

# FROM THE EDITOR

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## INTRODUCTION

### PSIT AND TECHNOLOGY. CHALLENGES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Volume 5 of the *FITISPos International Journal* attempts to introduce the reader to the unavoidable topic of the use of technology in public services communication. As a necessary form of intralinguistic and intercultural communication, PSIT provides people with the opportunity to participate, favors equal access, and helps to overcome or reduce discrimination. Advances in technology and its application in all facets of our lives, both daily and on a professional level, has also led to additional efforts being made to apply these means to translation and interpreting in different fields, such as legal, administrative, or healthcare settings. The number of examples is multiplying with each passing day: the creation of multilingual webpages, standardized forms in a multitude of languages, mobile phone applications with a variety of objectives, a plethora of online dictionaries and glossaries that can be added to and revised, machine translations with ever-improving accuracy, and more and more powerful search engines. To that list, we must also add practical aspects like cost savings, which is a highly valued factor within institutions regarding the services they provide to society. Legislation is also making headway and incorporates, permits, or incentivizes the use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) in legal processes and a variety of procedures, while, at the same time, it attempts to guarantee the correct use of said technologies and their compliance with current regulations. That means developing specific laws and standards that go beyond national borders like the *Future European Regulation on Data Protection*, ratified on 27 April 2016, whose application will become effective two years later.

This rapid development of ICTs and this set of tools that facilitate information and communication processes thanks to the advances and developments in technology has propelled us into the digital age. Having said that, these advances also bring about new important challenges and difficulties that greatly affect the population that does not have command over the communication language(s) used in public services and that is/are the focus of attention regarding PSIT.

The European Parliament Draft Report on language equality in the digital age in Europe published on 26 February 2018 will help us demonstrate some of those obstacles. The report points out a widening technology gap between well-resourced languages and less-resourced languages, whether the latter are official, co-official, or non-official in the EU. It stresses that lesser-used European languages are significantly disadvantaged due to an acute lack of tools and resources, as well as a lack of researchers with the necessary technological skills. This assessment can, without a doubt, be extended to speakers of non-official languages in the Union, but with increasing use, such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, or other Asian and African languages, who not only do not have technology training and resources, but also frequently lack education, or specific knowledge in order to serve as linguistic or cultural intermediaries between the population seeking public services and their providers. Such differences further deepen the digital divide between widely-used and lesser-used languages while the digitalization of society continues to increase. A terrible paradox

then arises: with increased digitalization comes an increased digital divide; progress and poverty together like two sides of the same coin.

A worrying observation in the European Parliament Draft Report (2018) is that

the Digital Single Market remains fragmented by significant language barriers, thus hindering online commerce, communication via social networks, and the exchange of cultural content, as well as the wider deployment of pan-European public services.

The conclusion drawn from the preceding paragraphs is the need to reduce the digital divide and, thus, promote respect for linguistic diversity and compliance with the fundamental right to understand and to be understood in the multilingual societies in which we live.

Some solutions could be to:

1. Share successful policy strategies in the field of language technologies with minority languages.
2. Exchange experiences and good practices regarding the application of new technologies in PSIT.
3. Invest in the development of minimum language resources such as lexicons, speech records, translation memories, corpora and encyclopedic contents, which are useful for effective and necessary communication for translators and interpreters who often mention the lack of said resources for certain language combinations.
4. Promote research and provide it with sufficient funding to enable the development of innovative technologies and services and to contribute to the reduction of the technology gap between languages.
5. Boost the transfer of knowledge and technology with the creation of platforms and applications that enable the sharing of technology-related resources.
6. Extend the Digital Language Diversity Project instead of pursuing the digital single market.
7. Develop education policies in accordance with current educational needs related to both the linguistic diversity in society and to language technology.
8. Raise awareness among schoolchildren, students, and future professionals of the career opportunities in the language technology and linguistic diversity industry.
9. Promote the use of language technologies within cultural and educational exchanges with the aim of reducing the barriers that linguistic diversity can pose to intercultural dialogue.
10. Raise awareness among public bodies and citizens of the benefits of having quality online services, content, and products available in the most-used languages in their field.
11. Improve access to online services and information in different languages taking advantage of already existing advances such as machine translation, speech recognition, or remote interpreting in order to improve the accessibility of those services.
12. Increase collaboration between research, industry, public and private data owners, and language service providers, as well as facilitate interoperability to share and develop core language resources (corpora, lexicons, ontologies, etc.) for communication.

In short, the aim is to ensure that technological development in general and language technologies in particular contribute to the equality of all European citizens in their daily lives, regardless of the languages they speak. Is that what really happens? Some facts, such as the following, seem to indicate that, in fact, it does:

Most conferences on translation include new technologies among its proposed topics. Each event is presented as a distinctive act in which translators, interpreters, researchers, translation

companies, language service providers, and international organizations can interact, exchange ideas, and debate current trends. Contributions may be sent regarding any topic related to the technology utilized in translation and interpreting from CAT tools to machine translation (MT) in its most recent and multiple specialties. There are more and more publications regarding automatic post-editing tools or new advances in MT like Neural Machine Translations (NMT), Statistical Machine Translation (SMT), Rule-Based Machine Translation or training automatic translation engines, including natural language processing for translation and interpreting, mobile technologies, and automatic evaluation of translation quality, to name a few topics.

Close interaction between technology and the practice of translation and interpreting is sought (while also bragged about in some circles). In turn, its adoption in daily practice is demanded, but at such a velocity that it runs the risk of its use going beyond control, on the one hand, by the professionals, associations, users, as well as by the communities that translators and interpreters serve, and, on the other hand, by the trainers and researchers. Exchanging human practice for technology leads to a change in expectations and new pressures and, therefore, a change in our actions.

We are now at a moment when it is necessary to create synergies between technologies and translation. To understand each other. To try to speak the same language. In the words of Forcada (Alcina 2017: 126), president of the European Association of Machine Translations (EAMT):

I believe that from the technology domain we have really tended to promote solutions without understanding the problems very well, to treat the translation community as if it were enlightened despotism: “everything for the people, but without the people.” On the other hand, a lot of mistrust is seen in the translation community, probably because of what I have just said, and also because the technologies have not measured up to what they promised to be. Translation work is very complex and it is sometimes seen in an excessively simplified way from a technology standpoint.

However, we can understand each other. Forcada advocates applying the European directive called “Responsible Research and Innovation” (RRI) (1). The directive recommends that all actors in the research and innovation chain, including users, be involved. The EU proposal known as MT@EC (Machine Translation at European Commission) is a step in that direction. MT@EC, also known as *eTranslation*, is presented by the EU as a free service designed to offer secure translation for public administrations in the EU and its Member States, as well as EU institutions and agencies. For the time being, it works best with texts about issues related to the EU. It is, without a doubt, a way of reinforcing and bringing to the forefront, once again, one of the fundamental objectives of the EU: to protect multilingualism.

This special issue of *FITISPos-IJ* gathers some experiences and/or applications of new technologies, as well as some results from research on the use, development, and future of technology in PSIT fields.

The articles that constitute this volume, organized in alphabetical order by author, serve to share more information regarding the dizzying advances of technology in Translation and Interpreting Studies and in PSIT. The section begins with an article by Henry Liu, invited by the publishers of this volume of *FITISPos IJ* due to his experience and international recognition in multilingual settings. Henry Liu's article, with its challenging title, “Help or Hinder? The Impact of Technology on the Role of Interpreters” (in Spanish “¿Ayuda o estorbo? El impacto de la tecnología en el papel del intérprete”) outlines his vision regarding the evolution of the role of the interpreter and translator in these settings, the strengthening of the deontology of the profession, and the expectations and effects of technology both in professional practice and in research training.

Abi-Mikasa and Eingrieber and in “Training Video-Interpreters for Refugee Languages in the German-Speaking DACH Countries: The SAVD Initiative”, presents an educational experience of video-interpreting carried out in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland after the 2015 refugee crisis. In

addition to presenting the course, the opinions held by course participants are shared by means of a survey carried out after the training.

Bianchini and Pisani, in “Didactic Proposal for Teaching Translation Technologies in Undergraduate Education”, describes, in detail, a didactic proposal for the incorporation of technology in public translator and interpreter training in an Argentinian university. After his explanation, he points out some of the challenges found, such as the difficulties of integrating said training into other subjects and into other general study plans or the lack of adequate infrastructure.

Symseridou, in “The Web as a Corpus and for Building Corpora in the Teaching of Specialised Translation: The Example of Texts in Healthcare”, emphasizes the importance of documentation skills in translator training and advocates direct participation by students in the development of specialized corpora. From a practical standpoint, this article examines using the web as a mega-corpus that can be read directly with the help of commercial search engines like Google and introduces the WebBootCat software as an automated means of developing corpora.

Vitalaru and Rodriguez Galán, in “Open Education and Translation Teaching through MOOC Courses in Spain and the United Kingdom”, analyze and compare general aspects related to their creation and more specific aspects such as the objectives, the structure, the topics and different design strategies in the MOOCs related to PSIT and available in the countries mentioned. They warn of the scarce number of initiatives that exist at this time, but also of the enormous potential that this modality of training has. The article finishes with a series of general recommendations to ensure success in said courses.

In the *Interview* section, José Luis Vega, Head of Department, Alberto Rivas, translator in charge of quality, and Luis González, terminologist, all of them from the Spanish Department of the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission, speak to us about the role that technology plays within translation in the EU and the most-used tools, as well as the importance of quality and the controls implemented to ensure it. They also comment on the changes that technology is provoking in terms of the translator profile and the update of IATE as an invaluable tool for the user.

The *Book Review* section includes reviews of various books or recent collections of articles covering a wide range of topics and different fields, giving accounts of the complex circle within which PSIT is integrated. The analyzed texts are *Teaching Dialogue Interpreting* (Cirilo & Niemants, 2017), *Comparative Law for Legal Translators* (Soriano-Barabino, 2016), *New Insights into Arabic Translation and Interpreting* (Taibi ed., 2016), and *Superando límites en Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos. Beyond Limits in Public Service Interpreting and Translation* (Valero-Garcés et al. eds., 2018).

*The Research Corner* includes various recently defended doctoral dissertations covering quite a diverse range of topics that, once again, confirm the advances of PSIT research. The titles alone shed much light on their contents, which we encourage you to read. They are the following:

- *La presencia mediática de la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos a través del análisis de discursos en la Red / The Media Coverage of Public Service Interpreting and Translation through the Analysis of Online Discourses*, by Carmen Cedillo Corrochano (2017).
- *Aproximación al diseño y elaboración de un diccionario sanitario trilingüe en línea (español-rumano-inglés) / Approach to the Design and Creation of a Trilingual Healthcare Online Dictionary (Spanish-Romanian-English)*, by Liliana Illie (2017).
- *Estudio sobre la enseñanza de traducción en Tailandia y diseño de una propuesta didáctica / Study about Translation Teaching in Thailand and Creation of a Didactic Proposal*, by Thanita Sirinit (2017).
- *La traducción jurídica del Código Penal de España al chino. Análisis de los problemas de traducción y propuesta didáctica / Legal Translation of the Spanish Penal Code into*

*Chinese. Analysis of Translation Problems and Didactic Proposal*, by Yanping Tan (2017).

- *Aplicación de estudios sobre el lenguaje en zonas en conflicto: el caso del intérprete de guerra / Language Studies Applied to Conflict Zones: The Case of the War Interpreter*, by Yolanda Moreno Bello (2017)
- *Planificación lingüística de la lengua de signos en el ámbito educativo de la Comunidad Autónoma de Galicia / Linguistic Planification of the Sign Language in The Educational Field in The Autonomous Community of Galicia*, by Cristina González Abelaira (2018).
- *La práctica de la traducción jurídica: problemas y dificultades en la traducción de sentencias inglés-español en dos casos de Derecho Penal y Civil / Legal Translation Practice: Problems and Difficulties in the Translation of English and Spanish Sentences for Two Cases from Criminal and Civil Law*, by Verónica Fabiana Pérez Guarnieri (2017).
- *Museos, mediación cultural y artes visuales; perfiles profesionales del ámbito educativo / Museums, Intercultural Mediation and Visual Arts: Professionals Profiles in the Educational Field*, by María Vidagal Murgui (2016).

Reference is also made to *Humanterm*, an R&D&I project carried out with funding from the Universidad Europea de Madrid, with the general aim of creating a terminological multilingual glossary (Spanish-English-French-Chinese-Russian) for translators working in the humanitarian field, which contributes to reducing the scarcity of electronic resources. This section also includes a list of new tools related to PSIT and a selection of various events that will take place in 2018.

The *Working Papers* section deserves a special mention in this volume for its unity regarding topic and because of the linguistic and cultural diversity that it features.

El Jirari, in “La influencia de las asimetrías institucionales en la traducción jurídica y administrativa: Estudio de caso: España y Marruecos” (“The Influence of Institutional Asymmetries on Legal and Administrative Translation: Case study: Spain and Morocco”) calls the attention to the significant institutional asymmetry between these two countries and the need to carry out a comparative analysis within the framework of the legal systems that transcends the purely terminological and linguistic field in order to help translators in their task.

Illie, in “La terminología informatizada y la traducción en lenguas minoritarias. Reflexiones” (“Computerized Terminology and Translation in Minority Languages. Reflections”) insists on the need for specialization and the role of computerized terminology in order to carry out a teaching proposal in the Spanish-Romanian-English language combination. Her proposal aims to increase the translational dexterity of future professionals and to facilitate their work in a rapidly evolving multimedia context with the goal of offering some good final products.

Sirinit, in her article “Análisis de los errores de traducción de los alumnos tailandeses en la traducción del texto con elementos culturales (español-tailandés)” (“Analysis of Translation Errors of Thai Students in the Translation of a Text With Cultural Elements (Spanish-Thai)”), presents the results of an analysis of translation errors made by Thai students in a Spanish to Thai translation of a text with cultural elements in the Thai educational context. This work leads to drawing conclusions with respect to developing a more comprehensive translation program in a language combination with hardly any materials available.

Zhang, in “The Overview of the Spanish Translation Course of the Spanish Philology Degree in China” (“An Overview of the Spanish Translation Course of the Hispanic Philology Degree in China”), presents a critical vision of the current situation regarding teaching Spanish translation in China at a time of mutual interest from the respective languages and cultures. With that in mind, it offers certain guidelines to help correct this situation and to train qualified professionals facing the growing demand of translators who work in the Chinese-Spanish language combination.

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