

Session 1:

Summary of the discussion

INTRODUCTION

Pierre-Renaud Martin of Electricité de France asked Isabella Moore if she could recommend any criteria for the quality control of machine translated output. She reiterated her previous point that, where translations were required for information purposes only, consistency of terminology was essential, assuming that the translation could otherwise be understood by the customer. For translations which required post-editing, she said that these would have to be of a sufficient quality that translators would be happy to edit, rather than completely retranslate, the raw output. Moreover, the combined machine translation and post-editing processes should be quicker than a normal human translation if their use was to be justified.

Edward Bennett, Central Electricity Generating Board, asked about other possible quality criteria for translations. He commented that agencies sometimes tended to confuse quality of presentation with quality of translation. Isabella Moore accepted this last point, but re-emphasised the fact that the translation was just part of a whole package, quality of presentation and service forming important aspects for the customer. For Fred Zirkle, President of ALPNET, the customer's perception of a translation was vital in assessing its quality. He said that CAT could ensure consistency of both terminology and style, thus avoiding the situation where, for example, ten chapters of a manual might be translated by ten different people to produce an inconsistent whole.

Val Butterfield of Staefa Control System asked Professor Sager about

the practical aspects of the simultaneous preparation of multilingual documentation, particularly within the context of a commercial environment. Professor Sager acknowledged the cost pressures involved, and stated that translations should be carried out subject area by subject area. Simplification would be required as far as both syntax and parallel translation processes were concerned. This could be greatly assisted by the use of editing devices which would ensure a degree of consistency. Fred Zirkle pointed out that, in an interactive system, translators have to solve all the ambiguities which occur. Pre-editing devices, including an editor for the author preparing a text, would help to eliminate some of these ambiguities.

Raphael Salkie, who writes for the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, asked Fred Zirkle whether firms like his would be playing a larger role in training translators in the future. He replied that ALPNET was already supplying a large amount of financial support to universities in the form of technology and project support.

Geoffrey Kingscott of Praetorius Limited asked David Jackson how users of multi-script keyboards, including translators and information scientists, could make their influence felt in persuading manufacturers to provide compatible standards. David Jackson was fairly pessimistic on this point, stating that translators formed a very small proportion of the world market. Furthermore, large companies, such as IBM, were primarily interested in producing their own standards in their attempts to maintain and increase their market share. He then suggested a few practical solutions to help translators remember their keyboard layouts: one could make use of keyboard stickers, or photocopy the layout shown in the manual; a further option would be to use software which displayed different layouts on screen, and one recent solution provided revisable liquid crystal display key caps, but this was a fairly expensive option. Finally, Pamela Mayorcas added that software developers are now starting to tackle this problem, having themselves experienced the difficulties involved in the translation of their own software and manuals.

RAPPORTEUR

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