

# Expressions of Translation in an Interculturally Globalised World: Language, Culture and Interculture in the Spanish context

*Expresiones de la traducción en un mundo interculturalmente globalizado: lengua, cultura e intercultura en el contexto español*

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We are intercultural albeit unique: In the words of Cristina Sepsi Soare, «[m]an is a unity in diversity, a paradoxical creature» (2009, 745) because the myth of society as monocultural is «consistently denied by the dynamic realities of the development of political and socio-economic communities» (2009, 747) in such a way that it is the coexistence, cooperation and communication of different ethnic populations which produce positive mutual influences. These, as she contends, constitute «the premises of interculturality as a basic resource of social development of all ethnic communities involved» (*ibid.*). In her view,

A practical approach and positive purpose is to examine some of the common elements that could affect communication in an international environment. Only by

understanding these elements (cultural evolution, language, religion, perception of time, human behavior, and communication style) will ensure an increased efficiency of communication with people from other countries or cultures. How to communicate depends on a critical understanding of that culture, because what can be positive in one culture may be outrageous to another. (Sepsi Soare 2009, 751)

This positive view contrasts greatly with the perception of an attitude which Cronin has described as neo-Babelian, and which involves a desire for «mutual, instantaneous intelligibility between human beings speaking, writing and reading different languages» (2003, 59) but which, as Bielsa (2005, 137) highlights, involves a reductionism in linguistic diversity which, albeit it does not result in the disappearance of translation, widens the cultural divide by forcing those who do not speak the dominant language to translate to and from the dominant language.

Interculturality permeates the territories of local cultures and peoples in a globalised world, and hence its expressions and manifestations are pervasive and have been discussed and analysed profusely in different disciplines. However, the role of languages and translation has been systematically neglected in current studies on globalization, although, as Bielsa claims (2005, 131), «translation is central for an understanding of the material conditions that make possible global connectedness» in such a way that «a focus on translation has important consequences for the way that globalisation is understood today».

Following the perspective adopted in the first issue of this first volume of *Clina*, in this issue the question of how interculturality permeates the territories of local cultures, peoples and meanings is approached from a variety of angles with an aim to offer a deeper insight into the expressions of globalisation from an intercultural perspective and the role of translation and translators in this process. The contributions in this issue cover a variety of situations in which this 'unique diversity' is expressed, particularly within the context of Spanish language and (inter)culture from a range of perspectives. They highlight a basic tenet of contemporary translation studies: that global communication in any field of knowledge implies a displacement, and that this displacement cannot be addressed solely in terms of traditional disciplinary approaches. Translating diasporic literature, intercultural communication in literature or commerce, the ambivalence of Self and Other in accounts of a near, yet culturally distant world, and the challenges of their translation, are some of the key issues addressed in this volume.

Anass Elamri's «*The Elixir for the Redemption of Captives*, a little known account of late 18th-century Spain through the eyes of Moroccan Ambassador Muḥammad ibn cUthmān al-Miknāsā» reflects on the difficulties encountered by the translator into Spanish of a little-known yet very important work of travel literature: the diary of a Moroccan diplomat to the court of Spain's Carlos III and his colourful account of Spanish life at that time, including the description of cultural contrasts and musings

about the fate of the Muslims in Spain two centuries earlier. The *Elixir* is a remarkable document about intercultural communication (which would eventually result in a peace treaty between Morocco and Spain), the efforts at bridging cultural gaps and making the foreign familiar, and also the challenge of the translator who tries to reverse the process giving Spanish voice to the Moroccan diplomat's experience.

With the title of «Horacio Vázquez Rial: Historia y trabajo de un escritor que fue también traductor», the article authored by Magdalena Cristina García Díez presents a thorough portrait of the Argentinian writer, translator and journalist. In this contribution of a biographic as well as a bibliographic kind, Vázquez Rial's prolific work is analysed revealing some of its characteristic features. Horacio Vázquez Rial, who was born in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 1947 and was exiled to Barcelona in 1974 for political reasons, is a representative example of the dynamism of cultures under the umbrella of Spanish language, often ebbing and flowing along both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Chenyng Wang's article, «La traducción de la literatura diaspórica china en España», deals with the factors that influence or determine the selection of Chinese literary works that are translated and published in Spain, dealing with key aspects such as ideology and representation, the influence of literary awards, and the commercial benefits, among others, that make up the representation of Chinese culture in Spain, in a highly relevant discussion, from the point of view of Translation Studies, of the role of translation in the construction of world literatures.

The last two articles depart from the literary realm in order to delve into the discourse of science popularization articles (García Riaza's) and with that of toy manufacturers aiming at international commercial transactions (Ivorra Pérez's). Its presence in an issue devoted to a multifaceted view on intercultural issues within Spain and Spanish cultures is justified by considering that, as it is often claimed, English is the language of science and, even though that has not been always the case, Spanish has never been the preferred language for disseminating science or for commercial transactions at an international scale. According to a recent bibliometric study carried out by Luis Plaza, Begoña Granadino and Esther García-Carpintero, between 2005 and 2010 the presence of scientific publications in Spanish which were indexed in the Science Citations Index Expanded (SCI) was just 0.24 % of the total (Plaza *et al.* 2013, 329), just to name an example. It goes without saying that traditionally the popularization of science has followed a similar pattern.

The article by Blanca García Riaza aims at showing how variation reveals within the same publication. Under the title «Mapping attribution across texts: The particle 'according to' in science popularizations and editorials from *The Guardian*», this contribution relies on discourse analysis to bring light to the use of discursive choices in newspaper discourse as well as to some fruitful analytical tools applicable to other texts and genres. The study presented here will be of interest to contrastive linguists but, as it concludes, also brings to the fore the importance of text analysis for translators,

particularly for those working with media discourse or with the popularization of science.

Francisco Miguel Ivorra Pérez's article, «How can Spanish toy manufacturers achieve intercultural competence in English? A contrastive study of Spanish and U.S. business websites», presents a study of how the area of toy manufacturing in Spain constructs advertising websites in English for commercial purposes in the US with the ultimate aim to help translators who work in this area produce more efficient translations for commercial purposes, when designing and translating websites for the US market.

In addition, the Review section presents two extremely interesting and complementary publications, both dealing with the intercultural relations between Spain and America, with a focus on the role of translation in them. The study carried out by Roberto Valdeón, and reviewed here by Antonio Jesús Martínez Pleguezuelos, covers a diachronic analysis of the role of translation and translators in the Spanish empire and conquest of the Americas, whereas the edited volume by Iciar Alonso Araguás, Alba Paéz Rodríguez and Mario Samaniego Sastre, which is reviewed by Marta Lucero García, presents a collection of studies on a variety of expressions of conflictive relations between Spain and America and the role of translation in them.

## REFERENCES

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