

Training Legal Translators and Interpreters in Palestine

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Abstract

Training Legal Translators and Interpreters (TLTI) is gaining weight and momentum in many translator/interpreter-training institutions all over the world, and it has become an integral part of Translation Studies (TS). In Palestine, however, TLTI has been a neglected area until quite recently. The establishment of Palestinian Authority, pursuant to the Oslo Accords between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Israel has brought about political changes in Palestine which seemed to have taken a major step forward. The need for more qualified translators/interpreters has become urgent. New (post)graduate programmes have been established in several local Palestinian universities with a view to prepare qualified legal translators/interpreters for the emerging translation market. Other attempts to introduce non-academic training courses have also been made. This paper aims to explore the status of (non-) academic training in Palestine; it will examine laying the groundwork for TLTI in Palestine, based on an analysis of the examination for translators/interpreters made by the Palestinian Ministry of Justice (PMoJ). Accredited sworn translator/interpreter is awarded to the successful examinees. Analysis for the legal-oriented examination held for the past three years shows that Palestinian translators and interpreters have serious translation problems caused not only by the lure of legal language, but it is also attributed to the lack of professionally-oriented training. The paper reveals that the examinees who have received (non-)academic training managed to pass the exam whereas those who rely solely on experience did not. The paper also shows that the problematic areas the translators/interpreters encounter fall into three categories: syntax, layout and tenor.

Keywords: translator/interpreter training, legal translation, Palestinian Ministry of Justice, (non-) academic training, Translator Accreditation Examination, Palestine