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Gerhard Budin

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TRALOGY

Report of the Session 4 of Tralogy: Tools for Translators

Gerhard Budin
Rapporteur

TRALOGY I - Session 4
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This session was chaired by Anca Greere.

The keynote speech was given by Alex Waibel (Carnegie Mellon and Karlsruhe) on the topic of Spoken Language Translation - Bridging the Language Divide.

The key question discussed by Waibel was whether language technologies and translators are enemies or partners. These two elements are certainly partners when the challenge of doing business despite cultural differences is to be supported by both. The question is: How to bridge the gap? English is certainly not enough, despite the ubiquitous use of English as an international lingua franca. It is interesting to look at some figures on the translation industry: it turns out that translation needs are growing by 30% a year, there are about 400 000 translators worldwide, and about 150 000 translators in Europe. But also in speech communication there are interesting figures, e.g. that only 1% of 300 000 conferences that take place every year are actually interpreted. In the multimedia sector this percentage of the content is available multilingually is even lower, although this percentage is gradually rising.

The focus of Waibel's presentation is on speech translation, discussing speech-to-speech translation systems. He presented the latest developments and achievements in research & development. In the process of speech recognition, speech-to-text conversion, source language -> target language transfer and text to speech synthesis there are, despite the impressive progress in MT research, still many problems in speech recognition, disambiguation, inter-textual references, etc. Many projects such as TC Star, EuroMatrix, etc. have documented the progress on statistical machine translation.

The vision of so-called "unlimited speech translation" (or machine interpreting) that is not limited to a specific domain is gradually coming true. Alex Waibel presented a live demo of a speech-text-speech translation system for mobile phones (Jibbiggo, LLC, for ten languages, available for iPhone, Android, iPad, etc.) which is to be considered a real breakthrough. There is also ongoing work to include more languages such as Thai, Dari, Pashtu, also for humanitarian projects and not just business applications. Live cross-lingual subtitling for TV broadcast translation is also available nowadays. The system is also used for translating lectures and speeches (e.g. parliamentary speeches such as in the TC Star project where speeches in the European Parliament have been recorded and live translated (machine interpreting), which of course is interesting to compare with the human interpreting taking place at the same time in order to work on benchmarking evaluation of MT systems.

Alex Waibel presents the InterACT Lecture Translator Live Broadcast for English-French-Spanish. The parameters of comparing machine and human performance are understanding, fluent speech, effort, overall quality, content, etc. It has turned out that in some areas the machine performance is already close to human performance, in particular for the content parameter. There are also attempts to use hybrid systems, i.e. technology-enhanced human simultaneous as well as consecutive interpreting in order to overcome natural limits of cognitive load in humans.

Alex Waibel pointed out that all this is not to replace human interpreters and translators by machines but to complement and enhance what human are doing and can possibly do. Jobs for human translators are changing; the boring stuff is increasingly done by machines so that humans can focus on the difficult topics. Language Technology is not to be considered as a threat to human professionals but as an opportunity. Increasingly, translators use MT systems as part of their tool set or workbench.

The presentation was by L. Ramirez Polo; C. Vargas Sierra on the topic of "The Translator's Workstation revisited: a new paradigm of translators, technology and translation". The presenters discussed the role of social media (Web 2.0) and semantic web and web service computing (Web 3.0) on its way of convergence towards Web 4.0 (ubiquitous web, cloud computing, crowd sourcing, etc.) and its impact on the translation profession. Nowadays we see a lot of collaborative translation platforms on the web burgeoning, many of them promoting voluntary translation by laypersons (i.e. non-professional translators). The presenters discussed the concept of "Training web interaction and translation technologies" (TWITT) as a concrete working scenario with didactical aspects. The learning environment with translation in an e-collaborative environment provides the basis for students to acquire skills (social skills combined with technical skills and intellectual (translator) skills) in a coherent and work-flow oriented environment. The goal is to integrate various technologies, to create new attitudes of translators.

The presentation by S. Kulikov focussed on the question: "What is web-based machine translation up to?" and analyzed current practices of web-based MT and gave a bold forecast for future MT scenarios that would include ubiquitous MT, covering even literary translation, sentiment analysis in blog communication, etc.

The paper by Fernández Costales on "Translation 2.0: facing the challenges of the global era" discussed the impact of new technologies on society and on translation in the context of globalization.

A-M. Robert gave a presentation with the following title: "Traduction et informatique dématérialisée: une réalité non virtuelle" with a focus on reflecting new translation technologies with their functionalities and their impact on professional translation practices. Some of these web-based tools and resources are for free and show new business models working in practice. The impact on teaching practices of these technologies and tools was also discussed.

D. Anastasiou gave her paper on "Speech recognition, Machine Translation and Gesture Localization" focusing on the work on "Ambient Assisted Living" in the "BAALL" (Bremen Ambient Assisted Living Lab). People with cognitive and physical impairments are being assisted by speech technologies enabling them to live their daily life in a more autonomous way. Research issues such as the combination of multimodality with multilingualism, gesture localization (different gestures of different locales, adaptation of gestures to target locales), video gesture control, etc. They also work on speech-to-speech translation SST combined with gesture recognition and computer-robot interaction.

In the Questions and Discussion part of this session the key question of the conference about the relation between translation technology and translator communities was discussed. While some translator communities are open and pragmatic towards MT and related technologies, others are hostile and defensive to technological innovation in their professions. The discussion on fan translation (including fan subtitling, literary translation (e.g. Manga, Harry Potter), outsourcing by companies to online communities (both professionals and amateur volunteers) and other types) showed this phenomenon is rapidly rising in size and requires more research. Interesting aspects of web-based amateur voluntary translation and its impacts were discussed:

- ▶ Many texts get translated that otherwise would never be translated
- ▶ It produces more visibility for the profession, on the other hand professional translators have a problem with it, since there is no quality guarantee
- ▶ In some communities there is a rating of voluntary translations by peers
- ▶ There is also amateur lecture translation in eLearning communities

- ▶ These activities create more and more data for corpus linguistic studies on language use, translation behavior, etc.
- ▶ Google and other big companies use such communities for their purposes
- ▶ How to tackle the problem of quality control?
- ▶ What are the motivations of amateur voluntary translators?
Most of all: social recognition through translation