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Translation and Interpreting

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Introduction

This chapter is about research issues, traditions, and methods in translation and interpreting (T&I). T&I enable readers, speakers, and signers from different linguistic backgrounds to access information in a different language than their own and to communicate with each other. While the term "translation" refers to the manipulation of written, video, or electronic text by humans or machines, "interpreting" is used for the communication of spoken or sign languages in real time, face-to-face or remotely. Interpreting involves human interaction during a communicative event across languages. Translation involves the delivery of information that may or may not require human interaction in real time.

Even when the origins of translation can be traced to the times of Cicero, and interpreting has always been referred as "the world's second oldest profession," the scholarly study of T&I, as well as the development of translation and interpreting studies (TIS) as a field of inquiry in its own right, together with the resulting empirical and theoretical research produced in the field, are viewed as fairly recent phenomena (Angelelli & Baer, 2015). The growth of this scholarly field is influenced, in part, by a more direct engagement with related disciplines (e.g., bi/multilingualism, cognitive psychology, cultural

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studies, educational linguistics, linguistic anthropology, psycholinguistics, and sociology of language, to name just a few). Evidence of this growth is the number of scholarly journals, the interest of publishing companies in this area of study, the appearance of new doctoral programs, and the increase of master's offerings in TIS in various parts of the world. In addition to the increasing interest in academic curriculum developments, the supply of short courses and seminars, webinars, blended and online training opportunities offered by individuals and companies, with varying degrees of expertise and success, has also raised questions about professionalization and quality in T&I. These issues, as well as additional ones that are discussed later in this chapter, are discussed in the two sample studies that appear at the close of this chapter.

The growth of interest in TIS is also due to recent developments in technologies that call for interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g., expertise in TIS coupled with expertise in mathematics and computer science to develop software applications in T&I), the increase in the volume of digital communicative events across languages and the resulting need for T&I, as well as the more pressing social, political, and economic issues that result in geographic displacement and migration (Angelelli, 2011, 2012).

Current and Core Issues

Initially, most discussions in T&I have centered on issues of cognitive and linguistic abilities, and the focus was primarily on literary translation and conference interpreting (Gile, 2002). Most of these initial discussions concerned students' selection, competences, their performance at the tasks at hand, and "research related to T&I pedagogy relied almost entirely on anecdotal accounts, case studies at best, detailing how translation/interpreting was taught in a particular institution or program" (Colina & Angelelli, 2015, p. 110).

During the 1990s, studies focused less on classroom and more on naturalistic settings. Consequently, research topics included more types of T&I, beyond literary translation or conference interpreting (e.g., technical, scientific, legal, or educational translation, stressing processes in addition to products, and machine-assisted translation). Studies in interpreting that had initially been experimental in nature and mostly about conference interpreting (e.g., Gile, 2002) have broadened their scope to include other settings [e.g., legal (Angelelli, 2015; Berk-Seligson, 2002; Hale, 2004; Morris, 2010), medical (e.g., Angelelli, 2004a; Metzger, 1999; Meyer, 2012), educational (e.g., Angelelli, 2016; Valdés, Chavez & Angelelli, 2000), and social work (e.g., Tipton, 2010)] and used a variety of approaches and methods, from ethnography of communication (Angelelli, 2004a), focus groups (Angelelli, 2007), observations (Bolden, 2000), case studies (e.g., Karoly, 2014; Kuo & Nakamura, 2005) to experimental (e.g., Dimitrova, 2005) and survey-based studies (e.g. Angelelli, 2004b; Li, 2000).

Interestingly, despite the importance of T&I in cross-linguistic/cultural communication, these constructs sometimes appear to be subordinated or subsumed in larger ones. For translation this occurs with the term "language industry," and translation gets overshadowed in software localization or project management. And the same appears to be true for the construct of interpreting, as discussions on interpreting processes and products appear to be subsumed in other issues (e.g., access to services on the part of linguistic minorities or technological developments).

Sample Study 34.1

Zimányi, K. (2013). "Somebody has to be in charge of a session": On the control of communication in interpreter-mediated mental health encounters. *TIS Translation and Interpreting Studies, 8*, 94–111.

Research Background

A study on mental health interpreting, with a specific focus on control and how participants perceive control issues in interpreted-mediated encounters. The larger study, of which this research is a part, sheds light on how narratives—specifically the stories told by clients—are co-constructed with the interpreter and therefore how the interpreter's presence and renditions influences the narratives.

Research Problems/Gaps

This study explores how the participants of interpreter-mediated encounters in mental health settings (specifically occupational therapy, psychology, and mental health nursing) take control of the communication flow.

Research Method

- *Setting and participants*: From two areas of mental health, occupational therapy and mental health nursing, 11 mental health professionals (including 4 mental health nurses, 1 occupational therapist, 2 psychologists, and 4 therapists and psychotherapists) who have worked with interpreters took part in this study, as well as 12 interpreters (with experience in mental health settings) representing the following minority-language groups in Ireland: Bosnian, Chinese, Czech, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, and Sudanese.
- *Instruments/techniques*: A series of semi-structured interviews (approximate length between 21 and 84 minutes with an average of 45) about interpreted narratives in mental health settings in Dublin, Ireland. Protocol included: (1) the perception of mental health among respondents; (2) the cultural and situational significance of narratives; (3) the interpreter's familiarity with the evolving narrative and with the participants in the interpreter-mediated encounter; (4) modes of interpreting; (5) interpreting narratives in mental healthcare; and (6) general issues on interpreting in mental healthcare settings.
- *Data analysis*: The thematic coding process was facilitated by the use of NVivo.

Key Results

In the interpreter-mediated encounter, when it comes to individual participants, there is not one single interlocutor who dominates. Respondents indicated that although the client's story/narrative may not always flow or may be restricted at times, clients may temporarily take control. The two providers involved (mental health professional and interpreter) share the communication flow with the interpreter being responsible for the transferring of meaning between the two interlocutors who do not share a language.

Comment

This work is important as it sheds light on an area of healthcare interpreting that is currently under-researched, that is, mental health with a specific focus on occupational therapy and nursing. In addition, as results appear to contradict the assumption that healthcare providers dominate the talk in monolingual and bilingual encounters, it opens an opportunity for further research across healthcare settings as well as languages.

In translation studies, initial discussions on the construct of translation focused on notions of equivalence and faithfulness to the source text (the original). In those the concerns were more about the product than about the process, and the agency/role of the translator was not considered an issue that deserved attention. The concern on faithfulness to the source text and on finding equivalency was questioned as researchers were thinking of adaptation rather than translation (e.g., Bastin, 1998). This shift beyond equivalent response gave way to the functionalist approach to translation (Nord, 1997). No longer preoccupied by the text equivalency but rather by its function, this new approach continues to be in vogue and is complemented by reader response theory.

In addition, more contemporary discussions in literary translation and theories of translation center around the power of translators (Bandía, 2008), their role (Inghilleri, 2005), and visibility (Venuti, 1995) as they are considered agents of change, manipulating text and playing a key role in foreignizing or domesticating texts/cultures for target readership. In Interpreting Studies, rather than focusing on the interpreter's recognition or prestige, discussions focused on interpreter's participation in the interaction as a result of exercising her agency (Angelelli, 2004a, 2004b; Hsieh, 2016) rather than the interpreter being perceived as a mere channel or language encoder/decoder. In its inception, interpreting was conceptualized as an exchange between two speakers who did not share a language with an invisible interpreter facilitating it. This model:

- portrays an invisible interpreter who is a mere conduit or channel between two speakers who do not share a common language;
- assumes no interaction between interpreter and speakers, and no direct interaction between speakers except through the interpreter;

- pretends that interpreting can happen in a social vacuum;
- equates the interpreter to a language modem;
- presupposes that in any given utterance there is only one meaning, which is independent of the parties to the interaction (interpreter included) rather than socially co-constructed.

Since the 1990s we have witnessed a shift in the perception of the interpreter's role, from a language conduit to an essential partner in a cross-cultural conversation or co-constructor in the interaction (Roy, 2002; Wadensjö, 1998) to a co-participant with agency (Angelelli, 2004a, 2004b; Davidson, 2000). Through ethnography of communication, participant and nonparticipant observations, focus groups, interviews, discourse analysis, survey-based studies, and corpora of transcribed interactions, research has shed light on interpreters' role. Nevertheless, the conceptualization of the interpreter as a conduit is still prevalent, especially among practitioners and trainers, both in sign and spoken languages. This is evident in various publications about ethics.

Various professional associations of translators and interpreters (e.g., The American Translators Association) have produced codes of ethics in which they describe (or prescribe) the role of the translator/interpreter. The California Healthcare Interpreting Association was the first and only one to base their code on empirical research (see Angelelli et al., 2007). It recognizes that the interpreter has multiple roles as a party in the patient/clinician interaction in addition to the conduit role portrayed in earlier writings. These roles are (CHIA, 2002, pp. 35–42):

- Message converter which equates the conduit model discussed on page 5.
- Message clarifier "includes gaining more information from a speaker to explain a message or concept in an alternate or more easily understood manner to facilitate communication" (ibid., p. 36).
- Cultural clarifier involves confirming and providing cultural information, particularly about cultural health beliefs (ibid., p. 37).
- The fourth role, patient advocate (ibid., pp. 39–42), prohibited for the court interpreter, may be required in the healthcare setting to support the health and well-being of the patient.

Unlike statements in codes of ethics from professional associations that tend to be prescriptive in nature, empirical research shows that both translators (Baker, 2006; Inghilleri, 2005; Tonkin & Frank, 2010; Tyulenev, 2015) and interpreters (Angelelli, 2004a; Berk-Seligson 2002; Davidson, 2000) impact processes and products. It is not a coincidence that as translation and interpreting become the target of more empirical research, what in its inception was characterized as a craft, or an art, anecdotal or experiential-based knowledge has become an evidence-based practice and a field of inquiry in its own right.

Technological developments also constitute a core issue in T&I. The arrival of new technology and software applications dealing with communication has impacted several aspects of T&I. For interpreting, multimodal and remote interpreting is an example. By using different platforms of video/audio communication, users of languages of limited diffusion or from remote areas or sign-language users can access services in a more efficient way. When there is no interpreter on site, by connecting to this service, hospitals, schools, government offices, and courts of law can now offer language services to users of non-societal languages. For translation, in addition to machine translation or CAT tools, social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and Google Translate) provide another example of how technology has impacted translation. Social media has enabled crowdsourcing, and volunteer and collaborative translation (Jimenez-Crespo, 2015).

Additionally, technology has facilitated data collection from virtual communities of translators, editors, and project managers. This data on issues that translators face as they work (captured via the use of eye trackers and screen sharing) are helping the industry develop better products for computer-assisted translation tools (e.g., memory management software).

Challenges and Controversial Issues

Within TIS, several challenges and controversial issues include the need to link theory/research and practice (as previously discussed), translators' and interpreters' education, and their status and professionalization. These three are highlighted as examples and discussed separately. They are, however, definitely interconnected.

Similar to many other professions (Sela-Sheffy & Shlesinger, 2011), translation/interpreting was initially perceived as a practice, an art or a craft. It was also thought of as a by-product of bilingualism. Throughout time we have witnessed different degrees of tension among three groups in this field: individuals who practice the profession (practitioners) and who may or may not hold a degree in the field; individuals who teach translation or interpreting (teachers) and who may or may not practice the profession or hold a degree in the field; and individuals who focus on translation, interpreting, or both as objects of study (researchers) and who may or may not practice or teach translation and/or interpreting. Although several individuals share membership in the three groups and more in two (practice and teaching), this is not common practice (Gile, 1995).

Par excellence a site of contact between theory/research and practice is the education of future translation/interpreting professionals as well as their testing and certification. Currently, given the limited opportunities available to develop a fine cadre of T&I teachers, coupled with the importance placed on practical experience T&I classrooms are generally led by practitioners (who may or may not be versed in pedagogy) or language teachers (who may or may not be versed in translation and interpreting). T&I instructors rely on their practice and their experiences to teach incoming students. Although sharing experiences and anecdotes with students can account for some aspects of teaching, designing curriculum around practical experiences as a pedagogical approach is risky. Learning by trial and error or assuming "one size fits all" is not sound pedagogy. Experiential information, albeit interesting, is generally limited to one person's individual experience, personal opinions, or anecdotes. T&I classrooms, like any other classroom, function better when tasks and activities are conducted in a student-centered learning environment where student-learning outcomes are attainable, content progresses in order of complexity, and issues are discussed providing the right amount of scaffolding. This once again is better achieved when T&I practitioners who are responsible for T&I instruction can pair with applied linguists or translation and interpreter researchers and engage in team teaching and problem solving through, for example, action research (Nicodemus & Swabey, 2015). An empirically based education would allow future T&I professionals to learn about the specifics of the industry/setting in which they work and gain awareness of the nature of situated practices (Angelelli, 2007).

Therefore, an education that integrates research and practice would differ from traditional models based on training. Not only would students understand how their practice is grounded, but also their assessment would be valid, reliable and more inclusive of competencies beyond traditional ones. Currently most measurement instruments and scoring procedures in T&I focus on cognitive (analytical skills, information processing, memory) and linguistic skills (language proficiency and specific terminology). Although both of these are essential subcomponents of T&I competence, they do not constitute the whole (Angelelli & Jacobson, 2009). As research has demonstrated, other skills, for example, interpersonal or social ones (Angelelli, 2004a, 2004b; Gavioli, 2012; Inghilleri, 2005), are as crucial as cognitive and linguistic skills but are seldom taught and almost never measured. This means that constructs such as neutrality, objectivity, and invisibility are assumed but are not tested. A more profound dialogue between theory and practice would result in replicating the reality of translators and interpreters at work during assessment.

Ethical, interpersonal, and social issues (such as problem solving, teamwork or time management for translators or alignment, affect, trust, and respect) should be accounted for in assessment of students of T&I rather than taken for granted or simply ignored. We cannot afford not to test what is either an essential behavior in good performance or an absolute inappropriate behavior that would render a performance unacceptable. Instead of neglecting or taking for granted social and interpersonal skills, programs would be testing them side by side with cognitive and linguistic ones. In so doing, testing becomes more integrative of all the dimensions present in any T&I assignment. This encompassing approach to testing would provide a more thorough and precise view of the candidates' abilities. This can only happen as a result of a meaningful dialogue between theory and practice. In sum, research produced during the last two decades has been groundbreaking in expanding our knowledge on translators' and interpreters' roles, their complexity, and responsibility, and the processes embedded in their practice.

In terms of professionalization, the status of translators and interpreters has been described as insecure, marginalized, and ambivalent for some time (Hammond, 1994). In fact, to some researchers (e.g., Sela-Sheffy & Shlesinger, 2011), translators and interpreters constitute an interesting case of an under-scrutinized professional group. Some studies have been conducted in the area of status and field—for example, legal translators and interpreters in Spain (Monzó, 2009), the struggles in the professionalization of an emerging sector such as the in-house translators in Hong Kong (Chan, 2009)—as well as in role and identity of translators (Meylaerts, 2010), interpreters (Morris, 2010), and bilingual youth interpreting for their families and immediate communities (Angelelli, 2016).

In addition, within the continuum of ad hoc interpreting, the case of bilingual youth who have interpreted for their families and immediate communities has been the focus of various studies. Research on circumstantial bilinguals who become young interpreters for their families and communities contributes to our understanding of the life experiences of individuals who begin to interpret early in their lives (Valdés & Angelelli, 2003). This broader view, which commonly refers to language mediation (Antonini, 2011), (child) language brokering, and nonprofessional translation and interpreting (Ervin & Meyer, 2016), has shed light on the challenges faced when students are non-mainstream elective bilinguals (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994).

Limitations and Future Directions

Translation and interpreting are, by nature, interdisciplinary. TIS has benefited from the synergies with related fields of inquiry such as bilingualism, cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, sociology of language, among others as new frameworks and research methods from these related fields began to be adopted or adapted for conducting research in T&I (see Angelelli & Baer, 2015). Calls for more interdisciplinary work have been made for quite some time. Interestingly, many of these calls have not been addressed, so we still encounter limitations in how research is conducted. When studies in T&I do not have a strong base on research methods, for example, we see confusion generated by making claims that cannot be sustained, by not grounding research on underlying conceptual or theoretical frameworks, ignoring previous research because it may be produced outside the field of T&I practice, and quite frequently not differentiating between descriptive and prescriptive approaches.

When it comes to research methods, interdisciplinarity is crucial, as expertise in a field of study is essential to address a phenomenon, as is mastery in conducting research. Many times, individuals working as translators and interpreters, as well as researchers on these topics, bring insightful knowledge to research groups working on, for example, artificial intelligence, multimodal communication, or software development. Pairing researchers and practitioners, as in action research, is not uncommon, especially in T&I pedagogy. As a result of interdisciplinary research conducted over several decades, a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of the contexts, participants, and processes involved in as well as the products resulting from T&I has emerged.

By nature T&I is intrinsically related to applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, cognitive translatology, and bi/multilingualism. While previous studies in the intersection of T&I and bilingualism (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1991; Muñoz Martin, 2013; Shreve, 1997; Valdés & Angelelli, 2003) have shed light on some cognitive, linguistic, and educational processes in translators and interpreters, several issues remain to be studied. This is especially true for the distinction between elective and circumstantial bilinguals (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994). The relationship between language and identity as well as linguistic behaviors exhibited by professional and nonprofessional interpreters and translators needs to be further explored. Specifically studying how circumstantial bilinguals who brokered communication for their families when they were young grow into translators and interpreters or are critical users of translation and interpreting (Angelelli, 2016) could provide us with a fuller picture of the needs of students populating T&I classrooms as well as the T&I end-user perspective and experience.

In addition, although TIS has taken a sociological turn for some time now (Angelelli, 2012; Sela-Sheffy & Shlesinger, 2011; Wolf & Fukari, 2007), several issues remain to be explored. As social agents, translators and interpreters are in a unique position to produce, reproduce and impact cultural production. We still need to understand how, when, and why they engage in these practices and what their level of awareness is about such engagement. Specifically in translation studies, when we consider the impetus of reader response and reception theory, we still need to explore the effects of readers' subjectivity (Chan, 2009) in translated texts (beyond literary ones). We also need to understand how, when, and why readers move across cultural and linguistic borders and what the interaction is among publishing policies, publishing houses, readers, authors, and translators over translated and non-translated work.

In predicting future directions and further research, given the pace of current technological developments and the social media penetration rate, we could hypothesize that future research agendas will call to study the views and concepts of ethics and responsibility in research, especially while studying translation of digital texts and interactions, the post-editing of online collaborative work, and the collection of digital data. These new technologies and software developments allow researchers (1) to collaborate and conduct research in areas of the world that deal with the protection of human subjects differently, (2) to look at corpora resulting from human interactions that were not initially collected for the purpose of research and sharing, and (3) to take part in a variety of fora which are open to the public. These three are just a few examples of issues that call for researchers to rethink their roles and responsibilities as they engage with various areas of the population in an unprecedented way.

Sample Study 34.2

Mellinger, C. D., & Shreve, G. M. (2016). Match evaluation and over-editing in a translation memory environment. In R. Muñoz Martín (Ed.), *Reembedding translation process research* (pp. 131–148). Philadelphia and Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Research Background

This translation process research study investigates professional translator behavior when using computer-assisted translation tools. Professional translators often use specialized software programs that can store their work in paired segments or units (source and target texts) called translation memories. These tools allow the previously created translations to be reused and leveraged; however, this translation process is inherently different from unaided translation. Translation process research provides insight into the impact of these tools on translator behavior.

Research Problems/Gaps

This study investigates how professional translators behave when presented with translation proposed by translation memory systems.

Research Method

- *Type of research*: The study examines de-identified data derived from an experimental task conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation (Mellinger, 2014).
- *Setting and participants*: In the initial study, 9 Spanish-English translators with 4–7 years of professional experience completed an experimental task online.
- *Instruments/techniques*: Mellinger (2014) used TransCenter, a keystroke logging software, to present participants with a Spanish source text that had been segmented at the sentential level and to record their behavior. The participants either translated the Spanish source segment from scratch or edited a suggested English translation.
- *Data analysis*: The data were qualitatively analyzed to better understand professional translation and editing behavior when working with a translation memory.

Key Results

From the qualitative analysis of experimental data, the researchers observe non-obligatory lexical and syntactic changes. The authors posit that this behavior is indicative of a mismatch between the participant's idea of what constitutes an adequate translation and the proposed translation, resulting in a tendency to overedit. Moreover, the preferential changes and persistence during the translation task are argued to be the result of a change in the translation paradigm when performing computer-assisted translation. The authors conclude with a call for additional research on editing behavior when interpreting translation process data.

Comments

This study shows how translation process research allows for greater insight on translator behavior and how translation technologies influence the translation task. It also opens new areas of study by calling for research on editing and revision in the translation process.

Resources for Further Reading

Angelelli, C. V., & Baer, B. J. (Eds.). (2015). *Researching translation and interpreting*. New York: Routledge.

This book offers a broad and systematic mapping of the research in the fields of TIS (including both spoken and sign languages). It explores the general features of a post-positivist approach to research in translation/

interpreting-oriented phenomena. It focuses on (1) the theoretical concepts (e.g., agency and role, bilingualism, cognitive processes, collaboration and volunteer work, fictional representation, gender, pedagogy, power and conflict, professionalism, identity and status, and reader response) framing research in TIS and explores these concepts by tracing how they have travelled from other disciplines and have been adopted or adapted in TIS and (2) the methodologies and methods used in T&I.

Saldanha, G., & O'Brien, S. (2014). *Research methodologies in translation studies*. New York: Routledge.

Focusing on empirical research in translation studies, this book offers a comprehensive review of current research methods used in translation. Studies are grouped into four categories: Studies oriented to product, process, participants, and contexts, and each of these categories constitutes a chapter. The final chapter offers insights to produce a research report by discussing structuring and framing the content as well as giving tips and suggestions on how to report the data.

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