

# How Interactive Translation Dictation Could Benefit Creative Translators

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Since the 1980s, translators have used keyboard-and-mouse computers to type their texts and exploit an array of applications, such as translation memories (TMs) and machine translation post-editing (PE) systems, developed to reduce the time and effort needed to type translations from scratch, among other reasons. More recently, in the era of multimodal speech-and-touch devices such as tablets and smartphones, translation researchers and tool developers have been exploring these emerging input modes and devices to perform different natural language tasks, from retrieving information to producing and revising (translated) texts (Zapata 2016; Zapata, Castilho & Moorkens 2017; Teixeira et al. 2019). However, little is known about how these emerging technologies could benefit translators working specifically with creative texts such as novels, poetry, theatre plays and advertising campaigns (for which TMs and PE are less appropriate or useful).

My contribution explores interactive translation dictation (ITD) for creative-text translation. ITD involves speech-based multimodal interaction throughout the entire translation process, from preparing to producing and revising a translation (Zapata, 2016). A pilot experiment was conducted with a handful of published literary translators in Canada. Participants tested various speech-and-touch-based applications on different devices (a hybrid Windows laptop + tablet, an Android tablet and an Android smartphone); performed a short creative-translation task; and took part in a semi-structured interview. The qualitative data collected highlight the potential advantages of ITD for creative-text translation, while pointing out the drawbacks of speech- and touch-enabled applications and devices currently available. This pilot experiment opens the door for a whole new area of research in translation technology, as scholars and tool developers seek to make computer aids more useful and attractive for creative-text translators, improving their efficiency and working conditions, while maintaining the quality—and admirability—of their creative work.

## References

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