

Communication, compliance and resistance in inter-contextual encounters

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If much of the scholarship on translation and interpreting (T&I) in the 1960s was less interested in political and ideological concerns and focused more on formal linguistic issues, with the cultural turn in translation and interpreting studies (TIS) “the link between translation and politics increases significantly” (Evans and Fernández 2018, 5). Conceptualizing interlingual mediation in its broader, cultural contexts has made scholarly discussions on T&I more complex and enabled TIS researchers to address the way the object of their study shapes the world. The spaces of T&I were revealed as spaces of tensions and negotiations, a perspective that allowed them to bring “specific formations of difference to light, from heterogeneous discursive spaces between and within societies and internal counter-discourses through to discursive forms of resistance” (Bachmann-Medick 2013, 189). The shift in TIS’s orientation put “culture” at its center, but, as Calzada Pérez points out, the study of the definitions of culture leads one to the conclusion that the difference between “culture” and “ideology” can be almost imperceptible. She asserts that the advantage of choosing “ideology” over “culture” when thinking about T&I is that ideology “permeates (identity) groups of the most varied nature” and encourages a greater degree of critical thinking, since “[b]eing ‘critical’ with our own cultures can be seen by some as ‘risky’ and ‘inappropriate’ as it is ‘politically incorrect’ to criticize other cultures openly” (2003, 6). Ideology in TIS is frequently understood as “the set of beliefs and values which inform an individual’s or institution’s view of the world and assist their interpretation of events, facts, etc.” (Mason 1994, 25). As such it encompasses “politics, religion and other grand narratives, all of which can affect how a translation is written and received” (Evans and Fernández 2018, 5). In the contemporary hyper-connected world, it is the ideology of capitalism that is the most pervasive of the competing public “meta-narratives” (Somers and Gibson 1994, 61) and has effectively “become a hegemonic force in our globalised societies” (Baumgarten 2017, 246). Inevitably, every act of translation or interpreting operates within the forces of dominant and alternative ideologies, propelling or hindering their momentum, since “[t]ranslation constitutes an essential medium for global relations of exchange and transformation and is a practice in and by which cultural differences, power imbalances and scopes for action are revealed and enacted” (Bachmann-Medick 2013, 186). Globalizing processes resulted in an increased production of T&I and a serious engagement of social

sciences with it (Heilbron and Sapiro 2016, 374–375) – the sociological turn in TIS. More recently, there have also been calls for an economic turn in TIS concerned with both the profession (Gambier 2012, 2014) and critical theory (Baumgarten and Cornellà-Detrell 2019). Although the relationships between T&I and culture, ideology, sociology, politics and economy are complex, research shows that T&I has mostly supported the dominant power structures and narratives (Cronin 2003, 88; Venuti 1995). Both uncovering the workings of the dominant currents and pointing to exceptions has become equally interesting in TIS in the past few decades.

Articles in this volume of *WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES* give insights into these opposing resistant and compliant translational behaviors and processes. On the one hand, they show how and to what extent individual and institutional agents involved in T&I have been able to resist ideological and economic pressures and negotiate a space between their (potentially) subversive attitudes and restrictions given by the power structures (Jia, Tyšš and Gromová) and, on the other, they illustrate the effect of hegemonic economic and political powers governing the movement of texts over linguistic, cultural and economic borders (Djovčoš et al., Yılmaz, Pliešovská and Popovcová Glowacky). At the same time, they show how the shifting public narratives and news as currency draw attentional capital and shape and distort a translated text which, by the virtue of being torn from its original contexts, is especially vulnerable towards interpretive manipulation (Radin-Sabadoš). The volume also addresses the issue of how translators navigate their actions within the stringencies of copyright ownership and high-paced technological advancements (Pisarski) and the multi-focus strategies TIS scholars adopt in an attempt to grasp the increasing complexity of writing a history of translation (Bednárová).

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