

Introduction

New Trends in the Theory and Practice of Translation and Interpreting

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Introduction to the Special Issue

It is often argued that Translation Studies (TS), traditionally considered an interdisciplinary area of studies, was, for many decades, and up until relatively recent times, relegated to the sidelines of better-established disciplines such as Linguistics and Literature. By the turn of the century, however, it had already outgrown its so-called ‘Cinderella status’ to become one of the most prolific disciplines in the Humanities. In the first issue of *Translation*, in 2001, Siri Nergaard and Stephano Arduini suggest that the interdisciplinary nature of our discipline calls for the use of a new, less restrictive term – “post-translation studies” (Gentzler, 2017). Indeed, TS, or post-TS, constantly shows an excellent capacity to establish links with other disciplines, ranging from artificial intelligence (Wilks, 2009) to drama (Baines, Marinetti and Perteghella, 2011), film and media studies (Chaume, 2004), and even food (Chiaro and Rossato, 2015). All in all, the wealth and breadth of TS scholarship are considerable today, and the discipline has become more solid and robust as decades have gone by, with sub-disciplines having also outgrown the academic margins of TS and nowadays constituting well-established and independent study areas (e.g. audiovisual translation and media accessibility).

It would be safe to assume that translation was often relegated to a secondary position because of its practical, vocational nature. This aspect is intrinsically linked to the professional orientation of most translator training courses, in which practical work involving situated learning experiences, translation technologies and project simulations is often privileged over more academic coursework such as essays. According to Kelly (2005), despite a few courses being offered before the Second World War, most courses were created only after the Nuremberg Trials – a well-known stepping stone for interpreters’

professionalisation and global visibility (Baigorri-Jalón, 2016) – as a response to a greater need for international communication. Translation served as a powerful way of the increasing internationalisation that followed in the second half of the 20th century. These were times when many economies would continue growing exponentially, so it is no surprise that translator training courses boomed during those decades and until the turn of the century. Professional associations also emerged in many European countries, including France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. In the latter, the popularity of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in higher education has even led to signs of market saturation (Vigier-Moreno, 2018). This is arguably a far cry from the more transversal position the discipline held in the previous century, and it is essential that TS scholars take stock of the latest trends in our discipline. The 2nd International Symposium on Translation and Knowledge Transfer (TRAK), entitled *New Trends in the Theory and Practice of Translation and Interpreting*, took place at the University of Córdoba, Spain, in November 2021 and served as a platform for translation scholars to engage in discussions revolving around the latest changes in translation and interpreting theory and practice. It is entirely thanks to the success of the symposium that this special issue came to be produced.

TS has indeed shown immense potential in keeping up with the newest technologies as well as embracing change, not only in research but also in teaching environments. The internet and social media, which affected TS as much as other research areas in the present century, have been of particular importance in the age of globalisation. We can agree that the much-discussed presence and visibility of translation theory and practice have been significantly facilitated by the many instances of activism led by linguists and professional associations in today's internetised society. Nowadays, there is a more comprehensive online presence of translation- and interpreting-related work, activities, and recognition. Prizes and competitions for translators, interpreters and TS scholars abound, often organised by the many national and international translation and interpreting associations that have appeared in previous years. For instance, the Iberian Association for Translation and Interpreting Studies (AIETI) recently launched their open-access encyclopedia entitled *ENTI* (Franco-Aixelà and Muñoz-Martín, 2022), which includes a variety of multilingual entries written by academics and professionals within the field of translation and interpreting studies. Nowadays, global projects are exploring translation in crisis settings, as well as how automation technologies, including artificial intelligence, can be better exploited to serve translators' communities of practice. These are only some of the many initiatives that aim to increase

linguists' visibility and agency in an ever-growing, albeit more competitive, industry. End users, broadly understood as those who are the ultimate recipients of any translation or interpretation in any given context, seem to be increasingly aware of translation-related processes, such as intercultural communication and mediation, and products, such as translated fiction and films or even subtitles in trending videos posted on social media, and, more importantly, the impact they have on our society.

The media have echoed situations where translation facilitated communication or put it at stake. For example, social media have facilitated the spread and dissemination of videos involving empowering sign interpretations of musical performances on stage (Best, 2023). Yet, they have also been a platform that has encouraged heavy criticism of series by social media influencers who thought the subtitles were not up to scratch, such as the Korean *Squid Game* produced by Netflix (Orrego-Carmona, 2021). What is more, the redubs of hit series that have followed social demand have equally attracted the attention of members of the public (Sánchez-Mompeán, 2021). In terms of how translations are produced, there are white papers on a so-called 'talent crunch' that legitimises the use of machine translation by language service providers and corporations (Stasimioti, 2022), subsequently followed by statements issued by translators' associations on what is considered malpractice when it comes to language automation. The COVID-19 pandemic constituted a catalyst for change, and, despite ominous predicaments that the industry would collapse after revenues decreased in 2019 for large companies, the industry managed to thrive, and the size of the language market continues to grow, with some sectors obtaining unprecedented returns (Nimdzi 2021). According to the latest information available on the website of the UK's Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), the translation and interpreting industries steadily grow at over 5% per annum. Coincidentally, sales of translated fiction often increase by the same amount, according to *The Bookseller* (Chandler, 2019).

Working conditions, however, have been profoundly altered since the pandemic erupted. Translators, whose work is, by its nature, solitary, might have seen little change in their work patterns; however, traditionally neglected aspects of their job, such as ergonomics and IT equipment, soon became an ever-more important matter. As months flew by during the COVID-19 outbreak, access to suitable infrastructures and resources, in order to be efficient and productive, proved vital to thriving in a period in which associations reported falling rates and low morale among freelancers. In addition, as meetings swiftly moved online, interpreters had to adapt their working ecosystem to accommodate ever-

increasing online interaction in record time. Transitions were only sometimes as seamless as they should have been. For instance, a few months ago, the European Parliament's in-house interpreters went on strike due to the appalling quality of some of the speeches they had to interpret, often produced using poor-quality equipment (including mobile phones). In the media industry, dubbing studios moved workflows online thanks to cloud-dubbing technologies; overnight, voice talents started recording translated scripts from home. Along the lines of what had previously happened in the subtitling market, dubbing specialists embraced online platforms that integrated workflows from receipt to delivery, thus bringing translators closer to other stakeholders involved in the localisation process.

If anything, the present decade has perhaps been characterised by the inroads made by technology-led augmentation. Developments in the fields of artificial intelligence and machine translation (particularly neural machine translation engines) can be combined with several other technologies, including speech recognition software and project management systems. Industry stakeholders, particularly larger companies, are currently investing in “augmented translation” (Lommel, 2021), which essentially refers to the combination of various technologies that allow linguists to achieve high-quality translations more efficiently. The industry has warmly embraced the idea that translators can achieve goals in shorter time frames with increased accuracy and consistency across translation projects. International associations, such as AVT-E, have embraced this refreshingly new concept of the augmented translator inasmuch as it “puts the human front and centre and uses technology to enhance their capabilities” (Deryagin, Pošta and Landes, 2021: 1). Translators' ecosystems are rapidly changing, thereby incorporating the latest technologies to attain increasingly higher levels of productivity. Still, there is always a risk of lagging behind times for those who fail to keep up with changes. In this ever-changing landscape, TS scholars must take stock of changes and revisit their own understanding of translation theory and practice.

This special issue follows the second TRAK symposium, held in southern Spain, in which TS scholars from many higher-education institutions explored the how translation and interpreting help disseminate knowledge in the 21st century. By bringing languages and cultures closer in an increasingly diversified world, scholars, practitioners and researchers from different areas within TS were given a platform to discuss the rapidly changing nature of our discipline, and sub-disciplines, as well as the leading professional and research trends in today's globalised world. The six papers included in this special issue offer a rich

overview of said trends and are therefore exemplary of the multidisciplinary nature of TS. The contents of this issue touch on taboo language, eco-translatology, the superimposition of languages in literary translation, industry-oriented translator training, community interpreting in health settings, and the interconnections between language learning and TS that affect our very understanding of translation.

In the first article in this special issue, Giampieri analyses the potential of film taboo language in the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) in online environments. More specifically, she reports on a didactic sequence developed to raise awareness about the importance of colloquial and taboo language in English-language films. Students who participated in her lessons were exposed to the English originals as well as the Italian dubs of five American films, namely *The Gauntlet* (1977), *Who's Your Daddy* (2004), *Gran Torino* (2008), *Ted* (2012), and *Ted 2* (2015). These allowed the author to discuss dubbing-specific translation strategies in class and to hear from the students on the language features learnt during the sessions. Despite this being a one-off, the author's methodology can contribute to further research on whether the honing of language skills can be achieved by means of exposure to films of this nature.

The second article, authored by Liu, offers an overview of Western translation theories (e.g. polysystem theory, skopos theory, communicative theory) in connection with Chinese eco-translatology approaches. Building on Hu's seminal works on this topic, the author sets out to analyse the Chinese version of Spain's official tourism website and more specifically some of the web pages dedicated to Córdoba, internationally recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage City, where the abundance of cultural references and local terms call for further perusal. Liu applies Toury's framework and establishes that the target-language norms have been adopted in the Chinese version and claims that the marketing-driven intention seems to play a significant role when translating these types of text in Spanish-to-Chinese website localisation.

The third article is Crepaldi Henriques's case study of the Brazilian version of Jonathan Littell's *Les Bienveillantes* (2006). The author draws on Berman's (1985/2012) deforming tendencies and discusses the effacement of the superimposition of languages by analysing the work of American-born Littell. More specifically, the author analyses a few passages in which German military terms had been left untranslated or were merely transcribed in the target version.

The fourth article, authored by Arnaiz and Ortego, describes in detail the FOIL project (Online Training for Language Industries, 2020-1-ES01-KA226-HE-

096155) that was launched by an institutional consortium and aims at bridging the gap between the industry and higher-education curricula. Through their article, readers will learn about the five modules of the online modular training: 1. “Skills for the job market and entrepreneurship”, 2. “Translation environment Tools”, 3. “Project management” 4. “Content management” and 5. “The language industry”. This initiative is based on a previous analysis of industry needs and the language mediator technological toolbox, and language mediation technology. One of their goals is to provide trainees with a translation environment experience so that their employability and professional performance can be improved.

López Rubio authored the fifth article, in which she shares a descriptive study that explores the interaction between doctors and Chinese patients in the context of sexual and reproductive health in the Valencian community. Apart from reviewing the state of the art and the literature on this topic, López Rubio delves into the communication problems (beyond linguistic issues) that these patients and doctors face. The results of the study are presented and analysed, and some proposals for improvement are shared.

Finally, Bazani seeks to establish whether the current remapping of translation in the field of language education has been informed by the discipline of TS. Throughout this paper, a thorough review of methods, approaches and theories is conducted, and both the CEFR and the CV are analysed to determine the degree of knowledge transfer that has taken place from TS in L2 teaching and has potentially transformed the concept of translation.

This special issue is – and we very much hope the readers will agree – worthy of its name insofar as the articles again have demonstrated how important it is for TS scholars to engage with the latest trends in translation theory and practice. It is hoped that readers will appreciate the breadth of topics and diversity of scholars that constitute the present issue, which will hopefully help to further our understanding of translation and interpreting theory and practice today.

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