



Editorial: Translation and mobile devices

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ABSTRACT

Mobile devices (tablets, smartphones,...) are transforming localisation, as they gave rise to new operating systems and to a boom in apps with their own characteristics in contrast to desktop software. This piece of work presents the *Tradumàtica* monographic issue on the intersections between translation and mobile devices. The issue pays special attention to the translation of products designed for mobile devices and to the use of these devices' hardware and software to translate or interpret.

Keywords: mobile devices, tablets, smartphones, translation, interpreting, localisation, mobile apps, software

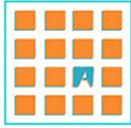
The advent of localisation in the 1990s transformed the translation sector. *Tradumàtica* was one of the early attempts within the slow-moving machinery of the academic world to reflect its existence; a phenomenon which has taken a while to mark out its own terrain in academic publications and even longer within our degree curricula. Localisation is currently undergoing an important transformation, which began some years ago at the hands of new operating systems and apps for new electronic devices, beginning with tablets and smartphones. Now, once again, *Tradumàtica* is at the forefront with an issue devoted to this new reality.

When its Editorial Board asked us to edit this volume, focused on the intersections in general between translation and mobile devices, we could not but see it as a challenge, particularly as far as the localisation of mobile apps is concerned, given that this has been included in professional translation only very recently. Would we be able to give a global picture drawing on expert knowledge? To date, very few publications have tackled the focus of this monographic issue; of the few exceptions, one noteworthy example is the journal *Multilingual*, which has given over space to individual articles in recent years.

So, with this monographic issue, *Tradumàtica* continues its pioneering role and proximity to the realities of the translation sector. The issue is structured around the following aspects, in the order in which they are here presented: localisation for mobile devices, of both software (including video games) and web sites; mobile apps of use to the translator or interpreter (including the post-editor); the new translator environments, brought about by devices such as tablets and mobile phones with their touch and voice modes; and the student faced with the "mobile reality". There follows an overview of the volume contributions, which include a catalogue containing tools related to the broad topic tackled.

Overview of the contributions

This year's issue opens with three articles covering localisation for mobile devices. The first is by **Simón Jiménez**, Localisation Manager for LocalVersion, a localisation multi-language vendor. He gives an overview of localising mobile apps, focusing on the various file formats and the corresponding processes and tools. His article highlights how mobile devices have made their way into our daily lives and the significance of this transformation for the localisation sub-sector: the number of language combinations for projects has multiplied,



English is not necessarily the default source language any more, the volume of words is decreasing, visual elements are gaining strength and workflows are speeding up at a frenetic pace. This all represents a challenge when it comes to making projects a profitable undertaking given that they are “inevitably small, global and urgent[, with] multiple time zones, [...] complex encodings and letter types, and [...] the administration and financial issues caused by agile operations in 30 different countries.”

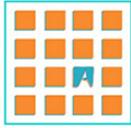
The second article focuses on localising video games for mobile devices. The authors, **Muñoz Sánchez** and **López Sánchez**, analyse, one component at a time (user interface, dialogues, descriptions for app stores, advertisements), the characteristic features of localising these products, from the internationalisation to the review and testing stages. Their article includes a section on tools used at each phase.

In the same way that apps created for mobile devices are undergoing transformations into desktop versions (e.g. messaging programmes such as WhatsApp and Telegram), web sites are moving in the opposite direction, as mobile devices are gaining ground when it comes to surfing the net (Bell, 2014, cited in Moorkens, O'Brien and Vreeke in this issue). The next article in this monographic issue, by **Plaza Lara**, centres on the localisation of web sites optimised for mobile devices. It offers a discussion on the concept of “responsive design”, also touched on by Simón Jiménez and an illustrative example of the transformation the sector is undergoing and its repercussions for translators. Plaza Lara's article, akin to the previous article, covers the internationalisation to testing phases; additionally, it includes project management, and pays particular attention to the tools which facilitate testing.

Following on from these three articles on localisation for mobile devices, this issue presents another three articles about apps that help translators and interpreters. The first is “Integrating mobile devices into the work environment of professional translators and interpreters”, by **Del Pozo Caamaño**, who works professionally with technical translations and as a medical interpreter. Mobile devices for her have meant “a certain revolution in the way translators and interpreters work.” Based on her own professional experience and that of colleagues in the sector, Del Pozo Caamaño identifies the following tasks as those where the impact has been greatest: note-taking for interpreters; generating, querying and maintaining terminology glossaries; querying information sources; on-going training; information management; and communication. Although she acknowledges that desktop computers are the most common working tool, she states that mobile devices enable work improvement and gains in efficiency: “With a tablet we can carry around our dictionaries and glossaries easily and effortlessly, or even on a mobile phone; we can use tablets to take notes and check our reference sources at the same time; we can make good use of our time by keeping up to date on topics of interest to us while commuting; we can carry our work files around with us at all times and keep in touch with our clients.” She closes her article with a call for the pressing need to develop mobile phone versions of translation memory systems which allow the user to dictate translations to devices.

Ortego Antón, from the perspective of community interpreting, assesses the six terminology management tools most used by conference interpreters according to the International Association of Conference Interpreters. Although her assessment is positive (the tools are user-friendly, allow for fast searches and are adaptable to the specific interpreting job), there is still much room for improvement – for example, compatibility with the various operating systems or writing systems such as Arabic or Chinese. The author underlines the need to improve existing tools and create new ones.

The development of a new tool is precisely the focus of the following article, but this time the tool is for translators rather than interpreters. **Moorkens**, **O'Brien** and **Vreeke** explain how the app Kanjingo came about – a mobile phone app for post-editing machine translation output –, its features and the results of the usability tests. The app was conceived for volunteer translators who want to give support to a particular cause or for low-volume fast workflows. Generally speaking the usability test results were very positive, but in their conclusions the authors remind us that it remains to be seen whether with quality translations



productivity would be enough for Kanjingo to be a commercially viable tool. Whatever the outcome, touch screen and voice recognition modes (the latter now available on mobile phones) make this a promising app.

These same technologies (touch screen and voice recognition, on PCs with touch screens, tablets and mobile phones) and their potential use in future tools for translators are featured in the article by **Zapata**, “Translating On the Go? Investigating the Potential of Multimodal Mobile Devices for Interactive Translation Dictation.” This article gives an overview of what the author terms “interactive translation dictation” (ITD), which consists in using devices such as computers with touch sensitive screens, tablets or smartphones to translate, given their capability to combine distinct interaction modes beyond those of the keyboard and mouse (voice, stylus, touch, gestures, etc.). This capability allows us to interact with technology in a more natural way and, according to Zapata, is taking us into a new era. His article describes an experiment carried out with existing hardware and software, which explores the potential and challenges of interactive translation dictation by considering whether this offers translators a better working environment than the traditional one with keyboard and mouse. Despite productivity being a little lower, the quantitative and qualitative results of the experiment are encouraging: “the technical effort needed to produce a translation with a traditional keyboard-and-mouse environment always exceeds the technical effort needed with the prototypical I[n]teractive T[ranslation] D[ictation] environment (in terms of number of characters typed, which includes spaces and deletions, number of switches between keyboard and mouse, time spent typing in active writing mode, time spent with the mouse, number of switches between windows, etc.)” Looking towards the future, Zapata underlines the fact that research on translation technology must focus on translators and their needs, and points to the need to integrate translation memories and machine translation into interactive translation dictation.

In another article on the translator’s work environment, **Jiménez Crespo** takes the concept of “mobile translation” as his starting point to focus on translation crowdsourcing and mobile apps. He points out that crowdsourcing, at the hands of technology, has moved beyond use for volunteer translations to the context of paid professional translations. For him, “mobile translation” represents the next frontier in the translation sector. “This next frontier involves a move from stationary translators’ workstations at desks to the possibility of participating in crowdsourced translations anywhere, anytime. [...] [N]ew business models based on micro-task crowdsourcing workflows via apps are now taking advantage of the ubiquitous presence of smartphones to attract bilinguals and professionals alike. [...] [T]hese types of initiatives will undoubtedly create a niche for themselves within the industry due to the never-ending need for speedy delivery of translations.”

A specific case of crowdsourcing is presented in the article “Sa tradutzione de Facebook in sardu”, by **Beccu** and **Martín-Mor**, which describes the localisation project of the Facebook platform into Sardinian: an opportunity to enhance the digital presence of this minoritised language, and thus contribute to preserving and disseminating it, while at the same time a challenge due to the absence of a standard form, terminology, reference sources, etc.

The last two articles focus on the student environment. **Arnáiz-Uzquiza** and **Álvarez-Álvarez** present a field study on the classroom use of mobile devices and apps by students studying a B.A. in Translation and Interpreting at Spanish universities. Conducted during the academic year 2015-2016, this study has produced some interesting data from across 13 Spanish universities. On the one hand, it reflects the habitual use of laptops for work or study and smartphones for communication. On the other hand, it reveals how the apps used differ between the early and later years of the degree: in the former, language learning apps prevail, while in the latter, the most commonly used apps are dictionaries, CAT tools and file management and storage software. Another interesting finding of this study is that students “believe that mobile apps should be incorporated more in their training.”

Martín-Mor, in turn, explains his experience with localising the instant messaging app Telegram into Sardinian. Given its potential to be replicated with other languages, this may be



of interest to public institutions and teachers: the project is an example of a contribution to digital linguistic diversity and has multiple pedagogical advantages.

The volume is completed by the catalogue of tools, following the journal's practice of publishing a technology catalogue related to the topic of the monographic issue. This issue's catalogue has been prepared by **Serón-Ordóñez** in collaboration with volunteer professionals and academics who contributed tools by filling out an online form. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their collaboration.

Having concluded our overview of the contributions, it is worthwhile looking back and asking ourselves if we have met our aim of offering with this issue a global picture of the intersections between translation and mobile devices. The issue does not limit itself to specific types of apps, processes or terminals, and it covers essential aspects reasonably well such as localization for mobile devices, mobile apps that may be of use to interpreters and new work environments for the translator. Furthermore, the volume reveals the lack of mobile apps that may be of use to translators, as well as the need for further studies on mobile device localisation teaching.

Keeping in mind the interest the latter topics have generated in professionals, software developers, voluntary associations and other agents, the Tradumàtica group has decided to extend the issue on the Web, and during the following weeks will publish related dissemination posts on its blog: www.blog.tradumatica.net.

We are certain that, before long, the *Tradumàtica* journal will receive articles on these and other aspects related to translation and mobile devices, some of which will be the focus of monographic issues. We have in mind, for example, the use of smart watches or other wearable devices by translators or interpreters. In this sense, the so-called "Internet of things" is likely to become an important source of work.

To conclude, we would like to draw attention to the fact that this issue includes articles in a language which is not Catalan, Castilian or English. The issue editors greatly appreciate the journal Director's acceptance of the proposal to publish two articles in Sardinian, together with their translations into Catalan. We also appreciate the valuable collaboration of the translator, Gianfranco Fronteddu.