Governments, NGOs, MT and Accessibility

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Study is part of forthcoming book

Saavutettava Suomi: Kääntäminen ja tulkkaus yhdenvertaista yhteiskuntaa rakentamassa

Maija Hirvonen & Tuija Kinnunen, eds.

Contents

1. Information accessibility

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The idea: accessibility to information

Access to information as a human right

Executive Board

Hundred and seventy-sixth session

176 EX/INF.15
PARIS, 5 April 2007
English & French only

UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

(iv)   Finally, the actual **enjoyment of fundamental rights** (expression, education, participation in cultural life, benefiting from scientific progress) is highly conditioned by linguistic factors. Languages thus provide an essential medium for exercising those rights.

8.   **Locally**, UNESCO will support the elaboration of coherent and national (and when possible regional) language policies that promote appropriate measures for both corpus and status planning thus preparing for a wider use of as many languages as possible in families and communities and in all domains of public life (education, media, administration, court proceedings, cultural activities and facilities). In this framework, multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at capacity-building action will be facilitated at the field office level with synergetic support of all programme sectors.
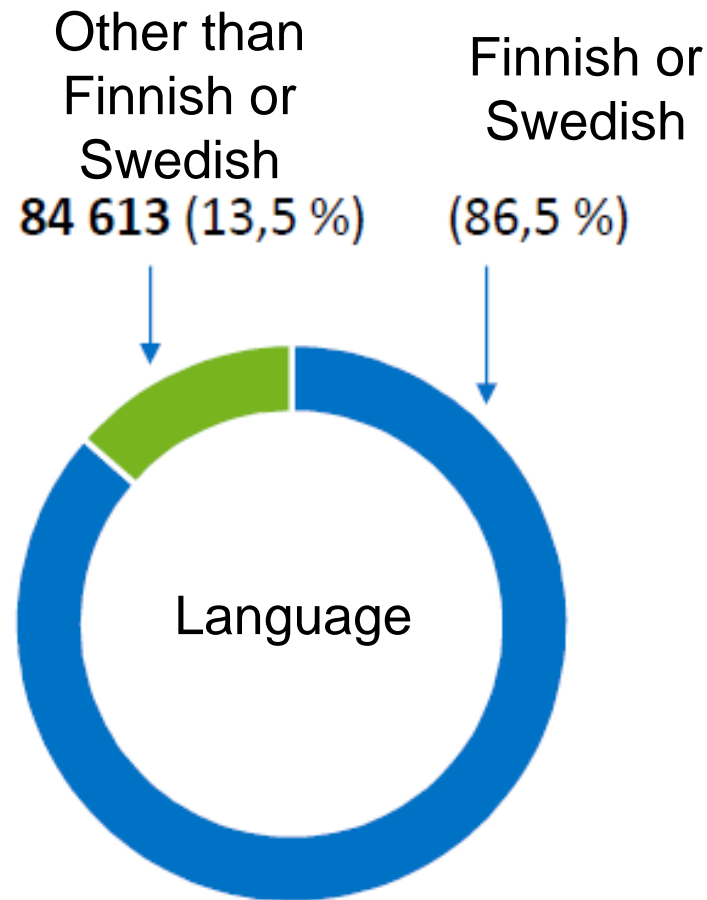
Access to information as an accessibility issue

Physical

Cognitive

Sensorial

Sensorial
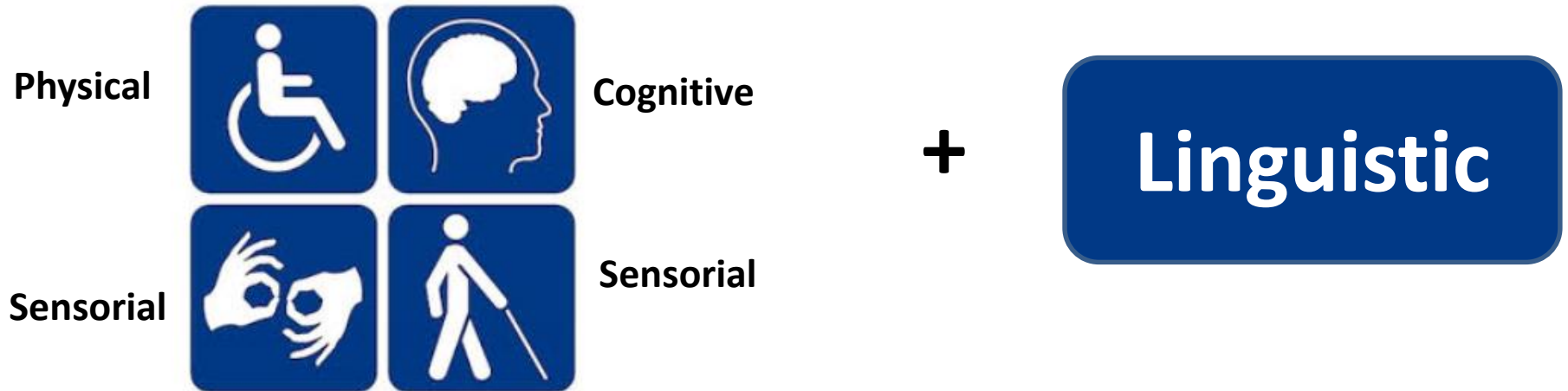
+ **Linguistic**

Linguistic accessibility

- For people with different cognitive abilities (cognitive disabilities, injury, lack of competence in predominant languages)
- Currently
  - Digital age → more information → higher need
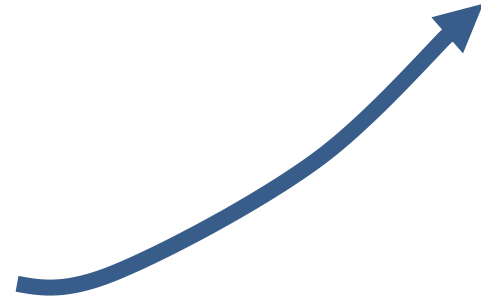 - More mobility → higher need

Example: City of Helsinki

Helsingin kaupunki
Tietokeskus

Other than Finnish or Swedish
84 613 (13,5 %)
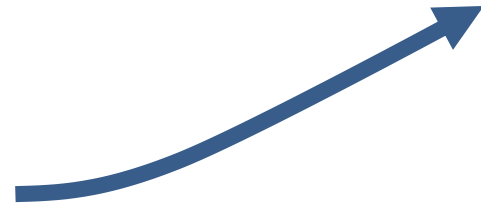
Finnish or Swedish
(86,5 %)

Language

Sounds great! But...

Growth in number of people needing information in own languages

Growth in variety of languages needed

Resources (€€€) available for human translation

Machine Translation (MT) as one solution?

- MT + post-editing
  - Better efficiency → more content translated at same price
  - New languages → higher initial investment, but more content can be produced

The Finnish context

- MT used relatively little (so far)
  - Finnish a challenging language for MT
- Development and implementation in LSPs
- Governmental efforts
- Digitalization is a key project → MT could help

http://vm.fi/digitalisoidaan-julkiset-palvelut

Finnish, Swedish, English

The practical: example projects

Early years: giants only

- Pan American Health Organization
  - Started development 1970s
  - 2009: >90% of translations done through MT process
- European Union
  - Started development 1970s

More recent projects:
Latvia

- Large Russian-speaking minority (37% speak Russian at home)
- Government wanted to ensure full participation in public life

Latvian, Russian, English

LATVIJA TULKO AR HUGO.LV

Governmental employees

- MT + post-editing tools
- All kinds of official texts

Internet portal

- Online MT tool
- Anyone can translate texts, documents or websites

Latvian, Russian, English

Sweden: DigInclude project

- Goal: e-inclusion

- Focus: groups with reduced abilities to read:
  - Disabilities
  - Reduced abilities (seniors)
  - Immigrants

Swedish, Arabic, Kurdish, English

DigInclude project (2)

- Collection of tools
  - Writing support
  - 'Easy Swedish'
  - Multilingual terminology
  - Machine translation
- Official websites, health information

Swedish, Arabic, Kurdish, English

Japan: MuTUAL project

MuTUAL

- Controlled writing + MT
- Governmental websites
- Results
  - Controlled writing → better MT output
  - More efficient writing

Japanese, English

YMC Viet project

- Japanese agricultural experts helping Vietnamese farmers

- 'Youth-mediated communication'
  - Young people covering technical aspects
  - Young people as mediaries between experts and farmers (parents or relatives)

- Communication online using MT

Japanese & Vietnamese + English as pivot

Crisis MT

- Role of translation in crisis situations noticed in Haiti earthquake crisis 2010

- 2017: International Network on Crisis Translation (INTERACT)

- Goal: readiness for quick implementation of translation solutions

- 	@CrisisTrans

Opportunities and risks in MT

Machine translation can...

- Speed up human translators' work → more content translated with same resources
- New languages: more bang for the buck

Machine translation cannot…

- Replace the need for human translators
- Be successful without good planning and proper resourcing

Risks

- Use of 'raw', unedited MT in wrong places
  - Quality not good enough
  - Perception: My language is not important enough for human translation
- Idea of promoting equality → could end up reducing equality

2 different types of information

Critical or high-risk	Non-critical

Critical, high-risk information

- Misunderstanding → cause harm or damage
- Misunderstanding → lead to more work (people call authorities to ask further questions)
- Topic examples
  - Health
  - Immigration
  - Social welfare
  - Legal
  - Taxing

Non-critical information

- Imperfect language unlikely to cause harm or damage
- Topic examples
  - General descriptions of organizations and their tasks
  - Opening hours

Critical or high-risk	→	Always requires human post-editing
Non-critical	→	Could be 'raw' or lightly post-edited machine translation

Conclusions

In short

Yes, to some degree, machine translation can be a tool to offset the prohibitive cost of human translation and promote access to information among speakers of other languages

However

Machine translation is not a replacement for human translators, and it requires good planning and proper resourcing to succeed.

Translate

| English | Spanish | French | English - detected ▾ |

Swahili | Sindhi | Finnish ▾ | **Translate**

Thank you!   ✕

🔊 ✏️   10/5000

Kiitos! 🛡

☆ ⧉ 🔊 ⇗   ✏️ Suggest an edit

See also

you

Translations of **Thank you!**

interjection

Kiitos!   Thank you!, Thanks!, Cheers!, Ta!

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