



Network project for the decentralised and centralised
dissemination of TNP3 results and outcomes

SYNTHESIS REPORT “WEST” (SUB-PROJECT 1)

Languages for language-related industries and professions

Introduction

This report is based on the updates of the National Reports (2004) from Belgium, France and Ireland. Since there are quite considerable differences between these updates, with respect to the themes dealt with and to the way they are dealt with, it seems appropriate not to try to give a general overview, but to go into more details in the description of the situation of the different countries.

In general, it can be stated that in the last number of years there have been no major changes.

The trends already observed in the national reports in 2004 and in Daniel Toudic's synthesis report 2006 remain the same, with some differences from country one country to the next.

1. Recent developments in the language industries and the language professions

A distinction can be made between institutional language services and the commercial sector.

1.1 Institutional language services

Important issues include migration to Europe and EU/national (language) policy.

1.1.1. Migration into Europe

The high number of immigrants in the countries of Western-Europe creates a need for translation and interpretation into and out of ethnic languages.

Belgium

In the last decade, public bodies were created on different levels (national, regional, local).

Great efforts have been made to implement a system of certification, in order to improve the quality of the work and to raise the status of the translators/interpreters concerned.

As regards the languages needed, the changes that can be observed, are connected with changing migration flows. UNHCR statistics¹ show that in 2005 the Russian Federation is the main nationality for refugees and asylum applicants, whereas in 2002 the country did not belong to the top 5 countries.

Ireland

Also in the last years, the numbers of immigrants from many parts of the world into Ireland and the availability of speakers of a wide range of languages in the economy and the community in general have continued to increase. Most up to date figures² indicate that foreign workers in Ireland now account for 8.2% of the total work-force, accounting for an increase of 3% since 2003. In March 2006 the Language Centre at the National University of Ireland Maynooth reported that 167 languages were spoken in Ireland. The Courts Service gives a figure of 210 languages and dialects.

The arrival in the country of large numbers of immigrants has led to an increased need for translation and interpreting. However, the growing demand for translation and interpreting services exposes the poor quality of translation services. There is no system of official accreditation for interpreters in Ireland with the result that anyone can claim competence as an interpreter and State officials are under no obligation to insist on minimum standards. More recently, however, some steps have been made to improve standards through, for example, the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association's (ITIA) certification test for professional members who specialise in translating such documents as birth certificates, contracts etc.

1.1.2. National and EU language policy

Ireland

The official status of Irish in the country and in Europe makes that there is an increased need for translation/interpreting from and into Irish.

Through the 2003 Official Languages Act, the constitutional status of Irish and English as official languages of the country was strengthened. This Act requires that a large number of statutory and public bodies have documentation available in both languages and that those bodies are capable of operating in

¹ www.unhcr.org

² Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *OECD in Figures 2006-2007*, Paris: OECD Publications, p.32

both. As a result of the Act there has been increased demand for translators to translate between these two languages.

With the granting of Irish the status of an official language of the EU in January 2007, this demand has increased anew, because MEPs can speak Irish at plenary sessions of the European Parliament (if they choose to) and by 2010, up to 50 regulations will be translated annually.

Closely related to the somewhat strengthened position of the Irish language in Ireland in recent years, the important role of the public service broadcaster TG4 has to be stressed.

The continued success and popularity of TG4 (the Irish language television station), is contributing to additional employment opportunities for those with skills in the Irish language. TG4 was founded in 1996 and now employs 80 people directly — producers, directors, presenters, journalists, administration and camera crews — and it estimates that it provides employment to a further 450 people in a freelance capacity. This growth of TG4 and Irish language media in general also affects the Irish language courses offered by educational institutions. Irish language courses in journalism, television and radio production are now available in many parts of the country and demand for such course is often greater than supply. For example, the Irish language journalism option at the National University of Ireland, Galway is so over-subscribed that fluent Irish speakers often have to take the English language version of course.

1.1.3 Regionalisation

France

In France, the continuing trend towards the devolution of many government services to local government (at the regional or "departmental" level) and the increased financial capacity of many local government entities, has led to the creation or enlargement of local government communication, economic development and tourism departments. In the European and international context, this has created openings for language graduates with good communication skills, a good understanding of economic issues and good organisational and management skills.

1.2 The commercial sector

Globalization of economic activities on the one hand and technical developments on the other hand have had a significant influence on the activities in the language professions, in a quantitative and in a qualitative sense.

1.2.1. Growth of the sector

Belgium

There have been an increase on several levels.

The number of translation and interpreting companies liable to VAT has increased from 3179 in 2002 in to 3420 in 2005. The highest increase could be noticed in the Dutch speaking part of the country, where it amounted to about 10% (1627-1790)³.

The number of AIIC (Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence) interpreters increased from 300 (2004) to 335 (2007)⁴. In the BKVTF/CBTIP, the professional organization of translators and interpreters, on the other hand, the number of members has gone back from 462 in 2003 to 334 in 2006.

In the number of companies in the field of language and speech technology in Flanders and the Netherlands enumerated on the web site of the Nederlandse Taalunie, there was also a rise from about 50 in 2004 to 66 in 2007⁵.

France

Although no overall figures are available, local knowledge and experience (based on observations from employer contacts and student work placement feedback) seem to indicate that there has been no slowdown in the demand for commercial language services over the past three years, and that most language service companies have continued to take on staff, albeit on a small scale.

A recent survey (February 2007) of translation and localisation companies working in the commercial sector in France⁶ shows that there has been little variation in the total number of companies operating in this field (approx. 600), since the previous survey carried out in 2003, although there may of course be changes in the actual companies involved. A majority of these companies are very small enterprises, with fewer than 20 employees, although a number are subsidiaries or associate companies belonging to national or international groups.

As regards interpreting, the AIIC website lists 450 members presently registered as full time professional interpreters in France (2007 figures), an increase over the figures recorded in 2004. The vast majority of these (over 80%) are based in Paris and Strasburg, which are the venues for many major international conferences. It is impossible to identify part-time interpreters, usually registered as translators.

³ www.wstatbel.fgov.be

⁴ www.aiic.net

⁵ <http://Taalunieversum.org/taal/technologie/ontwikkelaars/php>

⁶ conducted by the Centre de formation des traducteurs, terminologues, rédacteurs, Université Rennes 2, under Prof. Gouadec

In the field of language engineering, the APIL (Association of language industry professionals) currently lists 82 member companies in areas such as language consultancy, technical writing aids, technological and business intelligence, CRM (customer relationship management), KM (knowledge management), language learning software, electronic dictionaries, natural language processing research, EDM (electronic document management), voice recognition and synthesis, machine translation, character recognition, text mining, ontologies and "semantic web" applications. As noted in the initial national report, it is difficult to assess the number of jobs involved in these areas: what is clear is that many of the companies are small or medium-sized enterprises set up by people with IT engineering skills and qualifications, rather than language backgrounds.

Ireland

Recent OECD figures (2006, see footnote 1) would seem to indicate that the service industries in Ireland are continuing to expand. As was also highlighted in the National Report, the Irish economy is export-oriented and is generally perceived as being 'open', a concept which is understood as entailing a strong relationship with the economies of other countries. The export-oriented nature of the Irish economy points to the potential needs to develop linguistic skills amongst the Irish work-force in order to communicate effectively with the country's trading partners. However, this 'openness', has tended to imply principally a set of connections with the economies of the UK and the USA, both English-speaking countries, and with large multinational corporations whose tendency has been to conduct business through the medium of English. This trend may explain the fact that attitudes towards the learning of foreign languages have tended to be less positive in Ireland than in many other parts of Europe and that the perception amongst many members of the Irish population has been there is little 'need' to learn languages other than English.

1.2.2. Concentration of language companies

The world-wide concentration movement in the business world can also be observed in the language industries, with differences from country to country. The concentration of language companies goes together with
diversification of the activities: translating, interpreting, language courses...
outsourcing of work to freelancers

Belgium

That the effects of the concentration movement cause changes in the jobs of salaried translators, can be seen from the results of a recent survey of alumni

(1995-2004) of the School of Translation Studies of Hogeschool Gent⁷. Among their tasks, project management, coordination and revision become more prominent than was the case in the comparable 2001 survey.

On the other hand, it must be stated that the trend to greater concentration is not an absolute and unidirectional one: many of our graduates run successful small (one-man) businesses. They find niches and regular clients who prefer to work with small companies because of the personal contacts with their translators.

These small companies respond to the internationalisation by creating their own small international networks.

France

France has only been indirectly affected by the trend towards greater concentration that has affected the major international players (illustrated in particular by the takeover of the n°1 localisation company, Bowne Global Solutions, by the n°2 in terms of turnover, Lionbridge, in 2005, and of the major translation memory manufacturer (Trados) by SDL, another language services group, that same year).

The trend towards the outsourcing of a large proportion of the actual translation work to freelance translators has continued throughout the translation industry, which means that an increasing number of translation company staff are now employed as project managers, proofreaders, sales persons or IT experts, rather than as full-time translators *per se*, while the translation work may be carried out by translators based the world over.

2. New specialist HE programmes and offerings

The transition to the Bologna structures is more or less completed in several Western European countries (FR, BE). This means:

- overall introduction of Bachelor and Master programmes
- new, more competence-based curricula, new, especially project-oriented learning methods

Differences between countries can be explained from a different historical background.

Belgium

The HEI for translators and interpreters have always been situated outside the (research) universities. There are 9 of them, 5 in the Dutch speaking part of the country, 4 in the French speaking part. The Flemish schools have together

⁷ S. Evenepoel, De beroepsactiviteit van de oud-studenten Vertaalkunde Hogeschool Gent. Resultaten van een enquête (1995-2004)

about 3000 students and deliver about 450-500 degrees every year. From these figures, it may be clear that only a small percentage of them is working as a (full-time) translator or interpreter.

This fact has been taken in consideration in the implementation of the Bologna structure in Flanders, in the sense that there has come more diversification in the (one year) master degrees (instead of only translating and interpreting there are yet 4 different degrees: translation, interpreting, multilingual communication, journalism) and that the already existing degrees have been reoriented so that they can better meet the needs of the labour market.

Within the existing degrees, the curricula for translators pay more attention to IT skills and to project-oriented learning methods with realistic cases.

The master in interpreting is more oriented to liaison interpreting instead of conference interpreting and gives more attention to different forms of community interpreting. Conference interpreting will be trained in a postgraduate course.

As to the new degrees, the master in multilingual communication takes in consideration the multiple tasks that most of our graduates have to execute (administration, commercial, managerial...).

The master in journalism will put emphasis on a thorough foreign language knowledge.

As to the languages taught, Arabic (Lessius) and Turkish (Hogeschool Gent) have been introduced in the last years.

Together with the introduction of the new curricula, the Schools for Translators and Interpreters have to realise the so called 'academisation' of their programmes.

As their master degrees (like these of all university colleges) will be fully equivalent with those of the universities from next year on, the programmes will have to meet the same scientific standards: so more attention has to be paid to research and research-based teaching than was the case in the past.

The great challenge will be to realise curricula that at the same time become more professionally oriented and more research-oriented.

In the French community, there are no new (2 year) masters degrees introduced besides translation and interpreting, but there is a greater differentiation possible within the translation programme. Every school can set its own accents.

The curricula become more labour market oriented by introducing compulsory internships.

As to new languages, Chinese, Turkish and Arabic are offered in collaboration between the 3 Brussels schools.

France

French universities have all now officially completed the transition to the new Bologna cycles (known in France as "LMD" for *Licence, Master, Doctorat*), and offer two-year second cycle degrees following the traditional three-year first cycle. The qualifications formerly awarded at the end of year 2 (the "DEUG") and year 4 (the "Maîtrise") are in the process of being phased out. Many universities are already engaged in the process of reviewing their "LMD" programmes.

As a result of the first wave of new programmes, French universities now offer over 60 different second cycle programmes (Masters degrees) in "translation" or related areas. This shows a sharp increase since 2003-2004 (when there were around 40 such programmes) and an even sharper rise since the late 1990s, when fewer than 20 postgraduate qualifications in translation were available. Many of these new programmes are in areas such as literary, "media" or "editorial" translation (i.e. translation for publishing) and many are research-based rather than professionally-oriented. In many cases, they have been set up by language departments confronted with a drop in the number of students opting for more traditional postgraduate programmes in literature, linguistics or area studies. While this trend may be seen as a positive move towards greater diversification and relevance in higher education language programmes, it may also be a source of concern in that the new offerings are often in areas which do not appear to be the most favorable in terms of employment prospects. Given the number of programmes now on offer, it is likely that between 800 and 1000 graduates will be entering the job market with advanced qualifications in translation every year. While many will, hopefully, be able to use their competences in a variety of areas, this number is clearly more than the language industry itself can absorb in the longer term.

Ireland

Several new courses responding to the demand for Irish have been created. Some of them are taught in English, some in Irish.

On the one hand the (English or Irish) courses are intended to prepare graduates for new posts emerging from the requirements under the Official Languages Act and the requirements in Europe after 2007 created by the new official status of Irish in Europe.

They focus on advanced linguistic and technical training and/or high level translation skills or train staff working in the public and voluntary sectors in the management and delivery of quality bilingual customer service.

- MSc/ Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate Course in Irish Translation under the aegis of the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Europus (language consultancy company)
- Graduate Diploma/MA in Translation Studies, Dublin City University

- Dioplóma Iarchéime/M.A. i Léann an Aistriúcháin (Graduate Diploma/MA in Translation Studies), National University of Ireland, Galway
- Teastas/Dioplóma do Chéimithe /MA sa Chleachtas Dátheangach (Certificate/Diploma for Degrees/MA in Bilingual Practice)
- BA Gaeilge agus Iriseoireacht (Irish and Journalism), Fiontar, Dublin City University

On the other hand, there are Irish courses to prepare graduates for physical or script-based acting, puppetry and devising, for working in the media or in the many state and semi-state agencies and private enterprises which deal with societal multilingual situations.

- Diploma in Acting (Dioplóma sna Dána (Aisteoireacht) Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge (Irish Language School), National University of Ireland, Galway (part-time)
- B.A. sa Chumarsáid (BA in Media), NUI Galway.
- MA sa tSochtheangeolaíocht (Irish medium MA in Sociolinguistics)

In addition to this, there is a Graduate Certificate in Community Interpreting, Dublin City University

This is the only accredited training course for interpreters in Ireland at present. This is a one semester (twelve week) part-time course and consists of four modules: Introduction to Interpreting, Ethics, Terminology and Interpreting Practice.

3. New needs on the labour market and new needs in HE provision

The needs concern the range of languages needed and other than language skills.

Belgium

From the recent alumni survey of Hogeschool Gent (see footnote 7), it has become clear that due to ICT developments, acquaintance with tools as translation memory systems is much more needed than this was the case some years ago.

The expansion of translation tasks and the fact that translation is to a greater extent outsourced, also make it necessary for graduates to have more project management skills.

In Flanders, French (35,5%) and English (32%) are by far the languages most needed, much less German and Spanish (14%) and German (12,5). The need for other languages is negligible (all other languages 6%).

France

In the language industry itself, the need in France, as evidenced by work placement feedback and job offers, is clearly for Masters Degree level graduates with good active language skills in English and at least passive skills in one or more other European languages, experience in technical translation, a good knowledge of industry requirements and work practices, good project management skills and good IT skills.

In the wider business context, the relatively small size of most French business entities (it was recently revealed that the average number of staff in Airbus supplier companies in the Toulouse area was under 60 and under 40 in Bordeaux...) means that there are few openings for full-time in-house language experts in such companies, but that there is scope for outsourced language consultancy and language services on the one hand, and for staff combining language proficiency with commercial or technical skills on the other.

These trends mean that there should be a growing need in the coming years for flexible, multi-skilled graduates with business awareness and an international outlook, both at the bachelor's degree level and master's degree level.

Ireland

New needs on the Irish labour market can be divided into three broad areas. The first relates to the new status of Irish as an official language of the EU since January 2007. The second is linked to increased linguistic diversity in Ireland as a result of the continued growth in the number of immigrants from different parts of the world. The final aspect relates to the current profile of languages being studied in the public education system and its inadequate alignment with that of the foreign markets offering the most potential for the future.

1) Needs in Higher Education Provision: Irish language training

Nine posts are to be created to service Irish in the European Parliament — three translators, three interpreters and three lawyers/linguists. For this purpose the Commission is recruiting up to 30 translators and will need 20 interpreters for their freelance lists. Higher Education Institutions in Ireland would seem to have recognised the need to meet these new demands and several new courses have been developed at both B.A. and M.A. level.

2) Needs in Higher Education Provision: language training in new ethnic languages

The continued growth in the numbers of immigrants from many parts of the world into Ireland is leading to certain changes in the perception of foreign languages, as well as entailing the availability of speakers of a wide range of languages in the economy and the community generally. Translation and community interpreting are specific areas where demand continues to increase.

However, the growing demand for translation and interpreting services has exposed the availability of quality services. The Graduate Certificate in Community Interpreting at Dublin City University constitutes the only accredited training course for interpreters in Ireland at present (see 2). Given the demand for quality interpreting services, there is a need for the provision of training at B.A. and M.A.⁸. While a lot of research has been carried out in other countries, very little has been carried out in relation to the Irish context. Therefore, there is also scope for research at PhD level.

3) Needs in Higher Education Provision: Foreign Language Learning

In its report on Languages and Enterprise, launched on 8 June 2005, the Expert Group commissioned by the Irish government pointed to the importance of foreign language skills⁹ for the successful future development of enterprise in Ireland and that any deficit in this area would result in companies failing to achieve their full potential. In the report the importance of foreign language skills was considered in two key sectors of the Irish economy, namely exporting indigenous firms and foreign-owned firms engaged in international service activities. The report also suggested that internationally-traded services were a growing component of foreign direct investment because effective communication with customers was at the heart of service provision. The report assessed the current profile of languages being studied in the public education system in Ireland. A key finding of the report was that the language profile of the Irish population had not been aligned with that of the foreign markets offering the most potential for the future. In response to this finding, there is a need for Higher Education Institutions in Ireland to reassess their traditional focus on European languages, particularly French and German, and to align the language profile of their future students with high potential foreign markets beyond the EU. Such an alignment needs to be made at B.A. level.

4. Structured consultation and collaboration

Belgium

In spite of legal restrictions, there have in recent years made efforts in fields as career offices, work placement services etc. in many HE institutions.

More and more schools have stakeholders as members of their boards.

For the rest, consultation is mostly rather occasional, not structural, on the occasion of internship contacts, job fairs etc.

⁸ cf. National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). Advocacy paper 5. Interpreting Translation and Public Bodies in Ireland. Dublin: NCCRI.

⁹ Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN). Languages and Enterprise. The Demand and Supply of Foreign Language Skills in the Enterprise Sector. Dublin: Forfás, 2005.

France

The youth and student unrest which French society and French universities experienced in late 2005 and early 2006 highlighted the need for greater social relevance in both Secondary and Higher Education and led to a number of conferences and consultations on the theme.

Structured consultation between universities and employers organisations is not something that is widely promoted or accepted in HE circles, and present university governance rules do not allow for more than token representation of employers or external representatives in University Senates or other bodies. This is a subject of current debate and changes could be introduced as a result of the coming Presidential Election.

However, in recent years, many French universities have developed active careers offices, including work placement services, which regularly organise conferences and careers information events where professionals (preferably former graduates) from various fields are invited to address and to meet students and future graduates. This has had a positive effect on the language specialist sector by promoting other careers than teaching, in business, local government, tourism, and the language industries.

More regular consultation with employers, when it exists, usually takes place informally at the departmental level or involves individual teaching staff who also act as work placement tutors.

presented by Marc Van de Velde, Hogeschool Gent, Belgium

References

This TNP3-D synthesis report for West Europe on sub-project one is based on:

the update to the National TNP-3 report from Belgium, submitted by Marc Van de Velde, professor, Hogeschool Gent

the update to the National TNP-3 report from France, submitted by Daniel Toudic, Maitre de conférences – Head of the language Centre, Université Rennes 2

the update to the National TNP-3 report from Ireland, submitted by Bernadette O'Rourke, Visiting Fellow, National University of Ireland, Galway.

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