

An ergonomic comparison of translation tool interfaces

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Technology has become so much a part of the translation workplace that few professional translators would be comfortable working without access to the internet, online dictionaries, termbases and/or CAT tools. The latter have contributed to higher consistency and productivity, but recent research suggests that there is potential for improvement in ergonomic terms (e.g. Ehrensberger-Dow et al. 2016; O'Brien et al. 2017; Teixeira & O'Brien 2017). Examples from our corpus of workplace and classroom recordings include repetitive reformatting of source files and complicated work-arounds to accomplish tasks that could be automated by using macros and changing the default settings. Other examples from self-report data relate to apparent overload of cognitive resources by the amount of information presented on crowded screens. The tasks of translating with TM, selecting matches from a variety of sources and post-editing MT are merging in many professional contexts, so it is imperative to develop ways to best prepare students for working seamlessly between both modalities (cf. Krüger 2018). In this presentation, we report on a usability comparison of two translation tool interfaces that differ with respect to the amount of information and number of functions available on the screen. One of the interfaces has several fields with supporting functions visible, and the other has a simpler look. Quantitative measures from eye tracking and qualitative indicators from retrospective commentaries and interviews highlight how MA students interact with the two interfaces. We consider the implications of our findings in light of cognitive, physical and organizational ergonomics in order to open the discussion of whether ergonomic conditions can be more efficiently reduced by limiting the options available to the translator or by identifying and applying individualized settings for any given user.

References

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