**Globally Speaking**

**Podcast 019**

**2017 Translation Industry Forecast:**

**Part Two, Deux, Dos, Zwei,** **Èr**

R I am Renato Beninatto.

M And I’m Michael Stevens, and today on Globally Speaking we’re looking at the misses from our predictions for 2017.

R Yes, it’s interesting because our podcast, the episode about our predictions for 2017 was one of the most downloaded in our history, and we had a lot of feedback, thankfully most of it positive, and some criticism over things that we missed and that we didn’t cover.

M Some encouragement!

R Some encouragement! Let’s be positive! So, after a lot of introspection and thinking, we chose to talk about two comments that came to us: one from Ewandro Magalhães, who is an interpreter at the ITUT in Geneva, the Chief Interpreter in the group there; very experienced in the interpretation area, who complained that we haven’t talked about interpretation. And we also will talk about some constructive comments from Tom Hoar from Thailand with Slate, with some of the concepts in the translation memory space.

These are areas that we didn’t talk so much in our forecast about because they tend to be under the radar, they’re not the flashy stuff like neural MT that everybody is talking about. So that’s what we’d like to talk about today.

M So, Renato, there are some people out there who confuse localization and interpretation and translation. They are talking about getting documents interpreted. Is that an accurate description of what that is?

R Well, translation is the generic term and everybody talks about translation. Interpretation is translation as any other type of translation, but it’s done orally, and you have several types of interpretation. There is the consecutive interpretation where the speaker utters the message in their language and an interpreter is sitting next to him and translates immediately what the person is saying, immediately right after.

Then, you have simultaneous interpretation, which is conference interpretation where you have headsets and the interpreter is sitting remotely, and the people in the audience have the little headsets and hear what’s going on. That’s simultaneous interpretation, and one of the things that is interesting about simultaneous interpretation is that you can do it into multiple languages.

So, you go into the United Nations, European Union, all these international organisms, or big conferences, and you will have different cabins and different channels in the little devices and the radio devices; the speaker might be speaking one language, let’s say Russian, and you have the translation being done in 25 other languages simultaneously.

There are other types of interpretation, like sign-language interpretation which is usually in the same language of the speaker, but it’s for people who cannot hear, so they read the sign language.

So, interpretation is a very interesting area that is growing very much.

And then you have telephone interpretation.

M Telephone, video, Skype…

R And that’s where the trends are important. I think that in the area of interpretation, one of the trends, it’s not a trend, well, it is a trend, but it’s not new; it’s the fact that you have video interpretation—it’s becoming more mainstream.

A few years ago you would talk about video interpretation, and it would be “yeah, right, video interpretation”. Today, any company can provide that service, and it’s widespread in the United States. You even have apps. There is an app that I saw recently at a conference; it’s called Interprify that downloaded on your iPhone, and you can do remote interpretation. And there are other tools like that, that do the same thing.

M And there are often white labeled, in your experience are companies that want to get white label services, so if they do choose to have an interpreter it can seem like they’re being offered through their services?

R Yes. It’s a service. So, you have that availability; you have a provider that provides an infrastructure and interpreters, and you can brand it any way you want. So, I think that this is becoming more mainstream, and it’s not something that talks about the future; it’s something that is becoming more and more widespread.

The other thing is what I just mentioned. I think the other trend is the ability to have remote simultaneous interpretation, which is made available with the devices, with the smart phones and so on, with apps where the interpreter doesn’t need to be, necessarily, in the same location as the speaker and the audience.

So, one of the problems with simultaneous interpretation, for example, is that it’s very expensive to have interpreters fly to a certain location; you usually need two interpreters for an event because, as a human, it’s very extenuating to be an interpreter, so you cannot have an interpreter work all day doing the simultaneous interpretation. They usually work in pairs, and they switch every half hour.

So, every time that you want to do an event, let’s say into 10 languages, it becomes very expensive because you have to fly in 20 interpreters; they arrive the day before; they leave the day after; they need to be available during the whole event. And that becomes expensive.

This is the lure, the attraction of remote app-based interpretation, and I think that this is becoming more accepted. I don’t think it’s the dominant thing, but it’s a good trend to talk about this. I hope I covered this well.

M Yes. There also seem to be at least in 2016, I’m interested if you think we’ll see more of this in 2017, the rise of the celebrity interpreter.

R I wouldn’t call this a celebrity interpreter. I was talking to a friend of mine during the Olympics in Brazil, and she was describing to me—her name is Maria Paula just to give credit—that she does interpretation for celebrities, for these gurus, self-help people. And these are not the traditional procedural interpretations where you are just, essentially, humming away the presentation that the person is doing, like let’s say, at a medical conference the guy is talking about intestines and all the diseases and things like that. It feels like you’re hearing this monotone hum in the interpretation: “na, na, na, na,”…

When you are doing something like a self-help, like a Robbins or something like that, and you are interpreting what he’s saying, you need to convey that enthusiasm and that showmanship, and a lot of that, when you convert that into a foreign language in a stadium with—I don’t know—15,000 people participating at an event, you need to convey this type of emotion.

So, I even coined a term for this. I said that she wasn’t doing interpretation she was doing *interpretainment.* You told me that you read in the news something about ultimate fighting.

M Yes, Slator had an article this past October on one of the interpreters for UFC, the Ultimate Fighting Championship. He’s a Polish interpreter named Dariusz Kruczek, he goes by Derek, and I think there is this rise of people who are tuning in for more than just that sort of background hum, like you said, for more of a feeling and the emotion.

R Yes. A big chunk of… I mean, I don’t think you’re interpreting very much in this Ultimate Fighters that don’t have much to say! “I punched the guy; he fell…”

M Well, their weigh-ins can get…

R “Way to go; cool!” But, there is all the commentary during the transmission and all this information that is going on, and you need to drive this expertise. So, mark this word—*interpretainment* is the equivalent of transcreation in the interpretation world.

M In addition to the rise of interpretainment, there were also some fairly significant business deals from 2016 related to interpretation. That was the acquisition of LanguageLine Solutions to the French call-center operator, Teleperformance. Do you continue to see that trend with other companies that are doing interpretation?

R Well, the thing about Teleperformance—and this is a guess, okay—the thing about telephone interpretation is that it predominantly exists in English-speaking countries. It is big in the United States, it’s big in the UK, it’s big in Canada, it’s very big in Australia. You don’t hear much; I know that there is some in Sweden, Scandinavia, I know there is something in Germany, but it’s not as big as it is here in the United States.

I think that Teleperformance, being a much bigger, global player in the contact-center market, providing all kinds of support to all kinds of brands all over the world, I believe that they will make telephone interpretation more widespread and available in other source languages than English.

M It definitely sounds like a market opportunity, for sure.

R Absolutely. I believe that’s why they bought it. If I were Teleperformance, this is the reason why I would buy it because they have the client base, and it’s a logical add-on service to their suite of services.

So, let’s move on. Let’s talk a little bit about what Tom Hoar mentioned to us that we missed in 2016.

M Yes. Tom said we missed a huge trend that tech vendors have shifted their focus to embed MT technologies and tailor the experience to individual translators. And he gave a number of examples that have surfaced to be the norm in 2016. He is curious, what is happening there; what is happening with MT technology and the access that translators have to it?

R We’re going to have a show soon about neural MT, and we mentioned this as the biggest trend in 2017. A lot of advances, translation memory technology is old technology; it’s 25-30 year-old technology. You have small improvements happening every day that improve your productivity by about 0.5 percent, by one percent over a period of a year. So, these are not major, revolutionary changes that happen in technology but they are, nonetheless quite important.

And the biggest thing that happened in 2016 in this space was what they call predictive MT or adaptive MT. Lilt is the banner technology in this space, but now Trados 2017 has this adaptive MT; I think that Slate also has that; MateCat with their tag support which is predictive also figures out what the tags are and where they should be without requiring human input.

So, this automation of repetitive tasks is … I wouldn’t say an innovation, but it’s an evolution, and it’s a major improvement in the technology that happened in 2016. I didn’t predict it in 2015 or 2014.

M Can it be assumed that in 2017 that every translator is going to be using some form of MT?

R I think that the translator that is not using some form of MT is probably lying. I think every translator is using and if they’re not using, they should be using. Of course, I’m making a huge generalization here, but a professional translator, if they come across the text in a language pair that is not theirs, they will use machine translation. They hate it. They curse it, but it’s still free machine translation; generic machine translation is very useful when you are not doing something in a commercial environment, and it’s just for information only in a language pair that you don’t understand. I believe that the offering of machine translation within tools is going to make the life of the translator much easier by increasing his or her productivity in a significant way.

And, again, I think we talked about this before, it’s this concept that the biggest barrier to the adoption of machine translation by professional translators is old age. So, what is going to happen is that, it’s unfortunate, but it’s the way life goes, a lot of these people who are resisting adopting these new technologies that can improve their productivity significantly will retire, will die, will move on to other things, and this new generation of translators that is coming up and that is coming into the market—they will be using machine translation without even knowing that they’re using it.

So, in a way, yes, is the answer to your question.

M Yes, it will become ubiquitous with the translation process.

R Yes. I think that on this topic of the translation memory features and the keyword here, I think, is feature, is that these incremental innovations that happen will, eventually, be adopted by all the other tools. It’s brand new now; it’s a great new thing. Lilt, when you see it working, you say “wow! This is the way I want to be translating”. It’s self-learning, self-correcting; it improves your productivity as you go, but it’s something that is going to be a feature, and every other tool will implement something similar because it’s so good that it becomes a requirement.

M Okay. Well, we do appreciate our listeners’ feedback, and this show is evidence of that. Call us out on things that we missed or things that you like and, who knows, maybe you too will get on the next episode of Globally Speaking.

R As usual, please keep listening to our podcasts, subscribe in iTunes, Google Play or wherever you get your podcasts and give us good ratings; it really helps.

**End of Conversation**