

Introduction

Miriam SHLESINGER, CETRA Professor 2007

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Every CETRA Professor presumably brings along her/his toolkit, her/his area of expertise, her/his preferred paradigms as well as her/his individual strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and as a translation scholar. So too it was with me – coming primarily from an Interpreting Studies background, but also dabbling in the study of quality in translation (written and oral) and – like all my colleagues on the CETRA staff – rather obsessed with methodological issues. The latter concern, methodology, came up in every single CETRA tutorial and in virtually every offhand chat with participants. Methodological issues were clearly the Leitmotif of CETRA discussions, for reasons too obvious to enumerate.

Indeed, the 2007 collection represented here – the papers deemed (by two or more referees in each case) sufficiently well formulated, well thought out and well researched to merit inclusion – all devote extensive attention to methodological choices, shortcomings, logistics etc. But of course they do not stop with methodology per se; i.e. they do not make do with accounting for the *how* and the *why*, but also invite us into a trove of new knowledge about the *what*: individually, these papers are a remarkable example of contemporary Translation Studies at its finest; collectively, they epitomize our discipline's diversity – stretching it in directions unimaginable just a decade or two ago. The depth and breadth of this knowledge and of the new questions it raises are intellectually both stimulating and gratifying.

Take *subtitling*, for example: just when some of us may have thought – naively, foolishly – that the academic analysis of subtitling had run its course (how many more studies can there be about strategies for dealing with wordplay within this severely constrained medium?), we encounter Valeria Franzelli's highly innovative study of anger sequences as a unit of meaning in films, at the interface of Translation Studies and cognitive-emotion theories. Or take the (very) under-researched Jakobsonian notion of *intersemiotic translation*: using a cognitive linguistic toolbox to explore the many functions of form, Agata Holobut stretches our definition of *translation* in thought-provoking directions, revisiting the notion of description as translation (i.e. as a form of re-expression) in the context of design and its

communicative function. Or, to take yet another under-researched area, the *revision* stage of most (written) translational activities, Isabelle Robert shares some of the methodological challenges she confronted, as she pitted several approaches against one another in an attempt to determine how much leeway to allow revisers in an experiment designed to pinpoint the dynamics of revising.

When it comes to *cognitive aspects of interpreting*, we are re-introduced to the ongoing struggle to create a viable interface between our own discipline and its academic "neighbors", as Šárka Timarová comes to terms with the pesky difficulties of staking out a comfortable middle ground between the paradigms and methodologies of cognitive psychology, on the one hand, and those of interpreting studies, on the other. A very different aspect of interpreting studies comes to the fore in Seyda Eraslan Gercek's innovative fieldwork study, which presents us with the decisive advantages of triangulation, with each method both testing (i.e. challenging and validating) the other, and contributing to the rigor of the study as a whole while examining the cultural implications of *the interpreter's role*, as perceived by the various interactants. A different perspective on role emerges in the context of literary translation, where the frequently tapped notion of translational habitus is analyzed afresh by Vasso Yannakopoulou. Challenging both DTS and polysystems theories, this paper introduces the reader to new ways of discovering the translator's own ideology.

The *historical perspective* too is rife with methodological considerations, found at the focus of several very different papers (all of them either explicitly or implicitly political) included in this collection. Each of these very distinct and distinctive studies – Francis Mus' overview of the internationalization of Belgian periodicals after World War One; Marta Pacheco Pinto's description of the "Female Oriental Other"; Pieter Boulogne's revisitation of polysystem theory, via Dutch translations of Dostoevskij; and Ting Guo's questioning of the boundaries imposed on the definition of "translator" in Communist China – sheds new light on the role of translation and translators in the transfer (and transformation) of historically and politically revealing materials.

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Thinking back over the summer of 2007, in which I had the pleasure of discussing these papers (and many others) with their respective authors, I remember being struck by the intensity of it all. All of us – students and tutors alike – were clearly marvelling at the uniqueness of the opportunity to brainstorm in an unconstrained setting, and to take advantage

of one another's insights and inputs. Many of the participants were at that critical stage of agonizing, quite literally, over choices that had been made or were about to be made: the choice of topic, the choice of methodology, even the choice of the mentor or institution – with all that this implied for one's personal and professional life in the following few years. But almost as salient as the intensity of it all was the sense of being among the singularly privileged – again, this was true of students and tutors alike – to be working at a setting like CETRA, the ideal setting in which to engage in all this agonizing and brainstorming. There is nothing else like it, I believe, and I felt (and still feel) grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with so many scholars-in-the-making as they kept digging deeper into their chosen themes, never resting on their laurels, never taking any of this for granted. This collection, as I see it, represents the atmosphere of intellectual rigor and collegial support that CETRA promotes so admirably and the scholarly excellence that it enables each participant to pursue.

About the author

Miriam SHLESINGER studied linguistics and musicology at the Hebrew University. Besides being an active translator of Israeli literature she has worked extensively as an interpreter, including diplomatic interpreting and court interpreting. She is a member of the editorial boards of several international journals in Translation Studies, an Associate Editor of the Benjamins Translation Library and co-editor with Franz Pöchhacker of *Interpreting: international journal of research and practice in interpreting*. She is also a member of the Research Committee of the International Association of Conference Interpreters and has served on the executive board of the European Society of Translation Studies. She has been teaching written translation, interpreting and translation theory at Bar Ilan since 1978. Her non-academic positions have included her role as Chair of the Israeli section of Amnesty International and as board member of an Israeli NGO that strives to ensure equal access to health care for language minorities. In May 2006, her interest in healthcare interpreting motivated her to initiate an international conference on "Access to Health Care for Language Minorities" and later, Israel's first university course in community interpreting.

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