

GRAU D'ANGLÈS

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Translations of Covid-19 health
information in Catalonia

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Abstract

This study analyses the mistakes made by the Generalitat when using machine translation. It also shows how other governments in other countries have managed to translate information into other languages. To do this, I went to the website of the Generalitat and analysed the mistakes made by the machine translation. To find out more about the project, I interviewed a person who is not fluent in Spanish or Catalan to find out how she has experienced the pandemic.

The results show that machine translations contain a large number of mistakes, which damage the reader's trust in the government and its messages.

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1. Introduction

This project aims to see how translations related to the coronavirus have been done in Catalonia and what methods have been used for translation. Giving good information to the population is an important factor, as it is always necessary to be informed about what is happening in our country, especially if everything that happens can affect our health, as is happening now with the coronavirus pandemic. That is why the government must focus on always providing up-to-date and correct information. Thus, knowing how important it is to inform the population properly, what I want to do in this project is to show how the Generalitat and other countries have disseminated information about the pandemic in languages other than the country's native language.

My research question for this TFG is: are the translations adequate? My first hypothesis is that machine translation is a risk as the final translation may be wrong and can produce problems to the reader.

The methodology used in this project is based on the analysis of the translations done on the website of the Generalitat to analyse translations done in Catalonia and the research on how other English-speaking countries have translated information related to the pandemic.

On the other hand, I want to do an interview to a person who doesn't understand either Catalan or Spanish about how he or she got informed about the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the government due to its language situation, and it includes x questions, which are listed below:

1- Have you found it difficult to cope with the pandemic given your situation? What has been the hardest aspect?

- 2- How have you been informed about the pandemic given your situation?

- 3- Do you think that the lack of materials in other languages can affect immigrants' trust in the government?

- 4- Did you know that you had a section on the website of the Generalitat with information in your language?

- 5- Do you think the information given in your language is useful and well translated?

- 6- Did you use machine translation to get information?

2. Results

2.1 Translations done in other English-speaking countries

2.1.1 *Australia*

Australia is one of the English-speaking countries that has done the most to inform its non-native speakers. I will show how the Australian government and other Australian authorities have informed its population.

If we go to the webpage of the Australian government and then to the health section, we can see that the Department of Health of the Australian federal government has a section where it brings together all the resources translated into different languages for its non-native population. The government has made videos, fact sheets, and posters in different languages explaining different topics related to COVID-19 (vaccines, testing, downloading an app, prevention from the virus, etc). The Australian government has gone to great lengths to ensure that its population is informed about the pandemic, as they have information in many languages (Hebrew, Hmong, Haka Chin, Finnish, Greek, German, French, Dutch, Persian, Dinka, Dari, Croatian, Burmese, Vietnamese, Urdu, Turkish, Swahili, Somali, Punjabi, Nepalese, Macedonian, Hazaragi, Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Karen, Northern Kriol, Meriam Mir, Bengali, Korean, Slovenian, Japanese, Italian, Kirundi, Laotian, Maltese, Chinese, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Slovak, Slovenian, Bulgarian, Spanish, Tibetan, Ukrainian, and many others).

The government of Victoria has a page where all the information about the pandemic is available in 55 different languages (Acholi, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Bengali, Bosnian, Burmese, Chaldean, Chin, Chinese - Simplified and Traditional, Cook Islands Maori (*Rarotongan*), Croatian, Dari, Dinka, Fijian, French, Greek, Gujrati, Hakka, Hazaragi, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Khmer, Korean,

Macedonian, Maltese, Nepali, Niuean – Vagahau Niue, Nuer, Oromo, Pashto, Persian (Farsi), Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Rohingya, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Sinhalese, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Zomi.

And in some of these 55 languages, apart from information about restrictions and vaccinations, there is also a video where a person of the nationality of the language explains the importance of following the rules to fight the pandemic.

Furthermore, Australia is a territory where Aborigines live as well, and they have their own language. That is why councils in different parts of Australia have decided to translate information into the languages of the Aboriginal people. The Northern Land Council has released 18 videos in Territory Aboriginal languages. In this way, Australia not only focuses on foreign languages but also considers Australians of Aboriginal origin.

The videos provide information about the Coronavirus pandemic for Aboriginal Territorians and are in the following languages: Anindilyakwa; Alyawarr; Anmatyerr; Western Arrarnta; Westside Kriol; Kunwinjku; Maung; Pintupi; Gurindji; Central Arrernte; Warumungu; Modern Tiwi; Pitjantjatjara; Burarra; Eastside Kriol; Murrinh-Patha; Warlpiri; and Yolngu Matha.

These videos have been translated by interpreters from the Aboriginal Interpreter Service and the videos also feature actor Robbie Collins. They highlight that it is very important and beneficial to spread the information in their own language.

But in Australia not everything has been done correctly, as the federal government used Google Translate to translate information into other languages. According to the ABC news service (Dalzell, 2020), the government “side-lined official translators and preferred to translate with Google Translate”.

Such mistakes have also occurred at the local level. In Victoria, they made a poster where they translated the information into two different languages at the same time, Farsi and Arabic. Ms Yako (Dalzell, 2020) fears that such errors create insecurity and a lack of public trust in the government's official messages. Incorrect or poorly translated messages jeopardised the level of trust placed in public health messaging by multicultural communities.

The government defended itself by saying that at the beginning of the pandemic they used Google Translate to ensure that information reached everyone quickly. After these mistakes, the government has worked hard to inform all the population in the right way. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Department of Home Affairs had spent more than \$2 million on translating COVID-19 materials using certified translators.

And perhaps one of the biggest mistakes made by the Australian authorities is the confusion of two languages. The Victorian government created a poster where Farsi and Arabic are mixed as if they were the same language. The main text was in Farsi, while the government slogan was in Arabic.



(SBS News)

The Victorian government, after making this mistake, announced it would spend \$14.3 million to better support multicultural communities in the coronavirus crisis. (Razik, 2020).

This \$14.3 million will be distributed in the following way: \$6.9 million for community organisations to provide culturally specific relief, \$5.5 million to expand how translations are distributed, and \$2 million for translation and interpreter services.

2.1.2 United Kingdom

In the UK, the situation is a bit different compared to Australia. In the UK, there is a lack of translation by the government to inform the segments of the population who are not proficient in English. Thus, *Doctors of the World* have criticised the government saying that this lack of translation is putting people's health at risk.

The government answered that they have translated information into more than 25 languages. However, according to the campaigners these translations are very limited, and the translations take a long time to be updated, so that by the time they are updated, the rules and restrictions have already changed.

In addition, in England and Wales, more than 4 million people do not consider English to be their main language and also there are 88 languages other than English that are spoken as a main language (Evans, 2020). These are the reasons why *Doctors of the World* have said that the government has shown no engagement on the issue. In response to criticism that the information was not translated into many languages, the government said that "wouldn't be feasible to provide translations of all of these languages but that it had translated some of its "key messages" around coronavirus into the most common languages spoken in the UK" (Evans, 2020).

As a result of this neglect by the government, 30 local authorities, groups of public health leaders and charities have written to Health Secretary Matt Hancock and Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick requesting the government to provide and update translations into more languages. (Evans, 2020). Doctors of the World, which was also a signatory of the letter, has translated coronavirus guidance into documents, audio guides and videos in more than 60 languages because the government had completely forgotten the population that does not understand English, and by doing so they increased the risk of catching the virus and making it more difficult for them to protect and care for themselves.

The translations about the NHS are not done by the government itself, but by *Doctors of the World*, that has been obliged to do so because otherwise the population that does not understand English would not have the opportunity to be informed about the situation.

Obviously, it is not all negative, as for example the website of the City of London has a section where a guide to COVID-19 is available in several languages: Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Fulfulde, Gujarati, Hausa, Hindi, Kurmanji, Large print, Oromo, Pashto, Polish, Punjabi Gurmukhi, Punjabi Shahmukhi, Slovak, Somali, Sorani, Tigrinya, Urdu, Welsh.

Also, different authorities, such as Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council have created videos in different languages to help people who do not have English as their first language and inform about the importance of keeping safe during the pandemic. These videos are in Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali.

They decided to produce these videos because they believe that in areas where there is a lot of immigration, people do not stay at home because the message has not been delivered correctly.

2.1.3 United States

In the United States, the different states and councils have done different things to try to inform the population that are not proficient in English.

For example, the U.S. Food and Drugs Administration (FDA), an administration of the United States government, brings together different articles about the pandemic (Vaccines, Testing, Prevention, advice, etc.) in 26 different languages (Arabic, Burmese, Cherokee, Chinese Traditional and Simplified, French, German, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Hmong, Iu Mien, Khmer, Korean, Mam, Marshallese, Navajo, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Somali, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Yiddish).

The government of Pennsylvania has a webpage where it brings together a range of COVID-19 related materials and resources (business, mask use, COVID and pregnant women, quarantine, schools, vaccinations, social distance, etc.), translated into French, Spanish, Chinese, and Nepali. In Spanish, there are also information posters and printable materials. On the website, there are also several fact sheets (What You Need to Know, Symptoms of COVID-19, What to Do If Sick, Stop the Spread of Germs, Wash Your Hands) written into 21 different languages (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, French, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Russian, Swahili, Ukrainian, Amharic, Nepali, Haitian Creole, Pashto, Somali, Tigrinya, Urdu, Portuguese, Bengali).

The New Hampshire state government has a webpage where puts together resources (videos, posters, facts sheets) in eight different languages (Arabic, Spanish, Vietnamese, Swahili, Nepali, French, Portuguese, Kinyarwanda).

Also, local law enforcement spread the “Stay at Home” message in multiple languages. The Willmar Police and The Kandiyohi County Sheriff’s Departments have videos on their Facebook pages explaining Governor Walz’s “Stay at Home” order and how to avoid

the spread of COVID 19. Willmar Police Chief Jim Felt says the messages are in several languages.

On the other hand, students and physicians at Harvard Medical School wanted to help speakers who do not have English as their first language by translating Covid-19 information. The initiative, known as the Covid-19 Health Literacy Project, has already translated essential Covid-19 information about prevention and possible treatment options into over 35 languages. (Zia, 2020).

The group of students started this initiative because they saw that there was a lack of information in other languages and the available information lacked a lot of information. Pooja Chandrashekar, the student that started this project, noticed that this lack of information in other languages put minority communities at risk. Their project simplifies the language, summarizes key points, and adds visuals to make the message easy to understand. The translations are done by the students participating in the project who speak those languages. Once translated, everything is double-checked to make sure the translation is correct.

This project was able to bring together a national coalition of over 175 medical students to collectively represent 30 institutions and 37 languages.

2.1.4 New Zealand

The New Zealand government has a website where they bring together translations in different languages containing information and advice on COVID-19. They have translated the information (vaccinations, masks, testing, symptoms, contact tracing, information on the various levels of restrictions) into Te Reo Māori, New Zealand Sign Language, Arabic, Cook Islands Māori, Farsi, Fijian, Hindi, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean, Niuean, Punjabi, Rotuman, Samoan, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Tokelauan, Tongan, Traditional Chinese, Tuvaluan, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

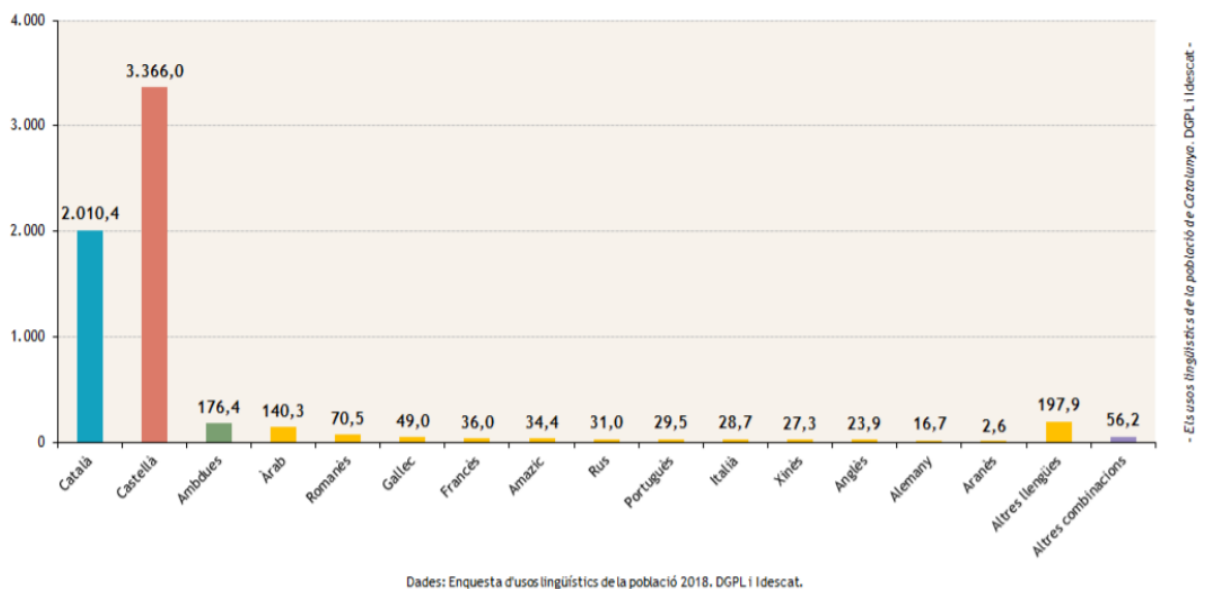
The Auckland Regional Public Health Service has information sheets and posters about different topics (protection, Red Cross, healthcare) in 46 different languages. They have translated the information into Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Cook Island Maori, Chinese (Traditional), Chinese (Simplified), Czech, Dari, Farsi, Fijian, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Karen, Kayah, Khmer, Kinyarwanda, Kiribati, Kirundi, Korean, Malay, Nepalese, Niuean, Pashto, Portuguese, Punjabi, Rohingya, Rotuman, Russian, Samoan, Sinhala, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Te Reo Maori, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tigrinya, Tokelauan, Tongan, Tuvaluan, Urdu, Vietnamese.

Besides, the Red Cross of New Zealand has a section where it brings together different resources about the pandemic (self-isolation, health system, information about the virus, etc.) translated into 17 languages.

2.2 Languages in Catalonia

Looking at the statistics of the "Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya" we can see that Catalonia contains many people with different languages. In 2018 more than 50 different languages were identified as being used on a daily basis (EULP 2018. Direcció General de Política Lingüística. Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya).

In Catalonia, as expected, the most widely spoken initial languages are Spanish and Catalan, with 3,360,000 and 2,010,400 people respectively. Arabic is the third language with the highest number of people who consider it their first language with 140,300 people. It is followed by Romanian with 70,500 people, French with 36,000, Amazich with 34,400, Russian with 31,000, Portuguese with 29,500, Italian with 28,700, Chinese with 27,300, English with 23,900 and German with 16,700. (Idescat i Direcció General de Política Lingüística. Enquesta d'usos lingüístics de la població. 2018).



(Idescat i Direcció General de Política Lingüística. Enquesta d'usos lingüístics de la població. 2018).

2.3 Translations made by the Generalitat of Catalonia

The Generalitat of Catalonia has followed two totally different ways of informing its population. One in which they have decided to spend money with translators, which gives a good result with well translated information, and another where they have decided to translate quickly and badly, giving not so good results.

2.3.1 Analysis of the translations made by the Generalitat

First of all, I will explain the mistakes made by the translation machine and how these mistakes affect the credibility of the text, and then I will focus on the efforts of the Generalitat to translate the information correctly.

The Generalitat has a section on its website where you can find all kinds of information about the coronavirus (new restrictions, news, data...). Within this section, there is a section called "Information for citizens" where they give more information about different topics related to the pandemic (current measures, measures in schools, information about the virus and how to prevent it, how to live with people who have mental health problems or addictions and advice on how to deal with the pandemic). All these sections are written in Catalan, and the website itself gives you the option of translating the content into three other languages, Spanish, French, and English. But, when you click where you can change the language, there is another section called "About the translation". In this section, it is explained that the translations are made with the automatic translation of Google, that the result of these translations are not revised and that it is possible there are mistakes, but that even if there are mistakes, the information is understandable.

I have divided the mistakes made by machine translation into three types: Conjunction and preposition mistakes, terminology mistakes and syntax mistakes.

2.3.1.1 Conjunction and preposition mistakes

With the resumption of normalcy, it is very important that the public be alert to the possible symptoms of COVID-19. If at any time a person presents with fever, cough, shortness of breath, general malaise, diarrhea and vomiting, they should contact the healthcare system to make a quick diagnosis.

It will help you identify your close contacts to prevent transmission in the asymptomatic period, track them, and diagnose them early. Close contacts are people with whom you have shared space less than 2 meters away, for more than 15 minutes, without a mask and from the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms.

In this first example the machine has literally translated the conjunction "i" by "and", when in this case the more correct conjunction would be "or". A similar mistake occurs when confusing the preposition "from" with "within"

Respect your private space

Isolation in a private space can often be positive for teens - it can be a way to rest and order the experiences they are living. Respect them for making their room their personal refuge, and don't get into discussions about the order or the way they have it right now.

Neither are you alone, nor are you alone. We will all get out of it together.

Another typical mistake in machine translation is the confusion of the pronoun of the person spoken about. We can see a clear example in these two sentences. In the first sentence it should be "respect their private space" as it is talking about respecting the private space of the teenagers of the house. In the second sentence, the second "you" should be "they".

2.3.1.2 Terminology mistakes

This kind of mistakes are the most common when translating with a machine translation, since the machine does not know which words are better in each case.

- Indicate to the person preventive isolation until the results are available (48/72 hours), which can be consulted from My Health, the digital space for personal health. People who do not yet have access to it can request it using the online form .
- If necessary, it explains how to process sick leave , through the eConsulta non-face-to-face care service, available from La Meva Salut, for the duration of the preventive isolation.

Here we can see that the machine translation has problems translating the name of the application “La Meva Salut”, as sometimes it translates it ("My Health"), and other times it does not translate it ("La Meva Salut"), and this may create confusion among the readers.

Night confinement

It is not possible to drive on the street from 22:00 to 06:00, except for justified reasons.

Another big problem occurs when the machine translation translates "confinament nocturn" with "night confinement" when the correct word is "night curfew". Because if we look at the definitions in a dictionary the correct word for this case is "curfew", since confinement, according to Cambridge Dictionary is “the situation in which a person or animal is kept somewhere, usually by force” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d) whereas curfew is “a rule that everyone must stay at home between particular times, usually at night, especially during a war or a period of political trouble” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d).

Displacement of workers and their representatives to go to or from the work center in or telework, as well as those mission trips inherent in the development of the functions

The same happens again with the verb “displacement”. The verb "desplaçament" is translated as "displacement", which would be inappropriate in this context. Displacement, according to Cambridge Dictionary is “the situation in which people are forced to leave the place where they normally live” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). In another sentence, the verb "desplaçament" is translated as "mission trips", which is again inappropriate in this context.

Until the results of the test are obtained, the student or teacher must do the home insulation. School or cohabiting siblings who work in an educational center must also stay at home.

Another big mistake occurs with the translation of the word "aillament". The machine translates the word as "insulation" when the correct word would be "isolation", since Insulation, according to Cambridge Dictionary is “the act of covering something to stop heat, sound, or electricity from escaping or entering, or the fact that something is covered in this way” whereas isolation is “the practice of not leaving your house and of staying away from other people when you have, or may have, an infectious disease, so that you do not infect anyone else” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d).

Universities and schools

Universities: theoretical teaching in virtual format, except for the first year.

Baccalaureate, training cycles and regulated general education, including authorized music and dance schools: reduction of face-to-face activity.

ESO, primary and children: full attendance.

Extracurricular activities: open extracurricular and sports activities that are carried out in schools with stable groups of coexistence of school activities.

It is mandatory in workspaces for public use or open to the public, or in trips inland.

Hydroalcoholic ice dispensers should be placed in strategic places, such as at the entrance to the school and classrooms, and in the dining room.

Another visible problem in machine translation is the translation of studies. The studies called "cicles formatius" have been translated as "training cycles", which does not make sense. Another mistake occurs with "trips inland" to say "desplaçaments per l'interior".

"Trips inland" would be wrongly used, as the better expression would be "when moving around".

A big mistake, and one which makes the sentence totally meaningless, is the translation of "gel hidroalcoholic". The machine translates the word "gel" as "ice", proving once again how ineffective machine translation is.

The machine translation also has problems when translating and repeats words, leaving the final sentence meaningless. We can see this, in these four different examples.

- **Care of pets and pets during the essential time :**

Here, the machine translates "pets and pets" because in Catalan, it is written as "mascotes i animals de companyia", so the machine is not capable to differentiate these two different terms and translates it in the same way.

You cannot take your child to school if:

- Do you have any of the symptoms compatible with COVID-19:
 - Fever or fever (above 37.5°C)

In this example the same happens as in the previous one. In Catalan is written as "febre o febrícula", and the machine translates it in the same way again.

- **Information for dining room monitors and monitors .**

Here, the machine translates the same word because the original is in masculine and feminine, when in English the same word exists for the two different genders.

(those who are 56 years old within the vaccination period) who work or work in
are staff, external staff (canteen monitors, cleaning staff, school transport staff

Here, it can be seen the problem that machine translation has, to distinguish between general and specific terms, since in Catalan is written as “treballen o intervenen”, and the machine decides to repeat the word “work” instead of putting “take part”.

- After sneezing, coughing or sneezing.

Here, machine translation again makes the mistake of translating two words in the same way. The first "sneezing" is mistranslated as in Catalan it is written as "mocar-se", and in English it should be "blowing your nose". The second "sneezing" is well translated as it is the correct translation of "esternudar".

Input and output management

Since it is a title, the machine translation has no context about what is being talked about, it puts a word that does not make sense. This can be seen in this sentence, as it says "input/output" when translating the words "entrada/sortida". The problem is that in this case "input/output" does not make sense here. The correct words would be “entry and exit management”.

There will be no items to share on the tables, such as setrilleras, bread basket ...

Here, we can see how the machine translation does not even translate the words it does not know. The word "setrilleres", as it is unknown to the system, is left untranslated, thus rendering the sentence totally meaningless. The correct translation would be "cruet".

- You have to shower and change your moult daily. Towels must be changed after each use.
- The room must be ventilated for a minimum of 10 minutes 2 times a day

This is another example where we can see that when machine translation does not know a word, it translates it badly and meaninglessly. In Catalan it is written as "canviar de muda", and the machine has translated it as "change your moult". This makes no sense, as this is what birds do, human beings change clothes.

- Pause and space consumption.

- Dosage media exposure time,

If your partner isolates you, threatens you, ignores you, gives you orders, humiliates you, calls you, insults you, controls your money, forces you to have sex, breaks objects, assaults you, threatens to take you children ... you may be in a situation of abuse.

Therefore, it is important to ventilate enclosed spaces as much as possible to encourage sufficient air renewal, as well as to carry out in the open air those activities that allow it.

Leave your mobile or tablet to other people.

Here, there are several examples of examples of mistranslated words, which make sense but there are better options.

The first example should be "moderate" instead of "space", the second should be "moderate" instead of "dosage", the third should be "shouts at" instead of "calls", the fourth should be "ensure" instead of "encourage" and the last one should be "lend" instead of "leave".

2.3.1.3 Syntax mistakes

Syntax mistakes are also very common in machine translation. We can see some of these mistakes in the examples below.

Cultural activities

Open : cinemas, theaters, auditoriums and concert halls, with 50% of the capacity and a maximum of 500 people, or 1,000 if the ventilation is optimal. Also open museums, libraries and exhibition halls at 50% of the capacity.

Suspension of activities outside the usual programming of cultural establishments.

In this example, the verb “are” is missing and leaves the sentence without a verb. The correct sentence should be “Also, open are museums, libraries and exhibition halls at 50% of the capacity.”

Sport

Open-air outdoor sports facilities and facilities with a maximum capacity of 50%, access control and a maximum of 6 people.

Indoor facilities and equipment : capacity of 30%, limitation to 6 people and use of mask in group activities.

Resumption of competitions that give access to state categories.

Another sentence that does not make much sense is “Open-air outdoor sports facilities and facilities with a maximum capacity of 50” as there is a repetition of different words that mean the same thing ("open air", "outdoor").

Professionals who are exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus on a daily basis (health personnel, health center administrative staff, residential staff, etc.) must take special precautions when returning home after the workday to avoid putting themselves at risk. the people they live with, especially if:

A clear example of bad syntax is the sentence “to avoid putting themselves at risk the people they live with”. This is a sentence that makes no sense due to its bad syntax. The correct sentence would be “putting the people with whom they live at risk”.

Bed linen, towels, etc. must be washed. of isolated people with usual soaps or detergents at 60-90 ° C and allow to dry completely. These clothes should be placed in an airtight bag until washed and should not be shaken.

A similar mistake occurs in the sentence “Bed linen, towels, etc. must be washed. of isolated people with usual soaps or detergents at 60-90 ° C and allow to dry completely”. In this sentence the syntax makes no sense at all and there is even a full stop where there shouldn't be one. The correct sentence should be “Bed linen, towels, etc. of isolated persons must be washed with usual soaps or detergents at 60-90 ° C and allow to dry completely”.

Once we have seen some of the most typical mistakes, we can differentiate some of these as medium-risk errors and low-risk errors. Most of the mistakes (confusion of pronouns and prepositions, mistranslated words) are low risk, so they are mistakes that will not make the final message misunderstood. An example of low-risk error would be the sentence “Night confinement”, and an example of medium-risk error would be “Hydroalcoholic ice” since this mistake can create confusion as it does not make sense.

But, as we have seen, the real risk of the machine translation is that the reader will not trust the final message. Even though these mistakes are not very big or problematic, as the final message is still understood, these continuous mistakes decrease the credibility of the text. Some of these mistakes are trivial because if we read “wash your hands with hydroalcoholic ice”, I suppose that no one will wash their hands with ice, but these kinds of mistakes make the text less trustworthy and may cast doubt on the good translations on it. If the reader sees these mistakes, the reader will think that this text is written without basis and it is not revised, and therefore the information it gives is not trustworthy and

the reader will not take seriously the recommendations that are well written and that provide good information. This will lead people to distrust the official messages and then to trust other sources that may not be correct.

There is a clear example of how mistakes in translating can affect the credibility of the source. As I mentioned earlier, in Australia, news services reported COVID-19 information in which Farsi and Arabic were mixed as the same language (Razik, 2020). This kind of errors destroy trust.

2.3.2 Materials in other languages

The Generalitat has not done everything wrong when it comes to translating information related to the pandemic. Right at the start of the pandemic, the Generalitat created a 26-page PDF, written in English, entitled *Measures adopted by the Catalan Government to face the COVID-19 pandemic*. This PDF, with its latest update on 2 April 2020, talks about all the measures that the Generalitat has taken in its different departments (Health, Economy, Justice, Labour, Culture, etc.) to try to reduce the effects of the pandemic. The PDF is divided into 16 sections, each of which specifies the measures taken by the department in question.

In June 2020, the Government of Catalonia released another PDF, with the same name as the previous one (*Measures adopted by the Catalan Government to face the COVID-19 pandemic*), which adds the information already explained in the previous PDF, plus new measures proposed for the so-called recovery phase.

On the same webpage where they have the "Information for citizens" section there is a section called "Materials in other languages". In this section there are two different types of information, one in poster format and the other in audio format. Here, Here, citizens are also informed that if they do not speak one of the languages of the country, and have any doubts about COVID-19, they are advised to call "061 Salut Respon".

The posters are in the following languages: Amazigh, German, English, Arabic, Bengali, French, Fula, Hindi, Italian, Occitan, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Romani, Russian, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu, Chinese and Wolof.

The information of the posters is diverse and are listed below:

- Preventive measures to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus

- Can I be affected by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus?
- What does home isolation mean?
- Measures to be taken with children at home
- How to Take a PCR Self-Test
- Recommendations for people working in the fruit harvest.
- Recommendations for people working in the food industry.
- Isolation for close contacts and positive cases of COVID-19
- Preventive insulation for close contacts of COVID-19
- PCR tests for COVI-19
- If you need to process sick leave, do it through the application “La Meva Salut”
- Isolation for positive cases of COVID-19, pending results and close contacts
- We cut the transmission chain of the COVID-19: early detection of cases and monitoring of contacts
- What is the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus?

All these themes are not available in all languages. For example, the languages with the most translated posters are Romanian with 20, Arabic with 19, French with 18, English with 12, Urdu with 12, Fula with 11 and Chinese with 10. The language with the fewest posters is Amazigh, with only 3 translated posters. This makes sense, because if we look at the data previously shown, of the most spoken languages in Catalonia, they are the same languages that have the most posters (Romanian, Arabic, French).

Example of a poster about recommendations for people working in the fruit harvest in

English:



Example of a poster about news about the perimetral border in the district (*comarca*) of

Segrià in Arabic:



As for the audios, the Generalitat has created 19 audios in different languages. In these videos, there are some basic recommendations of the Department of Health related to Covid-19.

The audios are in the following languages: Akan, Amazigh, Arab, Armenian, Bambara, French, Fula, Georgian, Hindi, Mandinka, Polish, Portuguese, Romani, Romanian, Soninke, Turkish, Ukrainian, Wolof and Chinese.

2.4 Interview

This interview aims to understand and show how people who do not have the basic skills to understand the two official languages of Catalonia, Catalan, and Spanish, have lived through this pandemic.

When it came to deciding who to interview, I thought about Kadisha, the mother of my friend Omar. Omar is a son of Moroccan parents, who have been living in Spain since 1995. His father, since he has been living in Spain, has always worked, so he has been in contact with Spanish people, and over time he has learnt Spanish to the point where he understands and speaks it perfectly. On the other hand, his mother, who has never worked and has dedicated herself to household chores, has never been in contact with Spanish people, and her only contacts have been with people from her own country. In consequence, she has never fully learnt Spanish. He understands spoken Spanish quite well, but written Spanish is much more difficult for her, to the point of not understanding almost anything in sentences.

I will comment on her answers to my questions.

1. How have you been informed about the pandemic given your situation?

She said that because of her situation, what she was looking for was spoken information, either on news on Spanish television or from her children. While watching the news, she did not understand a lot of the information they gave, either because of the complexity of the words or sometimes also because of the speed at which they spoke. Kadisha, to complement the information she heard on TV, asked her children about the most important changes made by the politicians or about the situation in general.

Kadisha also commented that she watched the news from Morocco to find out about the situation in her country.

2. Have you found it difficult to cope with the pandemic given your situation?

What has been the hardest aspect?

Kadisha commented that the most difficult thing for her during the pandemic had been to understand and be aware of the restrictions, as normally every two weeks the restrictions were different, and she did not know if she could leave Reus or not. Kadisha also added that she found it quite confusing how the news explained each of the restrictions for each autonomous community, to the point that sometimes she did not know if they were talking about Catalonia or another Spanish community.

Kadisha said she knew that in fact, all these things are not so difficult to understand, but that her ability to understand Spanish is low and that this makes it more difficult to understand the information, so for her it was difficult to be aware of everything that was happening.

3. Do you think that the lack of materials in other languages can affect immigrants' trust in the government?

Kadisha said that she doesn't care about this aspect because according to her, immigrants living in Spain must learn the language of the country and not wait for information to be given in their own language. She added that if it bothers them that there is no information in their language, then they should make the effort to look for information or ask questions as she had been doing.

4. **Did you know that you had a section on the website of the Generalitat with information in your language?**

As I thought, she had no knowledge of the section where the Generalitat gave information in her own language, but still, she remarked again that if someone wants to be informed about the restrictions and measures, they should make the effort to learn Spanish.

With this response, it can be seen that the Generalitat has not made enough effort to get translated information to the people who need it, the information was not getting through.

5. **Do you think the information given in your language is useful and well translated?**

Once I found out that she was not familiar with this section where the Generalitat informed her about the pandemic in her language, I showed her some of the posters so that she could give me her opinion about them and about whether they were well translated or not.

Having seen these posters, Kadisha commented that the translations are very well done and that they are very useful and added that it is noticeable that these posters are made by a Moroccan person and not with Google Translate. Kadisha also commented that she thought it was very good that the Generalitat informs people in other languages so that people who can't speak or read Spanish or Catalan are aware of what is happening, but she insists that it is also important that they learn Spanish.

6. Did you use machine translation to get information?

Knowing that she is not very good with Spanish, I wanted to ask her if she has taken the information she saw in Spanish or Catalan and translated it into Arabic using machine translation.

Kadisha replied that she has no idea how to use a computer or an automatic translator, that all the information she has obtained has been through television, her mobile phone, her husband, or her children.

These answers help us understand more about what it is like to be informed about a pandemic in a country that is not your own and where the language spoken is unfamiliar to you. As we have seen, Kadisha is a person who knows that her level of Spanish or Catalan is not great considering the time she has been in Spain, but she implies that this is her problem and that she has no reason to complain about the lack of resources in her language. The conclusion she comes to is that if you want to be informed about something, the least you can do is learn the language of the country. This is her opinion, but not everyone will have the same opinion. Some people will think that not everyone can afford to learn a language or has the skills to do so or that not everyone has been in the country for more than a few months.

3. Conclusion

This study answers my research question “Are the translations adequate?” and at the same time it also answers my hypothesis that free machine translation is a risk.

It has been seen how the translations made by the Generalitat have not been correct for the most part, as they have decided to translate the original message using automatic translation by Google Translate. One of the things that surprised me the most is the fact that an official government has used machine translation to provide health-related information, as a bad translation can affect a person's health.

Another thing that surprised me is that the Generalitat has decided not to spend a lot of money on translations. It is true that the Generalitat has spent some money to create posters, but most of the translations related to the pandemic are done by Google Translator and not by people who work as translators.

One of the main risks of mistranslation is that the more mistakes, the less trust people will have in the government and thus the less people will pay attention to future messages.

As for things that could be improved and that I might be missing in this research is the fact that I have not been able to interview an English speaker living in Catalonia who is not fluent in either Catalan or Spanish.

As to how this work could be continued, one of the ideas I have had is that I could talk to someone from the Generalitat, do an interview and ask them about the reasons for the decision to translate with Google Translator and not with qualified people.

The same work could also be done a language other than English, or even on a topic other than coronavirus.

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