

Presentation

Roberto A. Valdeón

Volume 57, Number 4, December 2012

Journalisme et traduction
Journalism and Translation

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1021220ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1021220ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (print)

1492-1421 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Valdeón, R. A. (2012). Presentation. *Meta*, 57(4), 847–849.

<https://doi.org/10.7202/1021220ar>

Presentation

This special issue of *Meta* is devoted to an area of research that has been burgeoning over the past decade, news translation. Although news production is historically linked to translation, researchers had not paid much attention to the connection between these two linguistic and cultural processes until very recently. In 2009, though, two books brought this area to the fore: they delved into the intricacies of news writing from a TS perspective. M. José Hernández Guerrero published her *Traducción y periodismo*, a highly informative introduction to translation and journalism in Spain that can be applied to other languages and contexts, whereas Esperanza Bielsa and Susan Bassnett authored *Translation and Global News*, an enlightening sociological study of translation in news agencies. Additionally, in 2010 the edited collection *Translating Information* gathered articles by Yves Gambier, Henrik Gottlieb, Esperanza Bielsa, M. José Hernández Guerrero, and Ovidi Carbonell among others.

My introductory paper of this special issue of *Meta* highlights the role of translation in the early years of journalism in Europe. War news was the staple diet of the time, and much of the information came from Central Europe. News was produced in the Low Countries, Germany and France and then transported to and translated in peripheral countries such as England, Spain and Denmark. Translation was soon recognized as a vital part of the profession, but the translational activity remained secondary in most respects, perhaps because the linguistic and cultural transformations of news texts continue to be to a large extent obscure.

In the next paper, Christina Schäffner, who has worked largely on translation and ideology, assesses the relevance of a term introduced in the 1980s to refer to news translation: *transediting*. Schäffner contends that, in spite of the popularity of the word, there is no reason to support its use at a time when most researchers defy the traditional concept of translation and support a more anti-essentialist view of what translating means. The following articles exemplify a variety of approaches to the analysis of news translation.

Krisztina Károly starts with a corpus-based study of Hungarian-English texts. Although corpus-driven research is well established in TS, this is probably the first time that it is applied to news translation. The reason for this lack of corpus-based studies of translated news may lie in the fact that, given the peculiarities of news texts, it is a difficult task to gather corpora of one type or another: very often the researcher is unable to locate the source texts upon which news writers base their

material. Karoly has used Topical Structure Analysis and Event Structure Model to assess topical shifts in the Hungarian versions of English texts.

Shifts of politically-laden terms form the basis of Alev Bulut's paper. Bulut focuses on the translation of controversial terms in the Turkish context and, more specifically, of *zenci* and *negro*. Bulut studies the potential conflict arising from the use of inadequate choices and suggests the need to analyze the role of the interpreter of political texts.

Georgios Floros, who also looks at the debates concerning the traditional view of translation, connects it to concepts used in Communication Studies such as gate-keeping. Particularly relevant in his paper is the issue of translation ethics, which he studies within the Cypriot context. Floros acknowledges that news translation poses many challenges for the writer, the researcher and the audience, but also stresses that the primacy of news production norms over translational norms is not always beneficial for the readership and suggests taking into account the latter in order to improve the credibility of the final product and avoid ethical violations.

Ethics is also at the base of Chantal Gagnon's article on the issue of bilingualism, as characteristic of the Canadian situation. Gagnon explores the connection between institutionalized bilingualism, and, therefore, translation, and the production of political texts in news outlets such as *La Presse* and *The Gazette*. The most interesting conclusion she reaches is that, at least in the Canadian political and media context, news translation is a very visible activity. This runs counter to other studies that show that news translation remains invisible, largely because news writers reject their role as translators, which is discussed in many of the articles in this special issue.

This is not the case, though, of the argumentative genre, as authors assert their rights and the names of the translators are usually indicated. In her paper, M. José Hernández Guerrero covers the opinion columns of the Spanish daily *El País* focusing on the so-called Arab spring of 2011. As Gagnon, Hernández Guerrero emphasizes the institutional role of newspapers and resorts to the concrete example of a major news outlet such as *El País*, which allows renowned international personalities to establish a dialogue with Spanish authors and Spanish readership via translation. As Hernández Guerrero points out, this also contributes to disseminate opinions that support the political stance of the newspaper.

For her part, Marie-Ange Bugnot provides us with a complementary study of translated texts about the Arab world. Bugnot analyzes the presentation of the Arab as the Other, as portrayed in France and Spain, paying particular attention to the controversy surrounding the prohibition of the veil in France and Spain. She finds out that translation is used as part of the uniformization process aimed at maintaining damaging stereotypes of the Other within the European context, where certain lexical items (such as terrorism, Al-Andalus and Bin Laden) serve as metaphors of an impending threat.

Kyle Conway also works on the Arab issue, this time in the Canadian context. Conway, who presents news translation as a form of cultural translation, studies the uses of translation in the reporting of the choices made by Muslim women concerning the wearing of the veil. He is also interested in the comments made by the audience and finds out that, in spite of the difficulties posed by the topic, (Western) readers were willing to engage in a dialogue with the Other. Conway stresses that

this does not only provide a promising line of research but also a means of bridging the gap between such diverse cultural groups.

Petros Kontos and Maria Sidiropoulou join their efforts and fields of specialization to study the various routines at work when translating political texts from *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* for the Greek newspaper *I Kathimerini*. They underline that political routines are as important, if not more, than linguistic ones. They affect the decisions taken by the news writers because, as in Conway's approach, the differences between cultures and political systems are likely to transform the resulting text.

In her essay, África Vidal discusses the uses of translation in the hybrid texts published in women's magazines, where information and persuasion are intertwined in order to provide contemporary readers with a careful combination of glamour, modernity and sophistication. Thus, Vidal argues, the uses of translation, or rather, of non-translation provide these texts with the features that the readers are likely to expect even if, she notes, most of them are not likely to be fluent in English. Lack of translation becomes part of a marketing strategy, where information is only secondary.

Representation is at the base of Luc van Doorslaer's article, which explores the intersection between translation, journalism and image studies. Van Doorslaer posits that, in news production, the writer largely resorts to translation, localization and rewriting and proposes the term "journalator" to define him/her. He also studies how these processes are used when covering news texts about a neighbouring nation, i.e. Germany with respect to Flanders, and claims that some degree of stereotyping is at play.

Last, but not least, Claire Tsai discusses the importance of market-driven journalism in the era of digital media, when profit-making companies set the pace of news production, and journalists and translators alike cannot escape the forces of capitalism. Tsai focuses on a commercial television station in Taiwan, and provides a valuable sociological approach to the changing face of news production and translation, which will surely continue to generate valuable and innovative research in the years to come.

As we move on to read the papers included in this special issue, which analyze old concepts and introduce new ones, where interdisciplinarity is widely proposed as the key to new research, where various media and genres are studied, where English, Turkish, Spanish, French, Greek, Arabic, German, Chinese, Dutch and Hungarian are discussed, something remains unchanged: as in the 17th century, translation is at the centre of it all.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to those who kindly found time to act as referees for this special issue: Oslem Albachten, Sandor Albert, Ozlem Berk, Esperança Bielsa, Caterina Calafat, Marc Delbargue, Sue Anne Harding, Moira Inghilleri, Ji-Hae Kang, Rosario Martín Ruano, Anna Matamala, Christiane Nord, Anastasia Parianou, Myriam Salama-Carr, Paola Smecca, Cristina Valderrey, Elizabeth Woodward.

ROBERTO A. VALDEÓN