A Toolkit for Transnational Communication in Europe*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.

Knapp, Karlfried & Meierkord, Christiane (eds.) (2002): *Lingua Franca Communication*. Frankfurt/M.: Lang.

Seidlhofer, Barbara (2011): *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: OUP.