

Foreword

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Translation Flows: Exploring networks of people, processes and products

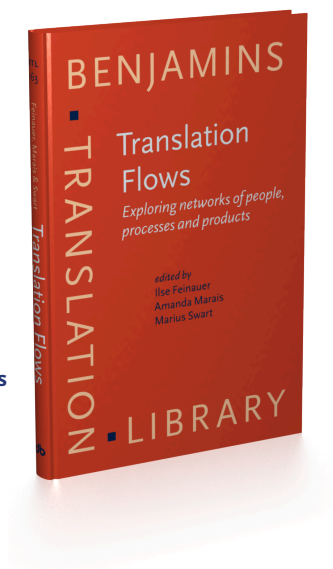
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Foreword

Background

The 9th Congress of the European Society for Translation Studies was held in Stellenbosch, South Africa, in September 2019. This was the first time that this event took place outside Europe. The theme for the 9th Congress was “Living Translation – People, Processes, Products”. The Congress included numerous current topics, such as the role of translation in the lived experience of the Other, in fake news, mass communication, power and ideology, oral histories, the hegemony of English, accessibility, inclusivity, education, gender and transformation.

Translation Studies is by its very nature a living, shifting and vibrant discipline which has shown its flexibility over the past decades. Congress presentations accordingly focused on numerous aspects of the field, including (inter)disciplinary, methodological, conceptual, professional, historical and geographical approaches, all relating the central Congress theme. A common thread that came to the fore, whether as a methodological or analytical feature, as a descriptive framework or as a subject in itself, was that of “flows” and the “flowing” nature of translation. This was the genesis of the present volume, starting with a call for papers to Congress participants as well as a general call to submit abstracts for consideration.

Initially, suitable abstracts for the volume were selected. After completion of each chapter, the full chapter was double-blind peer reviewed and authors who received provisional approval for publication had the opportunity to incorporate the suggestions from the reviewers. Following this, the draft manuscript was compiled, and the full manuscript was again peer double-blind reviewed and revised prior to publication.

Ordering

It would seem logical to use the original sub-headings of the Congress theme – people, processes and products – as thematic subdivisions for the chapters selected for this book. However, many of the contributions could fit into more than one of these sections.

Therefore, the editors instead opted for clustering the chapters into two sections loosely based on the temporality of the given case study. The first five chapters can be seen as dealing broadly with historical flows – ranging from translation-historical to geopolitical. The second cluster is comprised of seven chapters that consist of more current case studies.

Historical flows

In the first chapter in this section, **Anthony Pym** looks at the communicative flows between Aboriginal languages in Australia prior to the European invasion of 1788. He points out that when asking whether translation occurred in a given time and place, it is vital to conceptualise what exactly we mean by “translation”, taking into account our existing positions, orientations and assumptions. Pym reconsiders the clear divide between languages and cultures, as well as the implicit assumption of congruence between a language and a culture in any given translational situation, which are all tenets of much of Western translation scholarship. This investigation of an as yet largely unknown set of interlingual communicative practices gives scholars of translation studies much food for thought, as it brings into focus the situatedness of language, in the process broadening the very nature of translation to include numerous natural phenomena and other communicative modalities. Pym reiterates the importance of indigenous knowledge, not merely as material or data, but also for all its rich and turbulent methodological potential.

In his contribution, **Philipp Hofeneder** works to reconstruct patterns of mobility of agents and objects in translation which together constitute what he dubs the so-called translatorial space. In doing so, he adopts a spatial approach towards translation flows, meaning that he focuses not only on translations as physical objects, but also on the agents enabling them, namely authors, translators and finally readers. His methodology leads to research questions involving the living and working spaces of these agents, as well as the locality of publications and their readers. He examines three different cases of translation spaces, all from the 19th century and with Russia as their epicentre, and studies the dissemination of the works beyond their initial place(s) of origin. This approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of translation history.

Sofía Monzón Rodríguez turns to the substantial flow of Argentinian-made translations that were scrutinized and often denied publication in the 1960s by the Francoist censorship board in Madrid. While Spanish and Catalan publishers as a result sought to get their own editions published, local translations were also affected and shaped by the agents appointed by the regime. The act of translation and the translation processes thus became arduous for translators and pub-

lishers who had to deal with the regime's censorship apparatus. The author sets out to investigate the consequent flows of translations and the network of agents that facilitated the translations. She explores the editions of *romans-à-clef* written by Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin and Lawrence Durrell that travelled from South America to the Iberian Peninsula in the 1960s, and the Spanish and Catalan translations produced domestically in Spain. The outcome is an illustration of how the agents – translators, publishers and censors – involved in this translation flow between North America, Argentina and Francoist Spain interacted to shape the reception of these novels among the Spanish and Catalan readership.

The chapter by **Fruela Fernández** points out that although contemporary characterisations of book translation flows within the global structure tend to proceed from a hierarchical basis, looking at the interplay between centres and peripheries, there is also a need to look at the internal, national field. Consequently, he unpacks the notion of the “politically-committed” publisher in the Spanish context by looking at the role of six such publishers over a period starting with the global financial crisis in 2008 and going up to 2021. Fernández positions these publishers as the intellectual home for pursuing the issues and causes first raised by the so-called 15M protest movement. In recent years, there have been concerns that the post-15M left in Spain are overly concerned with causes such as sexual and racial identity, and not concerned enough with causes relating to labour and political strategy. Using a thematic analysis of publications from the six politically-committed publishers, Fernández shows that the evidence does not support this view, but that there is also a great need for further studies along these lines.

Inspired largely by Pym's idea of transfer maps, **Sare Rabia Öztürk** employs a historical survey to map the flow of people, knowledge, customs, practices and centres of power across the Middle East between the 5th and 14th centuries. The chapter proceeds from the premise that the historical flow between the three sites associated with Arabic, Persian and Turkish cultures gave way to the classical Ottoman setting of intercultural exchange. From here, the author investigates how Ottoman translators within this space engaged with both Persian and Arabic not only as source languages, but also as components of an Ottoman epistemic discourse. The chapter shows how intercultural transfers can influence cultural input in several domains such as science, literature, bureaucracy, education and religion.

Current flows

Just as translation evolves, the objects of its study evolve as well, broadening the scope of translation studies. In the first chapter in this section, **Selahattin**

Karagöz draws on a sociological analysis to investigate flows in the practice of non-commercial and non-professional translation of video games, and the flows resulting from these practices. Karagöz introduces the concept of “gaming capital” to foreground how translators create new language patches for games that have been in circulation for some time. To do so, these translators draw especially on their gaming knowledge and, ostensibly, their identity and position as gamers to do this work. The work they do leads to older video games being recirculated and recontextualised, forming an alternative production flow to the better-known commercial distribution channels. These translators, just like their work, are deeply embedded within a particular gaming community, and they utilise paratextual spaces both to aid them in their selections and to showcase what they have done. The production of these language patches is not driven by commercial considerations, but rather by the personal choices, history and preferences of the translators themselves.

Secondly, we have a contribution from and about Africa. **Maricel Botha** examines the role of subtitling in Nigeria’s film industry (informally known as Nollywood) in stimulating translation from and into indigenous African languages. Here Botha shows that translation in Africa does not necessarily involve horizontal flows between English and/or French and the indigenous languages, but that vertical flows between various indigenous languages also occur. Although the subtitling is usually done non-professionally and informally, Botha states that it has represented an important mechanism for communication flows within Nigeria and to other countries. Botha’s sociologically informed research employs Niklas Luhmann’s social systems theory (SST), as described by Tyulenev. Luhmann’s SST sees society as consisting of communication networks, rather than people or actions. This communication in the form of subtitling provides significant information flows between different language groups in Nigeria, but also between different countries where developing economies do not always offer the means for creating information flows. Botha has highlighted an excellent application for Luhmann’s SST. Nollywood’s ability to project a relatable African identity and to address pan-African themes lead to the export of indigenous-language films. The fact that these films are then subtitled into other indigenous languages highlights Africa and the African presence.

Inspired by the methodological framework of “*histoire croisée*” (intersecting events influencing history), **Yvonne Lindqvist** reconstructs four major intersecting flows of events that led up to the nomination and selection of the French Caribbean author Maryse Condé for the 2018 Alternative Nobel Prize in Literature. Each of these flows is presented in a compelling analysis, namely the translation bibliomigrancy of French Caribbean fiction to Sweden during the past 40 years; the authorship of Maryse Condé and her reception in Sweden; the effects

and repercussions of the cancellation of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2018 and in particular the consequences of the reorganization of the Royal Swedish Academy; the last series of events entails the foundation of the “New Academy” and the Alternative Nobel Prize in Literature. The question still remains open as to whether Maryse Condé’s chances of being awarded the regular Nobel Prize in Literature were spoilt by being awarded the Alternative Nobel Prize in Literature.

The role of international literary agents in the flow of texts and the network of relations of the global literary market is the focus of **Duygu Tekgül-Akın**’s chapter. She uses a case study from Kalem Agency, Turkey’s largest literary agency, and investigates the acts of translation that are undertaken and commissioned by literary agents, as well as acts of image building through such translation. Primary data (including interviews with the co-founder of the agency, as well as published news items and promotional material produced by Kalem) were analysed making use of content and discourse analysis in order to address questions regarding the types of translation that are undertaken or commissioned by international literary agents, and how these are related to the overall flow of texts. Furthermore, the role of these acts of translation in transnational cultural intermediation are considered, ultimately providing a perspective on the place of international literary agents in the broader network of the literary translation industry.

Bei Hu investigates the transnational flow of Chinese texts in translation. She draws on empirical evidence from a quasi-experiment in which a group of 22 readers in Australia responded to various English translations of foreign affairs discourses. Her findings illustrate how a nonlinear trade-off model could be used to explain the readers’ judgements where they weigh linguistic and ethical considerations against each other. The trade-off is between what seems mutually contradictory, namely faithfulness vs fluency, explicitation vs implicitation, and distance vs proximity. Hu views translation reception as a continuum, ranging from a position where a translation is definitely refused to where a text is absolutely accepted. According to these findings, the readers tend to take into account a pair of two seemingly mutually contradictory expectations (e.g. faithfulness vs. fluency) and, at some point, reach a compromise. Hu therefore regards translation reception as a trade-off, being optimal when it yields the maximum desired effects with minimum risks. She also suggests that the extent to which the translation is accepted is subject to the degree to which the readers trust the translator. The more trust the translator gains, the more open the reader is to accepting a wider range of translator interventions resulting in, for example, a more fluent translation with more explication and moving further away from the meaning of the source text.

Laëtitia Saint-Loubert analyses literary circulation in the Caribbean from a more fluid, decentred perspective in order to reveal horizontal, submarine (translation) flows, and to connect Caribbean Studies and Translation Studies. Saint-

Loubert claims that the Caribbean literary ecosystem and Caribbean Studies as a discipline are central to a decolonial approach to translation and literary circulation. Translation flows are analysed as tidal movements that focus primarily on literary (non-)circulation within the insular Caribbean. Kamau Brathwaite's term "tidalectics" is used as theoretical lens to describe Translation Studies from the perspective of Caribbean Studies. The research has shown that existing models of analysis for the transnational circulation of literature are not suitable for the region. Case studies such as libraries and book kiosks examined in this chapter, all individual and community-based initiatives, demonstrate solidarity and resourcefulness that resist mainstream circulation flows. Saint-Loubert's conclusion is that a more integrated approach is urgently needed to address issues of bibliodiversity and epistemological justice in regions such as the Caribbean. This requires decolonizing the mainstream book market, as well as the theory and praxis of translation.

Paola Gentile investigates the transnational imagology at play during cultural transfers between the Netherlands and Italy, two cultural peripheries within the global flow of translated literature. She considers the reasons and motivations behind the selections made by institutional agents when it comes to both the production and the reception of literary translations. The literary and cultural image of a country, in this case the Netherlands, is formed in large part by the selection of translations made of its literature. Therefore, in forming translation policies and supporting translation, agents such as the Dutch Foundation for Literature and Flanders Literature play an important role in shaping the representation of a culture abroad. Gentile builds on these principles in a case study showing how Italian publisher Iperborea has utilised the Nordic image of Dutch literature as promoted by the Dutch Foundation for Literature to promote translated Dutch literature in the Italian market. The benefits as well as the potential dangers of this situation are also pointed out.

In conclusion

The 12 chapters in this volume are a clear illustration of the wide scope of Translation Studies, indicating the way in which the discipline has started moving away from its traditionally European situatedness. Whereas the first cluster of chapters consists mainly of work on and from the Global North, the second cluster complements this by bringing the Global South into the picture as well.

This kind of methodological distinction is, of course, not a fact out in the real world. Dividing up the globe into two halves, deciding on which continent a study is based, and the like, are all attempts to simplify the complexities related to

delineating nations and nation states, continents, identities, ideologies and other aspects of being-in-the-world. The junction between the two sections, for example, is formed by two contributions reaching from the Ottoman Empire right into modern-day Turkey. As the title states, however, *translation flows*, not just in the conventional sense, between languages and cultures, but over artificial borders, into new spaces, between non-traditional agents and actors, and through various genres and mediums.

The contributions in this volume open up new avenues for further research, while extending the range of perspectives on the basis of which the discipline can be expanded. Translation as a social practice forms a golden thread throughout the various chapters that each provide novel points of departure, whether it be by incorporating non-traditional language pairs, materials, datasets or geographical and temporal spaces.

We foresee that this volume of state-of-the-art research will stimulate robust discussions as we map our way forward as a living discipline.

Ilse Feinauer, Amanda Marais and Marius Swart