

FROM THE EDITOR

INTRODUCTION

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW ON PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING OVER THE LAST DECADE AS WELL AS THE PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD

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The COMUNICA Network (Red COMUNICA) started in 2005 in conjunction with the 2nd International Conference on Public Service Translation and Interpreting, which took place at the University of Alcalá with the theme being *Mediación entre lenguas y culturas/Translation as Mediation or how to Bridge Linguistic and Cultural Gaps* (Valero Garcés 2005). This conference was held as a representation of all of the efforts that were made up to that point in time, starting three years prior with the 1st International Conference on Public Service Interpreting and Translation held in 2002 (Valero Garcés 2002), during the peak of massive influxes of immigrants in Spain. The 2nd Conference provided new input regarding dialog and an exchange of experiences and projects aiming to establish links between professional, academic, and educational communities actively involved or interested in the new multicultural societies that were forming worldwide. The COMUNICA Network emerges within this framework, composed of various research groups from several Spanish universities located throughout the different Autonomous Communities with PSIT in the country. As their blog states (<http://red-comunica.blogspot.com/>), their primary objective is to become a Permanent Communication Observatory between languages and cultures in Spain, focusing on the specific field of Public Service Translation and Interpreting (PSIT) and exercising critical awareness in a committed manner. In 2006, a book titled *Retos del siglo XXI para la lingüística aplicada: nuevo mapa lingüístico y cultural de la Península Ibérica [Challenges of the 21st Century in Applied Linguistics: A New Linguistic and Cultural Map of the Iberian Peninsula]* was published in RESLA, the Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics, and was later published again in 2012 by Editorial Académica Española.

This was the first joint contribution made by the COMUNICA Network as well as the start of its unstoppable journey. The following extract is taken from the foreword of this very publication (2006: 2):

This monitoring group aims to raise awareness about the current status of public service translation/interpreting in Spain, exercising critical awareness in a committed manner, exchanging information, proposing joint actions, and collaborating on projects that have been coordinated on a national level by each of those research groups, concurrently coordinating other actions both regionally and locally. The consensual notion here is that, in order to take action on reality, a realistic map of this reality is essential. Therefore, the first step that must be taken—which is what this publication corresponds to—is to sketch this map as carefully as possible, in order to attain a foundation on which to work and improve the current state.

Well aware that we are dealing with a situation that has repeated itself throughout human history but that is new to us, we aim to provide a detailed perspective on what was occurring in Spain. The research group members—some more established than others at this point in time—willing to start a network were the authors of each of the articles that constitute the first part of this paper aiming to explore the national reality by zones. The objectives remain the same:

1. Demonstrate the linguistic state in its area as realistically as possible.
2. Talk about the new challenges that arise from the coexistence of new languages and unknown cultures as well as the importance of mediation and PSIT.
3. Analyze the solutions that are being proposed regarding these matters.

The conclusions reached by the different groups demonstrate more similarities than differences in the following areas:

1. Speed at which society changes when several languages and cultures are introduced in a short period of time.
2. High concentration of said population in specific geographic areas.
3. *Ad hoc* solutions to resolve conflicts.
4. Different levels of awareness regarding the language issue.
5. Variety of strategies being implemented in order to compensate for the lack of well-prepared intermediaries.
6. Lack of resources to apply solutions that go beyond the moment in time in which they are needed.
7. Large presence of volunteers that can carry out multiple functions—including translating and interpreting in any type of environment or setting—without being specifically trained for said functions.

The second part of the volume titled “Futuro de la convivencia en una España multicultural y multilingüe” (*The Future of Coexistence in a Multicultural and Multilingual Spain*) included information on projects, groups, and experiences that offered progressive solutions or described other realities beyond and within our borders in order to help distinguish the model of coexistence that was developing in Spain at the beginning of the 21st century.

What has happened since then? After a decade of work, the COMUNICA Network continues its main objective by being both an observer and participant in the evolution of society and in the creation of a web of relationships and actions focused on the primary functions that the Network has set:

1. Study and analyze the evolution of PSIT in the country as a whole.
2. Promote the professionalization of PSIT.
3. Make those in charge of public services more aware of the need for quality PSIT.

From their workplaces, and across all of Spain, members of the COMUNICA Network

have not stopped fulfilling their duties as trainers of translators and interpreters as well as professionals and researchers. Various studies and analyses have been carried out from each of the relevant geographic areas regarding the reality and evolution of PSIT in its broadest sense, the demand for public service translators and interpreters, public opinions on the matter, the responses given by public administrative bodies, the management systems, work conditions as well as the quality of the translations and interpretations provided in each public service, and PSIT training in Spain.

The results of this analysis are regularly shared in conferences, national and international conventions and meetings, as well as in articles and monographs written by members of the Network. After a decade of commitment, the general conclusions that have been drawn from these studies are quite evident: communication between the arriving and existing parties is still not fluent, and if there were such things as professional translators and interpreters as well as service providers who knew how to work with such interpreters, the communication quality would increase drastically as well as the time being spent and, consequently, the money that this would involve, which is a topic that has always been of interest to the institutions.

The COMUNICA Network has wavered from their efforts to get academic, educational, and both public and private political and social authorities involved in providing solutions to problems that may arise in any affairs involving the immigrant population that is unfamiliar with not only the language in use and the culture, but also unaware of the operation of the institutions they should be seeking for multiple functions.

By taking a look at their blog and at the research groups that contribute to it (Alfaqueque, CRIT, FITISPOS, GRETI, MIRAS, FILSE) as well as their members, one can make out what their activities and advances imply. Such effort, at both a national and international level, is just another manifestation of the spirit of understanding that extends across different EU countries given the overwhelming reality of heading toward multicultural societies. From a standpoint involving constructive criticism and social commitment, the efforts being made by the COMUNICA Network and its web of relationships so that both Spain and the EU accept and provide minimum training standards for those individuals acting as communication liaisons between different languages and cultures represent a positive step forward.

Its compromise is demonstrated in two types of activities that summarize its history (COMUNICA Network 2010: 32):

1. Recommend, both within and beyond our university setting, training programs that focus on the professional qualifications of individuals involved in PSIT. In this field of work, several courses and seminars have been offered at the request of different public administrative bodies.
2. Bring awareness to political leaders, professionals in other fields, and PSIT administrators regarding the different types of repercussions that result due to a good or bad translation or interpretation and the consequences faced by the public service users and providers in practice.

A decade after its first joint publication with the COMUNICA Network, *FITISPOS International Journal* dedicates this issue as a tribute to—and reaffirmation of—a commitment. At this critical turning point, the content of this publication serves to demonstrate the changes that have taken place and that lie ahead in the increasingly well-known (but not always recognized) field of PSIT.

FITISPOS International Journal, 2016, 3 reviews and analyzes various aspects regarding the status of PSIT in the last decade.

The *Articles* section comprises six articles written by scholars of different backgrounds (New Zealand, Australia, Germany, and Spain). Half of these articles cover new aspects involving the teaching of interpreting and translation. Ineke Crezee, a senior lecturer at Auckland University of Technology, provides an interesting article on teaching experiences in a multicultural classroom in New Zealand, a country that is highly distinguished by its multiculturalism and diversity. This rich linguistic diversity is evident within the classroom in which students from different backgrounds come together. English is used as a lingua franca, although no specific focus is given to it. This poses a major challenge for teachers as they are unable to give specific feedback on the translation development of students, given that each student translates into a different language. In order to avoid this obstacle, a blog-creating system was devised by students. These blogs have become a success story, and Crezee's article focuses on analyzing 17 of them, which have been written by students from different backgrounds that speak different languages in an attempt to analyze their thinking levels on translation from a pragmatic/cultural approach.

Jim Hlavac, a senior lecturer at Monash University in nearby Australia, also provides us with an article that examines the relationship between training and examinations, using students enrolled in a 40-hour interpreting course as the subjects of his study. The article begins with a retrospective analysis on the current status of public service interpreting in Australia since the 1970s, taking a look at when the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) was established as well as providing a detailed account of the examination and accreditation processes that public service interpreters go through.

Also within the field of the teaching of interpreting comes Mireia Vargas Urpí's article. Vargas Urpí is a member of the MIRAS Group (Grupo MIRAS). Focusing on the region of Catalonia, she describes the progress and setbacks regarding public service interpreting as a profession, giving special attention to the training involved in said profession. Vargas Urpí provides us with a detailed description of the different types of training, leading readers to question and recognize the importance of basing the structures of training programs on observation and research contingent on the reality that surrounds us.

Marta Estévez Grossi from the University of Hildesheim in Germany—a country that is familiar with receiving immigrants—also contributes to this volume. Although Germany received a large influx of Spanish immigrants in the 1960s, this was considered to be temporary by both the hosts and the newcomers. Consequently, neither German teaching programs nor official interpreting services were established. Nonetheless, many of these new workers stayed in Germany and, nowadays, have missed the opportunity to take advantage of the German teaching programs that have recently been established. Marta Estévez Grossi provides us with a very interesting article that examines the communication problems that these older immigrants face as well as the solutions they resort to.

Focusing more on the specific fields of interpreting, the articles written by Leticia Arcos Álvarez and Elena Pérez Estevan take a look at the areas of legal interpreting and healthcare interpreting, respectively. The first article contains an anthology of the current legislation as it applies to translation and interpreting within legal settings in Spain, demonstrating very slow progress since the 1970s up to this point in time. Meanwhile, Elena Pérez Estevan highlights and demonstrates—using evidence-based data—the importance of an interpreter and a member of staff holding a small meeting prior to the interpretation in order to ensure a successful interaction.

The *Interview* section draws attention to the new momentum that Sign Language Interpreting (SLI) is gaining in Spain and how it contributes to the development of SLI in a

globalized and multilingual world, offering two interviews that were given to important representatives of different institutions and associations. The first interview was given to Laurie Swabey, Director of the CATIE Center, an excellence center which serves to promote the advancement of interpreting education in the United States. The second interview involves representatives of the Spanish Federation for Sign Language Interpreters and Interpreter-Guides (FILSE).

The *Book Review* section includes comments on four books on various topics. *Investigación emergente en traducción e interpretación [Emerging Research on Translation and Interpreting]* is the suggestive title of the first book, which was edited by three members of the FITISPos group including Lázaro Gutiérrez, Sánchez Ramos, and Vigier Moreno. This book includes contributions made by young researchers on various subjects that reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the scientific output surrounding Translation and Interpreting.

The two books titled *Comunicación entre profesionales de la atención en violencia de género y víctimas/supervivientes que no hablan el idioma. Informe sobre la encuesta a agentes del proyecto Speak Out for Support (SOS-VICS) / Communication between professionals providing attention and gender violence victims/survivors who do not speak the language. A report on the survey carried out on agents during the Speak Out for Support (SOS-VICS) project* and *Formación especializada en interpretación para víctimas/supervivientes de violencia de género / Specialised training for interpreters working with gender violence victims/survivors*, edited by Maribel Del Pozo Triviño and research team members of the EU project *Speak Out for Support*, contain some of the results of said project that are of free access on their webpage.

Lastly, commentary on *Community Translation* is included, which is a recently-published book written by Mustapha Taibi and Ozolins regarding an often overlooked issue in the field of PSIT.

Research Corner includes various doctoral dissertations that were recently presented regarding diverse topics that acknowledge progress within PSIT, but that also recognize how much still needs to be done and the obstacles that are yet to come within the field. The titles of the following recommended publications already imply a lot over the matters they cover:

- *Propuestas didácticas para la interpretación de lengua de signos / Didactic proposals for sign language interpreting*, H. González Montesino, 2016.
- *Interpretación en el ámbito educativo: la comunicación docentes-padres extranjeros / Interpreting in Educational settings: Communication Between Teachers and Foreign Parents*, Ana Isabel Foulquié Rubio, 2015.
- *Enfoques funcionalistas en los Estudios de Traducción y Comunicación Intercultural. Diseño y aplicación de un modelo de traducción de textos del ámbito sanitario / Functionalist Approaches in Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication Studies. A Design and Implementation of a Translation Model for Healthcare Texts*, Maanerat Marnpae, 2015.
- *La interpretación en los servicios públicos en el ámbito sanitario. Estudio comparativo de las ciudades de Montreal y Barcelona / Public Service Interpreting in Healthcare Settings. A Comparative Study Between the Cities of Montreal and Barcelona*, Noelia Burdeus Domingo, 2015.
- *Cross-Linguistic Communication and Public Policy: The Institutionalization of Community Interpreting*, Sofía García-Beyaert, 2016.
- *Norms and Ideology in a Translated Institution: A Case Study of Interpreter Involvement in Sermon Interpreting*, Alev Balci, 2016.

- *Non-standard Spanish in the United States and Translation Norm Behavior: A Study on Hospital and Court Interpreters*, Beatriz Cortabarría, 2016.
- *Mediación interlingüística e intercultural en el ámbito de la salud sexual y reproductiva: estudio de casos con usuarias de origen chino*, Marta Isabel Sánchez Pérez, 2015.

New projects such as the TIPp project and the SHIFT project are included in this section, and new types of tools dealing with PSIT are also mentioned, including Bmob-Byvox, Universal Doctor Speaker Mobile, and Universal Doctor Speak Web.

To conclude, some references have been included regarding the various events that are organized concerning PSIT that serve to promote and continue with the collaborative work that is required in modern times. The 6th International Conference on Public Service Translation and Interpreting (TISP6) deserves special attention as the starting point of the COMUNICA Network. Organized by the FITISPos group, it will be held in one year (March 2017) at the University of Alcalá and it will offer a new opportunity to reunite the Network in order to continue with work discussions as well as exchange experiences and projects that were undertaken in previous TISP-UAH conferences.

The *Working Papers* section of this third volume deserves special recognition due to the high-quality contributions it contains. It includes five articles written by young researchers on various subjects regarding public service translation and interpreting. One of these articles includes a very interesting contribution made by Marta Isabel Sánchez Pérez who uses case studies to explore the extent of the involvement of interlingual and intercultural mediators when dealing with Chinese patients visiting their doctors for sexual and reproductive health consultations. The recommendations that she makes are of great practical value.

Cristina Álvaro Aranda and Xi Wang, both from the University of Alcalá, examine different matters regarding the training of healthcare interpreters. Cristina Álvaro Aranda carries out a study on the various modes of training currently available in order to subsequently offer other methods in an attempt to organize teams comprising individuals from different professional backgrounds that have been defined by the training they received. Xi Wang, on the other hand, focuses on Chinese-Spanish interpreters and the lack of training resources available to them. In her study, she analyzes the materials that are currently available and describes the skills that are required in order to correctly fulfill the job duties involving this profession in an attempt to subsequently propose certain criteria that should be implemented when creating new materials.

Carmen Cedillo Corrochano and Paola Gentile analyze distinct aspects surrounding the current professional status of public service translators and interpreters from two different perspectives. Carmen Cedillo Corrochano carries out a unique study on the relationship between the level of professionalization in Public Service Translation and Interpreting and its mediatization, that is, its mass media coverage. From a different viewpoint, Paola Gentile reveals the results of an interesting survey that was conducted in which a possible link between two semi-professions is established: public service translation and interpreting and nursing.

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