

— Invited Talk —

Translators in the Loop: Understanding How they Work with CAT Tools

Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow
Institute of Translation and Interpreting
Zurich University of Applied Sciences
Switzerland
ehre@zhaw.ch

Abstract

The research that we have been carrying out at translators' workplaces over the past few years has provided indications that some CAT tools are not being used to their full potential or are even being ignored by the users they were (or should have been) designed for. Since by nature humans seem to resist changing habits and procedures that do the job, it is easy to attribute that to the intransigence of older translators and shift the focus to designing new tools for digital natives. However, the cognitive demands of processing complex input in one language while producing and revising and/or assessing and revising output in another add a new dimension to the usual considerations of the human-machine loop of interaction, which may be independent of the translators' age or experience. In fact, the productivity constraints that many professional translators work under means that they might be adjusting more to their tools than adjusting their tools' settings to optimize their (the translators') performance. And if those tools have not been designed to meet their users' cognitive and physical ergonomic needs, their use may actually slow down the translation process and have potentially detrimental effects on quality.

Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow is a Canadian psycholinguist who has been involved in research into multilingualism and translation in Switzerland for the past 15 years. She is Professor of Translation Studies in the Zurich University of Applied Sciences' Institute of Translation and Interpreting and principal investigator of the SNSF-financed research projects *Capturing Translation Processes* and the *Cognitive and Physical Ergonomics of Translation*.