



General conferences Intersteno Congress Ghent - Tuesday 16th July 2013

Challenges in processing and disseminating multilingual information today (report by Laura v.d. Zande)

The first speaker today is Yves Gambier, Professor in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Turku, Finland. His keynote address is about the challenges in processing and disseminating multilingual information today.

Gambier begins his presentation with the remark that messianism appears to be inherent to the history of the prophets of communication. Information technology is omnipresent indeed. It touches so many of our activities that managing without it is unimaginable. Gambier has some critical reflections on current changes, including the evolution of ICT technologies. For example, there are at least five different senses of globalization, but the fact that the digital divide is no utopia, is often ignored.

In only one hour Gambier shows us the wide aspects of translation nowadays and in the future. Translation is not only communication, but also transmission in time and space. The ICT revolution has implications for the process of translation and for the economic and social status of the translator. Gambier differentiates between machine translation, amateur translation, collaborative translation, translation with open source tools and volunteer networked translation. Especially the last types of translation put an end to the romanticized image of the translator. Also very interesting is the comparison between journalists and translators. Both professions are confronted with changes due to technological and finance pressures. Journalists and translators therefore are forced to re-question their very norms and ethics.

The last part of the presentation is about the implications for training. One of the most important competences of the translator is reading and understanding what needs to be translated. That is why electronic tools may not suppress the qualified translator at all.

Gambier thinks one of the positive aspects of ICT is the end of the domination of the lingua franca (English), because a lingua franca will be replaced by e-tools able to recognize and translate almost any pair of languages. Gambier's main conclusion is that in this climate of change, because of the ICT/digital phenomenon, translation is no longer a unified, homogenous activity.

Alessandro Tescari

Facing Tsunami Bureaucracy. How to paste voice into a PDF file and sign it forever (report by Peter Grondel)

Alessandro Tescari is the CEO of PerVoice, a company which explores new applications of Automatic Speech Recognition or ASR. One of these is the PerVoice AudioText Synchro Suite (PASS), a suite of software tools for managing the transcription workflow, from a voice recording to a written report in PDF format that includes that same voice recording.

The first step is to make a recording. It is possible to record speakers on different channels. In the second step an automatic transcription of a voice recording is made (Flyscribe). As this leaves mistakes in punctuation and wording, revision is needed. The proofreading of the file is done in the PASS&Doc step, and can be done while playing the sound file at a slightly faster pace. One hour of speech can be revised in a little over an hour. The third step is called PASS&PDF. With the push of a button a PDF file is generated that includes the audio recording. The final step is to digitally sign this PDF file.

A new way to process the recordings of court proceedings in Italy is multimedia reporting. An audio file is sent to a remote reporter, who sends back a report via the Web. The advantages are higher productivity, faster processing, the inclusion of voice in reports, which are now paperless, diskless, and secure.

So ASR plays a decisive role in Italian court reporting. It is between 80 and 90 percent accurate, and it is faster to produce a transcription. Alessandro Tescari is convinced this is a tsunami in Italian bureaucracy.

**Subtitling lecture videos with Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), Tatsuya Kawahara (Kyoto University Japan).
(report by Willem Boersma)**

Improving the quality of ASR-subtitling of lecture videos. Mr. Kawahara from Kyoto University in Japan is trying to achieve this goal because of the increasing amount of off-line lecture videos. In 2017 in Japan 100% has to be covered, but due to a lack of money subtitling of lectures is still not very common. So that is why Mr. Kawahara wants to improve the quality of ASR-technology for subtitling lectures. The speech recognition engine he is testing at the Open University of Japan, is firstly based on an acoustic model that includes a speech database of 300 hours of lectures. Secondly, a lexicon -- a text database of lecture transcripts -- and a language model with a relevant text are needed.

An accuracy rate of at least 75% is needed to make subtitles of lectures comprehensible, although that rate still is not very good. So that is why post-editing of ASR-subtitles is inevitable at this point in time. Mr. Kawahara stressed the importance of better training and formulating guidelines for subtitling internet videos, to increase accuracy, grammatical correctness and readability. On the other hand Mr. Kawahara expects the accuracy of subtitling video lectures to improve to approximately 90% in the near future, because lecture speeches are mostly fluent and not so emotional or spontaneous.

**Tsuguo Kaneko - 130 years of steno in Japan
(report by Henk-Jan Eras)**

Mr. Tsuguo Kaneko commemorated 130 years of steno in Japan. In the early 20th century representatives of the Romanisation movement brought back stenotype machines from France and America. They thought Japanese letters should be abolished in favour of roman letters to produce accurate transcription at high speeds.

Traditional steno in Japan was highly accurate with percentages up to 99.99. However, at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial members of the Japanese Supreme Court were surprised to see that the American court stenographers presented transcriptions the following day where it took their Japanese counterparts months to finish. It was there and then that the decision was made to train court reporters in using stenotype machines.

In 1948, Mr. Kawakami was successful in inventing the first Japanese stenotype machine. The layout of the keyboard, consisting of 21 keys in three clusters, was based on the principle of two syllables at one strike. In the 1980s transcription technology in Japan was brought up to date when Mr. Endo introduced a CART-system (Communication Access Realtime Translation) for real-time captioning.

Nowadays all kinds of Japanese stenotype machines are used for live tv-captioning and captioning for the hearing impaired. Modern day techniques used in Japan include computer-based speech-to-text machines and automatic speech recognition as well.

Collecting the past to face the future: the present of the Argentinian Congress library - by Jorge Bravo
(report by Anja Stijnen)

Mr. Bravo, president of the Asociación Argentina de Taquígrafos Parlamentarios, presented and commented on a video on the Argentine Congress library. The library was founded in 1859 and holds many books and magazines on shorthand, as well as special collections, such as the Palant collection, which consists of documents from 22 countries. The library is working on digitalizing its documents so they can be consulted online all over the world.

The library's documents refer to history, but what of the future? According to Mr. Bravo, "there is no future without history". Mr. Bravo suggests the creation of a network of shorthand libraries around the world, which all share their catalogues and documents online. If we have access to all these documents, we can learn from history and keep up with any innovations in reporting techniques. The future has begun; let's not be afraid of it.

NCRF - The oral history project - Stenographers capturing personal stories
Jim Cudahy/Karen Yates
(report by Wouter Zwijnenburg)

Mr. Cudahy, executive director of the National Court Reporters Association, presents the Congress Veterans History Project in which the NCRA and the National Court Reporters Foundation (NCRF) partner with the United States Library of Congress. The larger goal of the project is capturing the history of several wars in which the United States were involved, so that future generations can better understand the realities of war. In the meantime the project offers a great opportunity to promote the court reporter's profession.

Men and women who have served the United States in a time of war are interviewed about their experiences. The court reporters transcribe thousands of audio and video files, and even interview veterans, nurses and journalists themselves. The result is an archive of 3.000 interviews in the Library of Congress. When the Library of Congress showed great enthusiasm at the first material, Mrs. Yates, who as a court reporter participated in the project, helped to organise teams to find more World War II veterans. She considers her work for the Veterans History Project as a very rewarding experience: 'History is in all our villages, in all our homes'.

Linda Drake did a demo of how the speech recognition works and can be used in courts supported by stenomask.

Helping primary school students to face the keyboarding tsunami.
(report by Dick Boersema)

Laura Batani introduced the participants of the conference in the pioneering work that she has been doing since the early 2000's: being a teacher in a primary school, she teaches children in the first two grades of the Italian primary schools typing with their ten fingers. In this way, Italian pupils are able to face the challenges of this digital era. Also children with language related problems like dyslexia, can take advantage of typewriting, she stated. She underlines the official policy of Italy since 2003. In that year, the Italian school reform introduced both the general teaching of computer science and the English language in the first two grades of the Italian primary schools.