

# ЮРИДИЧЕСКИЙ ПЕРЕВОД В МЕЖДИСЦИПЛИНАРНОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ

## PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING: PROVIDING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

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The article analyzes the role of public service interpreting and translation (PSIT) in today multicultural world. The EU multilingual polices and experience in providing human rights through language services are highlighted within the multilingualism and mediation issues. Relevant EU documents and projects are mentioned in respect of translator and interpreter training for public service provision. Public service interpreting and translating phenomenon is analysed and specified. Some universities providing specialized Master programs in public service interpreting and translating are mentioned as examples.

**Key words:** public service, translating and interpreting for public service, multilingualism, language and culture mediation, intercultural communication, translator and interpreter training.

There is an increasing population mobility across the world. The society is becoming more multicultural and multilingual. People are crossing national borders to immigrate and unite with their families, for academic, business, or religious purposes, in search of better jobs and brighter futures.

There are many barriers that these people find on their arrival in a new country due to their poor or complete inability to speak the language of the host country. They have to cope with a number of barriers, including cultural and social ones, but language issues come to be on the top of the latter.

Meanwhile, the above mentioned social groups need access to utilities and other rights that they hold as members of the community and citizens of the country. This sector of the population are users of many public services that thus require translation and interpreting support to provide human rights and access to justice across the world.

The European Union policies and practices reveal the nature of multilingual society needs and issues.

The European Union has 27 Member States and 23 official languages. Each Member State, while joining the Union, stipulates which language or languages wants to be declared official languages of the EU. This EU could not function without interpreters and translators. In the same way, as a result of enlargement and globalization, all Member States of the European Union are witnessing a continuous movement of citizens inside EU frontiers. These people may be staying for a certain period of time in a foreign country for example during holidays, vacancies, studies, temporary job assignment, etc.

As the national language of the host country would be probably different than their own tongue, they might require assistance to access the public services of that country, finding themselves faced with translations problems to be understood and to understand other people. They will need, in this particular case, the assistance of a competent interpret or translator, in order to interact efficiently with the public officials and exercise their rights without limitations.

Similarly, migration from outside the European Union poses, and will continue to do so, even more complex language challenges. These facts demonstrates the multicultural and multilingual reality of the EU and the need to strengthen or develop policies to ensure, on the one hand, this diversity and, secondly, to ensure communication between all languages and cultures.

Taking into account the obligations that each Member State has regarding citizens' rights, it is essential that they ensure equal access to public services and institutions, the more so as Multilingualism is a fact of life in the European Union and one of the founding principles of the EU institutions.

At present, the policy of Multilingualism at the EU is unique in the world, and it is designed to achieve — through the use of different languages — relations between citizens and public institutions based on transparency, legitimacy and efficiency. According to the EU official documents and Legislative instruments [2], Multilingualism is an added value for intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and prosperity and it plays an important role in lifelong learning, media and information technologies, as well as in the EU's external relations.

Besides, Language still plays an important role and still continues to be an important barrier for many citizens, members of ethnic minorities and immigrants. It is, therefore, necessary to provide for this citizens, newcomers or immigrants in the European Union, a qualified interpretation and translation, as the first step of integration. This is the reason why it became one of the greatest ambitions and challenges for the European Union; consequently, translation and interpretation programs are being promoted in various fields, even though the need still persists.

This is shown on the recent report produced by the Special Interest Group on Translation and Interpreting for Public Services (SIG TIPS), which the European Language Council set up in 2010 and which worked on the basis of two previous reports, i.e. the Final Report of the High Level Group on Multilingualism and the Final Report of the Reflection Forum on Multilingualism and Interpreter Training.

Worldwide, there are many Master's programs in interpretation and translation, as the EU Optimale project reveals in the interesting map developed [3]. Some of these programs are renowned such as those included in the network of the European Master's in Translation Project (EMT) [1] which already gathers more than 50 universities.

However, in the specific field of public services, there are not so many, in spite of the indications for which are made from European authorities. Also, there are not very well-developed programs with different language pairs, or these are quite limited and do not allow high mobility and practices in institutions of the countries with those languages.

There is a gap to be filled by an efficient, full-fledged MA translation and interpretation program, organized by universities of excellence that enable/s/ students to develop the skills required in the «language pairs» or working languages they are studying and practicing.

As the EU-SIGTIPS report shows , «Currently, translation and interpreting services for migrants and other people requiring language assistance are unevenly provided throughout Europe as authorities and public service providers respond differently to language needs. [...] Examples of best practice do exist, but in most European countries people approaching a public service provider may never be certain to receive language assistance of professional quality or to find relevant translated material in their own language» [4. P. 13].

Everything mentioned above has laid grounds for the stakeholders to formulate and promote a specific status of Interpreting and Translation for Public Services (ITPS) in respect of professional activities, educational programs, accreditation, research field, etc.

The new millennium witnessed a number of monographs and research papers focusing on the TIPS challenges and prospects paving the way to a new research track.

The monograph by C. Valero-Garcés under the title «Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos en el Siglo XXI» has to be mentioned as the paramount work that summarizes the experience that already has been gained by the stakeholders and outlines the main features and goals of the socio-traductological approach [5] to further PSIT development in interdisciplinary research context [7].

PSIT specific status is found in a strong social character of the phenomenon under study. The above activities take place in such fields as legal, health, and local government, social, housing, environmental health, education, and welfare services. Therefore the PSIT activities require, apart from obvious foreign language(s), translation and interpreting competences, multidisciplinary knowledge in respect of the above mentioned social settings.

The translator and interpreter for public services has a very different role and responsibilities if to compare with the ones of professionals who work in the business world or deal with technical translation, for instance.

Translating or interpreting for public services provision means both the language and culture mediation and the responsibility for enabling the public service provider and the client to interact to their mutual satisfaction, overcoming their different cultural backgrounds and perceptions, inadequate status in terms of power and knowledge [6. P. 45–50].

Translator or interpret or for public services is supposed to facilitate access to public services for people whose first or preferred language is not that of the host country.

Taking into account the above it has to be mentioned that the activities under study can be characterized by different terms, including such one as «community interpreting» that is widely used across Europe to outline the target audience, purposes and settings, and training modules in educational programs, as well.

Translating and Interpreting for the public in fact has a long-standing practice across history though being the most neglected both by practicing professionals and by scholars, as well.

It can be mentioned in respect thereof that the term *community interpreting* that is closely associated with the PSIT was coined in the 1970s in Australia, from which it spread to Europe and eventually the US. Since the 1970s, the need for community interpreters has skyrocketed, causing steps towards more thorough and uniform education and certification.

Nowadays PSIT is getting its recognition by the stakeholders, including government authorities, public institutions, language service providers, and educational authorities.

Nevertheless only few European Universities run MA programs, that are «tuned» to meet multicultural public service provision requirements and standards by tailoring students' knowledge, skills and abilities to act as language and culture mediators in the above settings. It is necessary to mention the Master's program in Intercultural Communication, Public Service Interpreting and Translation at the University of Alcalá de Henares (Spain), Metropolitan University of London (UK), University of Surrey (UK).

The Master's program at the University of Alcalá is part of a Postgraduate degree which has been running since the academic year 2005–2006 when the Master's gained the official recognition by the Spanish Ministry of Education. In 2009 the Master's was accepted as a member of the European Master's in Translation Network (EMT).

As far as Russia is concerned it is only Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (PFUR) that tries to respond to Russia's growing multicultural population's needs by accumulating European higher education innovations in respect of training translators and interpreters for public service provision and integrating Russia's solid academic approach to university-based translator and interpreter training, on the one hand, and European socio-translationological focus [5. P. 205–217] on the other, one. The PFUR MA in Translating and Interpreting for Public Services in Russia got official recognition in 2012 and the admission starts in 2013.

The above programs' academic profile, including methodology, curricular, social focus and the respective training significance and potential to contributing to human rights provision and justice is subject to the authors' another publication on the topic under study.

All in all the above thoughts and statements lead to the conclusion that public service interpreting and translation phenomenon has to be studied in the interdisciplinary context, accumulating data from different social settings, regarding translators and interpreters as language and culture mediators who are expected to contribute to human rights provision and access to justice in today multinational and multicultural world.

## REFERENCES

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## УСТНЫЙ И ПИСЬМЕННЫЙ ПЕРЕВОД В СИСТЕМЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫХ СЛУЖБ: ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЕ ПРАВ ГРАЖДАН И СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ

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Статья посвящена анализу роли устного и письменного перевода в системе государственных служб и учреждений в условиях современного мультикультурного мира. Политика ЕС в области поддержки равноправия языков и обеспечения прав человека путем предоставления услуг по переводу в социально востребованных областях обозначены в связи с проблемами многоязычия и межкультурной медиации, также упоминаются положения соответствующих документов ЕС и результаты проектов, посвященные проблемам подготовки переводчиков для государственных служб. Анализируется понятие устного и письменного перевода в системе государственных служб, кратко охарактеризован ряд университетских программ, посвященных подготовке переводчиков соответствующей специализации.

**Ключевые слова:** государственная служба, письменный и устный перевод для государственных служб и учреждений, многоязычие, лингвокультурная медиация, межкультурная коммуникация, подготовка устных и письменных переводчиков.