Central European Translation Market Survey

Specific features of the survey

The "**CETMS**" (Central European Translation Market Survey) is an international translation market poll. It is unique in that it focuses on translators in the following (Visegrad 4, "V4") countries:

- Czech Republic
- Hungary
- Poland
- Slovakia

It was coordinated from the Czech Republic (Institute of Translation Studies, Charles University) and the stakeholders and other organising parties included **Universities** (especially Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic, represented by Pavel Král), **LSPs** in the V4 area (especially Espell of Hungary, represented by its CEO, Miklós Bán), **EU-Commission's Field Offices** (especially the Prague FO represented by Vítězslav Zemánek), **Professional Associations** (especially Union of Czech Translators and Interpreters, JTP), and the **associations of translation agencies**. The survey was conducted in Q4 2014 and attracted more than 900 responses. In late 2014, the organisers held a prize draw with valuable prizes (including tablets), sponsored and donated by the above stakeholders.

In conducting the survey[1], we were interested to learn if there is a specific V4 market. We also wanted to find out how rates compare when it comes to charging for translations. We also intended to provide some background information for translators to see where they stand in comparison to their peers in the area. This can be valid e.g. when making informed pricing decision, when considering the use of CAT tools, and if they want to learn about trends e.g. as regards the offer/demand for specific languages.

The Structure of the Survey

There were 18 questions altogether, organised under the following five sections:

- Place of residence, Gender, Age groups, Education
- Translation experience: Duration, Portfolio, Languages, Client types, Specialisation
- Market situation – demand trends, Pricing
- Technologies
- Membership of associations

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[1] Obviously, there were some limitations implied in the survey results: Direct correlations (e.g. if a translator's seniority correlates with his/her rates of pay) were impossible; however, general trends and indirect correlations are available. The target group was neither representative in terms of numbers (the majority of respondents came from the Czech Republic, which does not correspond to the country's population share in the V4 area), nor in terms of social distribution, which is due to channels used for addressing potential participants.

Key findings

- A **typical V4 translator** is a she, 31 years old, who has acquired an MA in Translation, and has worked as a translator for less than 5 years. The typical V4 translator works predominantly for national clients, does not specialise (translates in the "General" domain). She earns EUR 14 per standard page (average incl. 2-way translations), offers in English translations (both from and into EN), and is not associated in any translator association. She prefers to work free-lance for direct clients, avoids CAT tools and has not received a PEMT assignment yet.
- There does not seem to be a specific **V4 translation market**: If translators work for international clients, these are mostly located outside the V4 area.
- **Greatest differences** among V4 countries:
    - PL translators were rather reluctant to take part in the survey (represented by as little as 17%).
    - SK translators translate the most into a non-mother tongue.
    - PL translators, unlike any other V4 country, tend to be graduates of university studies in Humanities.
    - The lowest prices are charged in Poland and the highest in the Czech Republic.
    - HU translators, unlike CS translators, are advanced in using CAT tools.
    - PL sees the highest preference for English and the least preference for German as the source languages.
    - CS translators show the highest rate in terms of being organised in translator associations.
- **Greatest similarities (average for the V4 area)**
    - The survey attracted a majority of market entrants (1–5 years of professional translation experience).
    - Translations for EU Institutions represent just a minor share of translation assignments.
    - Slightly over half of the translator workforce does not use a CAT tool.
    - PEMT (Post-Editing Machine Translation) assignments get refused by translators.
- **Greatest surprises**
    - On average (V4 area combined), as much as almost 40% have stated that they translate in the domain of Marketing.
    - PL translators are the champions in working for direct clients (as opposed to working for agencies).

Main **Take-aways for translators**

- There seems to be some potential for the so-called 2-way translation (into a non-mother tongue) and/or 3-way translation (between two foreign languages).
- Translators seem to view translation markets as national markets. Translators can reach out and look for clients abroad.
- There is much potential in CAT tools to further proliferate among translators.
- As there seems to be (an indirect) correlation between the rate of pay and translators being associated in translator associations, there is still much potential for translators to become associated in some countries.

Outlook for future surveys

The CETMS intends to be a first instance of a more or less regular polling exercise. We intend to conduct a re-run of CETMS either in 2017 or 2018.

The Full Text of the Survey Report

This is an Executive Summary. **The full report[2] will be available for download in Czech in October and in English in November 2015 from the JTP website**, Tomáš Svoboda's LinkedIn profile and from the above stakeholders' respective web pages. There, you will find further information on subsequent translations into other V4 languages, if relevant.

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[2] A 15 page report with detailed charts and explanations for all the 18 survey questions: ● Where are you based? ● Gender ● What is your age? ● Highest education acquired ● Years of experience in translating ● Service portfolio ● Professional status (working for direct clients/agencies) ● National/International portfolio ● Specialisation ● I translate from/into… ● Over the last 2 to 3 years, demand for the following language(s) has increased/decreased ● Average net rate for one standard page (1500 characters without spaces / 250 words ● Do you use CAT tools? If so, which tool(s) do you use most often? ● Share of CAT-tool usage of all jobs ● Machine Translation: Have you received a request for Post-Editing Machine Translation (PEMT) yet? ● Machine Translation (MT): Is lower quality automatically associated with MT/PEMT? ● Machine Translation: What is the billing pattern? ● I am/am not member of a professional organisation – for the following reason(s)