



UNIT 4. THE PROFESSION

ELEMENT 2. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

INTERVIEW WITH A TRANSLATION PROVIDER

Other Video Transcript

Slide 1

Unit 4. The profession. Element 2. Interpersonal skills. Interview with a translation provider.

Slide 2

This video shows an interview with Nils Wöbke, who is head of the bureau for accessibility in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, in Germany. This organisation belongs to Lebenshilfewerk Hagenow, which is an organisation that supports persons with disabilities.

In this interview, Mr Wöbke talks about the changes and expansion that the demand for Easy-to-Read services have experienced in the past years. He explains in the interview the different approaches in the creation and validation of E2U content in Germany. Lastly, he reflects on the possibilities and limitations of easy-to-read and easy-to-understand language in audiovisual content.



Slide 3

Let's watch the interview now.

ROCÍO: Hello, my name is Rocío Bernabé Caro. I work at the Internationale Hochschule SDI München, in Germany. It is a pleasure to be here today to interview Mr Wöbke. Good morning, Mr Wöbke.

NILS WÖBKE: Good morning, Mrs Bernabé. Thank you for the invitation.

ROCÍO: Many thanks for being with us here today. Mr Wöbke could you please introduce yourself and your organization?

NILS WÖBKE: As you said, my name is Nils Wöbke. I'm the head of the bureau for accessibility in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The organization belongs to Lebenshilfewerk Hagenow. We offer accessibility products. For example, easy-to-read and understand information. Or usability checks within the groups of peers that our organization is heading out for. Or, of course, we are giving seminars and workshops. That is basically what we are doing. I have 2 colleagues, 20 hours a week, that are working for accessibility. One of my colleagues is deaf. So we kind of practice everyday accessibility.

ROCÍO: In Germany, there are different approaches to easy-to-read, as well as different translation networks. For instance, your network, but also the one from Netzwerk Leichte Sprache, or the one from the University of Hildesheim. What do they all have in common? Or what are the differences?

NILS WÖBKE: I know pretty much all of them, in a way. I used to begin in Hildesheim, and I took some seminars and workshops with Mrs Maass as a teacher. Capito is also member of the easy-to-read network in Germany. There are some common ways that we share. Actually, I would say that the goal for heading out for understandable, accessible

information: that is what unites us, of course. And that we have peers. People, for example, with disabilities. Intellectual disabilities or learning disabilities that prove the information results. So we actually get the transparent information: what they understand and what they do not understand. And of course there are so many rules that you may or should be obliged to. I would say most of them are common. What maybe not divides us, of course, but would be a different approach is that, within the Capito Network, we offer different “language steps”, competence levels. You could translate it in the easy language, in Plain language, up to sort of “citizen language”, from the A1 to B1 European language level. We are getting into different products, information products, not only the written paper, but also digital information, films and movies. The variety maybe is a little bit more widen. Actually, I’m informed a little bit via social networks and I know that many colleagues are going in that field too. Actually, I would say [that] we are one broaden group.

ROCÍO: You mentioned [about] having now more work also in audiovisual context, for audiovisual products. And, as you know, in EASIT we focus on accessible audiovisual content. Can you tell us about this shift, or this change in the demand?

NILS WÖBKE: I think, as the whole society is shifting from written paper to digital [processes], maybe TV, or via smartphone, the demands have changed within the last 10 years, I would say. There are so many people who can’t read that thoroughly, or within the letters and sentences. So they would have to hear, for example. The digital devices encourage them and show them ways to handle that. I would say, the most important step [is] to differentiate what people need or are used to. And not only to offer one product, but of course a variety of products in order to adapt the environment so that people get used to.

ROCÍO: So more like creating products that can be personalized, that offer different options.

NILS WÖBKE: Right. One example could be this one. In our Capito Network, we have the Capito App. And users can decide in what language level they would like to read it. Of course, integrating pictures, that is included. Or if they would like to get the information access via sign language, or in the audio way, with mp3 products. I think that would be one example on how you can reach people.

ROCÍO: Yeah, of course. I think what you say is that technology is allowing us to offer more, and at the same time we are all having better skills about how to use these products. Allow me to go back to one point you mentioned before about these digital products. You said there are more audiovisual content, more digital content now that are accessible in easy-to-read, or easy-to-understand. What genres are the most common? Like, news, or TV series. Where is the demand coming from?

NILS WÖBKE: I am working in the field of people with intellectual disabilities and in the field of education somehow, in giving assistance within my organization. I certainly would say: information. Politics is one example where we are active in. And we see that if you offer seminars, workshops, and information, people are mostly very glad to talk and to communicate about these topics. And of course, these are information where they have a better assistance in life, participation. Like when they would go shopping, they need information too in everyday life. But then also the working skills. Working information for safety reasons, or in the field of handling a machine, or work in restaurants and services, information in order to participate in the labor market.

ROCÍO: Ok. I see a similar development in Spain, I think. There is a lot of creation of easy-to-read, or easy-to-understand content in the field of politics. For example, voting. How do I vote? Do I have the right to vote? Education, as you said as well.

Are audiovisual products in these cases a help? Or do you think that printed, even if it is digital-printed, like a webpage, is more useful for the target audiences of easy-to-read? Or a combination?

NILS WÖBKE: I would say probably a combination of approaches. But I think your approach is very future-orientated. People and you should develop, as you probably do, within the target groups. I would say, within my experience, this is quite a challenge.

But of course, you can train it. You should offer workshops to experience that. Mostly, what we are doing is to combine easy texts and information with workshops, in order to assist and discuss. I would say this would be the most [difficult] challenge. To include these 2 or 3 activities within one move, in order to obtain the information.

And it also influences the pace, the speed of the information. Some people who are blind have a very fast hearing. And other people maybe would need 40 words in a minute in order to obtain the information.

ROCÍO: Now we are talking a bit about the creation process. Is the creation process of printed material the same as when you create audiovisual content? Like subtitles, or audio-descriptions, or in general.

NILS WÖBKE: I would say so. Because when you have a printed product, you read the [visualization], so it encourages the understanding. There are certainly different approaches. When you have movies, and you do the easy-language translation afterwards, and have subtitles, I would think that you have to make up different approaches. Where is the

appropriate amount of information, and the contrast, and so on. And hearing and listening, and also the patience to keep on for maybe 30 minutes or so. I would say there should be good pauses and possibilities to stop and make a rest. Or maybe [have] some first introduction where the participant gets an overview somehow.

ROCÍO: Indeed there is a lot that we are trying out at the moment. And different approaches. The idea of having introductions to the product, I think this is a great help. Because it is an option so whoever wants to use it, will use it.

NILS WÖBKE: I would say [that] preparation, in some way, is needed when people do not have the experience. But I would say, first of all, they need some preparation in order to get used to that.

ROCÍO: Yes. I hear that involving the user of the information is very important in these contexts, isn't it?

NILS WÖBKE: Yeah, yeah. For sure. When you want to create the product, you would need some information and some feedback from the experiences so far in order to make the product, if it is possible. And of course then within the production, you certainly need the backup and then, after that, too.

ROCÍO: I guess it is not always possible to validate the content afterwards. Because this is very time-consuming. I think it is not a matter of not wanting to do it. Can you give us some examples where it was not possible for you to validate the content and maybe alternatives to get feedback?

NILS WÖBKE: Yeah. When we produce easy-to-understand information, we certainly would need the evaluation, the validation, within our Capito standards. But sometimes there is less time. And then it is probably very

important to be in contact after using the product. We are nowadays creating some podcast about politics and health issues for people with special needs. We want to have the experience of what the audience would think about it. We can step into contact via WhatsApp and e-mail to search for feedback. I would say that is always very important.

ROCÍO: I guess, when in these cases is not going to be possible to validate or to get feedback before it is published, you really rely on the guidelines that you have, on the rules.

NILS WÖBKE: Right.

ROCÍO: And for creation, you have your own rules and then the [ones] from Inclusion Europe. Do you use them all? Or do you say: "No, we just stick to some certain rules"?

NILS WÖBKE: The Capito Network rules are of course the closest for us, because we got [them] evaluated within the network. I have pretty many rules actually on my laptop. But they are certainly [more like] routines. We try to see in most cases what is the audience. Is it just for a seminar for 50 people or so? Then nowadays we try to use the Capito App to make a variety of approaches.

ROCÍO: OK, so you have different versions from the beginning, in different levels?

NILS WÖBKE: Right. We somehow try to figure what is the most common language level in order to include some more people.

ROCÍO: Yes. I think that is going to be one of the main points in the future. Which type of simplification to use. Because Plain Language includes more people, but at the same time it might exclude some other groups. I think that in the future there has to be a development. Either a fusion of both or, as you said, a clear cut and say: "OK, down to here of

the simplification level, you are including that many users, and starting there, these other users.”

NILS WÖBKE: Right. We see that of course sign language has to be offered. Then of course the accessible documents for screen readers. And also easy-to-read and Plain Language, both would be helpful. We have quite some people with intellectual disabilities who are better informed about politics. They might need cooking recipes in easy-language but might be able to follow up and catch up in Plain Language. I would say it is the same with me: I like politics and cooking, but in technical skills I am very bad, so I need some easy information on that.

ROCÍO: Yes, I understand. This is the advantage of writing in a more simple way. That you reach everybody. Because, as you said, we all have our specialized fields, and then we have all these other fields where we really need support.

NILS WÖBKE: Yeah, right. The view in the future might be [this]: within the Capito Network, we are working [on] a product that makes automatic translations. Of course, this is still in the beginning, I would say for 2 years now. Then, people can decide if they would read it in easy or Plain Language. Of course, the translators [will] still need to correct and look upon that.

ROCÍO: Another side of this higher demand of easy-to-understand or easy-to-read texts is the profession. There are new professionals, many people enter in the field. Do you think it is possible to make a living out of these translations or adaptations?

NILS WÖBKE: For some people probably does. For others, don't. Because they have not the opportunity, or access, or the input to get into the networks. My experience for now is 4 to 5 years of Capito Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and it is hard. We need to earn about 700€ a day. When we

give seminars it would work somehow. But when we make the information, then it is almost impossible to make it. When you offer accessible information, and the translation is just one field of it, then it might work. But only translating, this is very hard, I would say.

ROCÍO: So more diversification if you are a translator entering in the field. Like, offering easy-to-understand content should be one option, but not the only specialty at the beginning.

NILS WÖBKE: Right. In Schleswig Holstein, there are 10 to 12 organizations or people who are doing that. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, we are pretty much alone. For us, in some cases, it is more convenient. And then of course we are in the network.

ROCÍO: Maybe, to finish up: what is your advice for people entering the field of writing in easy-to-read language? And also in audiovisual context, what is your advice for them? What skills should they have? What preparation should they undergo?

NILS WÖBKE: I would say first of all, it is important to have a good education, of course. Like in Hildesheim. This probably helps a lot: to be more diverse in the offer of your variety. You have to be a good networker, of course, I would say. In order to get into different fields. You need to approach into fields where easy-language is not [present] yet. Different fields, like within the government, like the media production, within tourism. Because the need is everywhere, I would say. But you need a good network and marketing to get in there. I think you need a good field where of course the demand is high, where you can earn money. And then also to work together with foundations and would be able to pay for that in a better way than the market would offer.

ROCÍO: Yes. Thank you very much for all this huge knowledge that you are sharing with us today. Maybe one last question: what is the development you foresee in the field in the next 10 years?

NILS WÖBKE: I would certainly believe [in a development] within the automatic translation, because there are quite some [investments] in that field. I would believe it is only a question of material that is needed. Our experience so far with reading a text, making a concept, and so many steps is not that productive. It is not efficient. The impact is still too slow. You should be more efficient and get into new fields.

ROCÍO: Yeah, for sure it is going to be very interesting, I think. In the next years many things are going to happen. I guess we will be there to see what happens.

NILS WÖBKE: Of course the most important thing is that the people get access.

ROCÍO: Thank you so much for being here today and sharing all this with us. Would you like to add anything else?

NILS WÖBKE: I would say it is important to be together in the whole community. And no to divide, but to see [ourselves] as one group with different specialties. Overall, we want the same. I think this is important.

ROCÍO: That is true. I think those are really great words to finish the interview. Because sometimes we do get into these arguments, or fights. At the end of the day, what we all actually want to do is provide accessibility. So thanks a lot for these last words. I think they are very important.

NILS WÖBKE: Thank you Mrs Bernabé.

ROCÍO: Thank you very much.



Slide 4

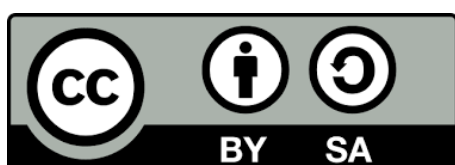
This interview has been prepared and conducted by Rocío Bernabé Caro and Piero Cavallo from the Internationale Hochschule SDI München, in Germany.

Slide 5

You can reach me at: rocio.bernabe@sdi-muenchen.de.

Copyright and disclaimer: The project EASIT has received funding from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education programme, grant agreement 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Partners:

