

Translatum Nostrum – Cultural melting at the Mediterranean

A review about the 9th AIETI biannual congress

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Abstract

AIETI, the Iberian Association of Translation and Interpretation Studies, held its ninth biannual congress at the University of Alicante on the 23rd-25th of January, 2019. Under the slogan "*Translatum nostrum – Cultural melting at the Mediterranean*", the event gathered more than 150 participants, who made structured contributions in ten specialty areas: bibliography and history of translation research, cognition and translation, didactics of translation, gender and translation studies, genres, specialized communication and translation; interpreting, translation technologies, audio-visual translation, scientific-technical translation and terminology, and literary translation.

Key Words

AIETI, congress, Mediterranean, cultural melting, translation studies



The event was officially inaugurated by Juan Francisco Mesa Sanz (Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Languages), Javier Franco (Director of the Translation and Interpreting Department), as well as the members of the organizing committee, belonging to the universities of Alicante, Jaume I, Murcia and Valencia: Catalina Iliescu, Elena Pérez Esteban and Carla Botella. The following is a summary of the plenary conferences that took place during the three-days event.

The first plenary conference took place on the morning of the 23rd and was given by Jesús Baigorri, Interpreter and Professor at the University of Salamanca. The talk entitled "A 'Mediterranean' alphabet on interpreters and languages. From Algeciras to Istanbul", spoke about how travel, transport, trade, the exercise of power, diplomacy, war, the dissemination of knowledge and ideas are some of the manifestations of the transactions involved in all oral and gestural communication, even when it occurs between people who do not know the language of their interlocutors. The object of attention in this case was a geographical and geopolitical environment that, according to Braudel, had for centuries the condition of universe for the inhabitants who populated their lands and crossed their straits. The proposal offered an alphabetical sample of common and proper names, languages and places, brought from different spaces and times. The aim was to arrive, after a route dotted with turbulence, at an impressionist image, among many possible ones, of the alchemy of languages and cultures that, exercised by speakers of more than one language, favoured mixing throughout history and also facilitates it today from the Mediterranean space.

On the afternoon of the 23rd, the second plenary conference of the day was held by Arnt Lykke Jakobsen, professor emeritus of translation and translation technologies at Copenhagen Business School. On this talk, entitled "Translation process research and the new construction of meaning: What meaning?" Jakobson spoke to us about research in translation processes and the need to relocate them in a new conceptual and methodological framework. The main motivation for this is that traditional procedures, using keylogging, eye-tracking and retrospective think aloud in lab-oriented experiments, are unable to capture the complexity, concreteness and situatedness of this new construction of meaning. In the new construction, cognition and meaning are not only in our heads, but in our bodies and even in networks. The kind of translation that is done in a lab is artificial and ecologically invalid. Real translation is the best method to study translation here, by using the anthropological field. While much of this criticism carries considerable conviction, there is still much to be said in favour of experimental, process-oriented work. It is not yet clear how field-study methodology will enhance either our understanding of the dependence of human cognition on brain, body, environment, situation and technology, or will reveal how these factors impact on translators' cognition and decision making.

On the morning of the 24th, Daniel Cassany, discourse analysis researcher at the Department of Translation and Philology of Pompeu Fabra University,

presented his proposal entitled "Emerging multimodal genres: multimodality and plurilingualism". He spoke about how young people search the net for "friends" with whom to share their passion for a series, a saga, a video game or a manga. Affiliates of fan communities develop sophisticated multilingual, cooperative and multimodal practices, with new digital genres, involving different tasks of listening, writing, translation and language learning. This is the case of *damaku* (bullet curtain), captions and the use of subtitles and automatic translators in the visualization of cartoons. By analysing these practices, Cassany offered a series of conclusions about the characteristics of the emerging digital genres of Web 2.0.

On the afternoon of the 24th, Franz Pöchhacker, Interpreter and Interpreting Teacher at the Center for Translation Studies at the University of Vienna, presented his proposal entitled "Bibliographic notes on Interpreting Studies", where he considered a variety of issues around publications and publishing in interpreting studies. Observations about some more obvious phenomena, such as the quantitative development of the research literature on interpreting over the past 30 years and various shifts in the thematic and methodological orientation of research, served as a point of departure for a more detailed exploration of the implications of growth for publishing in interpreting studies. Special reference was made to the contribution of the Chinese interpreting research community, which has come to play a significant role in this global discipline. With a focus on publishing in scientific journals, Pöchhacker shared some insights from his 15 years of experience as an editor, particularly with regard to the key role of peer reviewing. Finding that in this and other respects, the journal publishing system is under increasing pressure, he drew attention to the role of competition as the most powerful driving force shaping the scientific enterprise in our time. More importantly, he illustrated how some of the trends emerging from this competitive environment may threaten scientific integrity, with reference to examples of predatory publishing and junk science in the field of interpreting studies.

On the morning of the last day of the conference, Pascale Sardin, Professor in English Studies at Bordeaux Montaigne University, presented her proposal, "Barbara Bray (1924-2010)-A Woman of Letters and Author of over 80 Translations". According to Sardin, in the history of ideas, female translators are often found to be doubly invisible, as women and as translators. This is certainly the case of Barbara Bray, an English woman of letters who translated over 80 novels, plays and essays from the French to the English language, and who remains to this day largely ignored in academia. Her name is essentially

associated with that of Samuel Beckett with whom she had a romantic and intellectual relationship for over 30 years; as a matter of fact, her figure was revealed by the publication of the 3rd volume of Samuel Beckett's correspondence in 2014 and by the 700 odd letters that he wrote Bray. It could even be argued that this invisibility suffered by Bray was not double but treble. Indeed, she spent many years, before and during her time as a translator settled in Paris, working as a producer in radio, a visual-less medium. Ironically, in the documentary film entitled *Rue Samuel Beckett Barbara Bray* (2013), in which she actually physically appears and is heard, Bray declares that she "didn't want to be an invisible woman". The presentation meant to (re)evaluate in a textual, sociological and historical perspective the social role of an Englishwoman of letters in the history of European ideas and contemporary art. It aimed at rendering visible the work of this female mediator and creator whose voice has too long been silenced by an androcentered context.

The last plenary conference was presented by Laura Fóllica, French, Translation and Translation Studies teacher at the Pompeu Fabra University. Fóllica reflected on the decision-making process when preparing a doctoral thesis in literary translation. To this end, he examined the construction of an object of study, in this case centered on a play: *Ubu roi*, by Alfred Jarry, and its translations into Spanish, Catalan and Galician on both sides of the Atlantic between 1896 and 2016. Fóllica explained how he selected the theoretical framework, which nurtures comparative literature, literary theory, descriptive translation studies, the sociology of symbolic goods and theatrical translation studies. He also made a series of methodological contributions on how to carry out research in the literary field.