

Technology-mediated translation and/or interpreting solutions in public service settings

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International conflict, globalisation and mass migration have contributed to rapidly growing multilingual societies. One of the consequences is an increasing and changing demand of public service interpreters and translators (PSITs) in a variety of institutional settings, such as medical, social work, educational or legal contexts (Valero-Garcés, 2014). However, PSITs and public service providers alike face several societal challenges: scarcity of trained PSITs for particular languages or language varieties, ever-tightening government budgets for PSIT, lack of public policies ensuring quality standards, high workload and urgent demands to be handled swiftly, etc.

Against this background, service providers increasingly resort to other types of so-called 'bridging functions' to overcome linguistic barriers and ensure equal access to public services for all (Rillof, Van Praet, & De Wilde, 2014), such as technology-mediated translation or interpreting solutions. Examples are technologies facilitating non-face-to-face encounters – such as Instant Messaging systems, tools for remote interpreting services (Braun, 2015), etc. – as well as technology systems and multilingual (digital) resources supporting face-to-face encounters, such as machine translation systems, multilingual terminological resources, multilingual question-answering systems or audio-recorded pre-translated messages, etc. (Cox & Gutiérrez, 2016; Kerremans et al. 2018).

The aim of this thematic panel is to provide a forum for presenting technology-mediated translation and/or interpreting solutions used in face-to-face encounters across public service settings, for discussing the benefits and possible challenges of these solutions and for exchanging ideas on how these technologies can be empirically studied, by focusing on the perspectives of people, processes and/or products.

We welcome contributions that may address (but are in no way limited to) the following topics/questions in relation to technology-mediated translation/interpreting solutions:

- How does technology shape participant dynamics, participants' satisfaction, service outcome, professional practices and organisational routines?
- Do providers strategically utilize different types of technology depending on their communicative goals, including sense of urgency, interpersonal rapport or message complexity (e.g. routine encounter versus bad news disclosure)?
- What functions can technology fulfil, ranging from mere "verbal transfer", to information processing, (multimodal) text production, discourse management or mediation tool?
- What skills are required? How do PSITs and service providers deal with the emotional and cognitive impact of technologically rich environments?
- What is the role of PSITs and service providers in the creation of technology-mediated translation products? How is quality ensured?
- What methodological and analytical approaches are best suited for in-depth analyses of technology-mediated face-to-face interactions?

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