Language is Business! On the impact of linguistic applications in our society

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Language in the world economy

- It’s the economy, stupid!
  - The language industry. Communication comes at a price

- Language + Economy = Multilingualism
  - Impact of multilingualism on European business

- English Only? My smartphone speaks Finnish
  - On localization, globalization, transcreation and exoticization
The Language Industry. Communication comes at a price

- Fast evolution of science and technology
- Need of faster and reliable specialized information
- The international exchanges and the political, economical and cultural collaboration all resulting in an enormous increase in multilingual communication
The language industry. Communication comes at a price

- The mass production of consumer goods leading to an increasingly global economy, in which businesses need to take into account both the international rules of the game and local markets.

- Language itself has become an important product, a consumer article playing its own role in global trade.
The language industry

- Non-technological solutions:
  translating, interpreting, editing, localizing, learning languages, etc.

- Technological solutions:
  machine translation, computer-aided translation, computer-aided language learning, video conferences with interpreters, multilingual search machines, data mining, multilingual terminology banks for specific businesses or disciplines, etc.

- Countless new language-related jobs; need for competent linguists!
Knowledge economy

- Connected to the information society
- Has its effect on all sectors

We are building the knowledge economy
Knowledge economy – Information society

- A substantial part of economic growth in society is a result of **knowledge**.
- The application of knowledge enables **innovation**. This leads to new products and services, enabling **economic growth**.
- An economy in which the production factors labour and capital are mainly aimed at the development and application of **new technologies**.
- Often an impulse for academic disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
The economic ambitions of Antwerp are measured by a new monitor which has 38 indicators: 38 achievements of the largest city of Flanders in four fields: economy, labour market, knowledge economy and durability.

Traditionally, distribution, harbour and industry are Antwerp’s economic strongholds. But the city is also blazing new trails, for example with a strong growth of its knowledge economy: 40 percent of all employees work for a knowledge-intensive company.
Knowledge economy

- Reading fairly difficult texts, understanding complicated instructions
A variation of markets and economic activity

- Ship documents
- Customs documents
- Ingredients food industry
- Instructions textile production
- Information on medical products
- Information on building products

- Economic activity and expansion = focusing on language
Belgian chocolates
Business orders in the Emirates worth 2.7 billion USD

http://www.besix.com/Home.aspx
Tourism

- 65 billion euros per year in the Netherlands. Employment for 590,000 people – over 6 percent of the working population.
- Impact of international business (MICE)
  - MICE: Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions
- 2.3 million organized multi-day business trips
- Around 5.1 million nights spent in accommodation
- Turnover of multi-day business meetings estimated around 2.3 billion euros. An important part of this is generated by international visitors (54 percent). These business trips contribute substantially to the employment in the Netherlands. And at the same time, they have a considerable impact on language and communication processes.
The European market and multilingualism

- Although the EU represents only 7 percent of the world population, trade with the rest of the world covers about 20 percent of all import and export in the world.
- With its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of around 18.5 billion dollars (2014), the EU economy is absolutely leading in the world, followed by China, the USA and the other G20 countries.
- The EU economy is characterized by the increasing importance of its services sector (banking, tourism, transport, insurance, etc.). This services sector represents over 60 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
Language Technology Unlocks the Single Digital Market

2013

English (565 million)
Chinese (510 million)
World Spanish (165 million)
Japanese (100 million)
World Portuguese (83 million)
Russian (60 million)

Online Population

Europe today
(Many small markets)

2020

The Single Digital Market

META-\textsc{en}et
www.meta-net.eu

/instituut voor de Nederlandse taal/
ELAN study

- 11 percent of a test group of 2,000 small to medium-sized businesses said they had already **lost a contract** due to a lack of multilingualism
- 46 percent of the respondents said they would explore **new markets** in the years to come
- Half the respondents said they would need **new language knowledge** in the years to come
- Half the respondents said they had a **language strategy** in place
- **Multilingualism as an extra asset** was estimated to have an added value of around 35 percent in the services sector

- *InterAct International, Incidences du manque de compétences linguistiques des entreprises sur l’économie européenne (ELAN), EC, 2006*
SWOT analysis: strong and weak points

- Many languages are used (European multilingual space)
- International policy: many businesses want to serve the international markets (multilingual websites)
- Collaboration with employees who speak foreign languages
- Preference is given to multilingual candidates in selection procedures (language test, ...)
- Development and use of language technology software

- Lack of linguistic knowledge in many countries
- Communication problems with customers (different cultures, intercultural problems). For Europe specifically with Asian and Indian customers
- Extra costs (translating and interpreting)
SWOT analysis: opportunities and threats

- Growth in digital and multilingual information
- Increasing amount of foreign customers
- New educational initiatives (chèque-langue in Belgium and France)
- New opportunities (for specialized translation supported by computer-aided translation software and the language industry)
- Growing need of linguistic knowledge
- Difficulties to find multilingual employees with the right profile
- Growing number of employees with low-level education
- Loss of markets
- Loss of control over the management of multilingual information and diversity
Measures to be taken

- Recruit **multilingual employees** and offer language courses to advance multilingualism.
- The international communication of a company may benefit from organizing **multilingual company meetings** in a number of business languages, so-called corporate languages.
- Set up an adjusted, **multilingual documentation system and a multilingual terminology list**, in order to develop an internal company language.
- Make changes in digital communication. A company’s **intranet can be made multilingual**; its customer **website** should be written **in clear language and** of course **in the language of the customer**.
E-Commerce, the emerging factor in the economy

- **E-commerce** smashes the record. Online sales reached a new record this year. A growth of 15% per year
- Bol.com, Zalando, Colruyt-groep, AH, etc.

- Marktplaats.nl and Belgian Tweedehands.be are daughters of eBay, just like French iBazar. In 2018, eBay made a profit of 2.3 billion dollars and it had a turnover of more than 10.7 billion dollars.
E-commerce is Driving Job Growth in Europe

E-commerce growth in Europe over the next 5 years...

15 million square meters of new e-fulfillment facilities...

...or the equivalent of 2100 football pitches*

For each €18 in new e-commerce sales, Europe needs to add 77,000 square meters of new e-fulfillment facility space.

Approximately 200,000 new jobs are required to staff these facilities, or...

...100 jobs each day!

Hot spots will be: UK, GERMANY & FRANCE and also POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC & NETHERLANDS

* Source: E-commerce Europe, Goldman Sachs
* Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/2cktyd (Wembley Stadium)
The main activity of Caterpillar Inc., often shortened to CAT, is the design and construction of heavy machinery for civil engineering and mining. The company also produces generator sets and other equipment driven by diesel engines and gas turbines.

In 2014, the company had a turnover of more than 55 billion dollars, of which about 60 percent was made abroad. The company delivers in more than 200 countries all over the world.
Caterpillar

- **Caterpillar Fundamental English (CFE).**
  - This language was a highly simplified form of English. It was hoped that all technicians, also in other countries, would use this elementary English.

- **This was a clear *English-Only* language strategy**

- **BASIC English (Ch. K Ogden)**
  - *British, American, Scientific, International & Commercial*
  - This language was restricted to 850 words: 100 words denoting action, 600 words denoting things and 150 words denoting quality. Grammatical words are left aside.
From monolingual to multilingual

- **Caterpillar Technical English (CTE):**
  - 70,000 words, but the terminology was mapped out unambiguously and clearly

- **Basic principles of CTE:**
  - One term relates to one concept (⇒ one meaning per term)
  - Clear syntax
  - Complete website text in English, Chinese, German, French, Spanish and Portuguese
  - ! Safety regulations!
Localization

- What does this date mean? 11/12/13
  - France: 11 December 2013
  - USA: 12 November 2013
  - Japan: 13 December 2011

- Time: two o’clock in the afternoon:
  - 2 p.m. (UK) and 14h (FR)
McDonalds
Problems with met image and revenue
Localization

- First non-American director for McDonalds Europe
- Colors changed; more cosy restaurants
- Factory in Munich that develops menus and recipes for 41 (!) different countries on the European market, including Russia
Oops.... a small mistake!

- Commercial damage due to a “small” mistake in the communication
Glocalization

- However globalized the economy, markets are strategically won or lost by the flexibility with which companies adjust themselves to their customers. This is called localization.

- **Glocalization** is the term that denotes both processes. **Globalization** as an economic strategy is partly pursued by the internationalization of products, but it cannot do without a second pillar: **localization**, or adaptation to the local markets.

- Localization means: translating, intercultural communication, adapting to local situations.
GALA (Globalization and Localization Association)

- Localization is the process of adapting a product or content to a specific locale or market. Translation is only one of several elements of the localization process.
- Adapting diagrams and graphics
- Modifying content to suit local tastes and consumption habits
- Adapting design and layout to properly display translated text
- Converting to local currencies, units of measurement, etc.
- Proper local formats for dates, addresses, phone numbers, etc.
- Addressing local regulations and requirements
- [https://www.gala-global.org/](https://www.gala-global.org/)
New trend

One country, one language, one culture

The world speaks one language – yours

- Each language has its rights
- Information is adapted to the language and culture of individual customers
New job profiles

- **Localization manager**
  - good sense of planning and organisation
  - linguistic, administrative, technical and cultural knowledge
- A *localization manager* directs a whole team, interacting with different departments within an organization
  Sales and marketing, development, product management, engineers, quality control, technical writers, translators, management, sales agents abroad, etc.
- The localization manager must have strong communication skills and be *tech savvy*
Mistakes

- Mistakes most frequently made in the localization of products and their related texts and websites are:
  - omitting to translate
  - careless and bad translations
  - lack of respect for the unique cultural characteristics of the new market
Wrong translation

- An advertising campaign of pen manufacturer Parker went wrong in Mexico, because the English slogan ‘It won’t leak in your pocket and embarrass you’ was carelessly translated into Spanish. *Embarrass* was replaced by *embarazar*, so the new slogan for the Mexican market said:

  *It won’t leak in your pocket and make you pregnant*

- KFC’s *Finger-Lickin’ Good* was translated into Chinese as:

  *We’ll Eat Your Fingers Off*

- Pepsi’s *We bring you back to life* was translated into Chinese as:

  *We bring your ancestors back from the grave*
Lack of cultural respect

- In 2011, the United Arab Emirates celebrated its 40th National Day. In honour of the occasion, Puma released a special limited collection of sneakers in the colours of the Emirate flag, a sacred symbol to the Emirati...
Transcreation

- Emotion
- Language
- Culture
- Audience

Transcreation
Transcreation

- Creative translation, cross-market copywriting, international copy adaptation

- Transcreation is a relatively new concept, used by marketing and advertising professionals. It conveys that adapting a message to another culture is a complex matter. It concerns language, but mostly culture. The marketing of a product in a new market should be completely adapted to the local characteristics of that market, in order for the product to call up the same emotions.

- From the colour choice of a campaign, to the name of a product, to the humour in a slogan: anything can be put to use.
Exoticizing: the other end of the spectrum

Kakor Chokladflarn
Kanelbullar
Beer in the international market

internationalization

From Belgium with love

exoticization
Conclusion

- Language diversity is increasingly important to businesses; the economic impact of language is huge.
- Complex processes of localization and transcreation are becoming increasingly necessary.
- Language is the ideal vehicle of economic expansion.
- The market needs new language jobs and profiles.

- Young people need to be able to discover these new challenges.
- A task and a mission for EFNIL!