

## Translation and the Changing Profession: A Cross-Disciplinary Perspective

### La traduction, une profession en mutation : perspective trans-disciplinaire

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#### Résumé de l'article

L'avancement technologique a grandement influencé les disciplines qui doivent sélectionner, propager et traduire l'information. Sur le plan de la recherche, on peut constater la présence de nombreuses réflexions quant à la responsabilité et à la pertinence de la traduction et de ses professions connexes. Désormais, dans le grand domaine des communications, on choisit de travailler à contrat plutôt qu'en entreprise, ce qui entraîne de nombreux changements, que ce soit dans l'organisation de l'emploi du temps ou dans les possibilités d'avancement traditionnelles telles que les promotions basées sur l'ancienneté. Ces changements remettent en question les relations de pouvoirs propres aux structures organisationnelles de même que les valeurs intrinsèques que l'on associe à ces professions. Bien que toutes les professions qui transmettent un savoir et produisent de l'information aient été influencées par l'avancement technologique, la réponse à ces changements n'est pas la même pour l'ensemble du domaine. Cet article s'intéresse à ces différences. Les disciplines doivent-elles, elles aussi, faire face au changement à mesure que les professions évoluent? La recherche s'interroge-t-elle, à l'heure actuelle, sur ces transformations?

# Translation and the Changing Profession: A Cross-Disciplinary Perspective

**Candace Séguinot**

## **Introduction**

Translation is one of the disciplines at the intersection between culture and knowledge transfer. And like other disciplines that deal with the selection, transforming, and dissemination of information, it has been affected by the implementation of new technology and globalization. From the perspective of someone working in the profession, technology has changed the time and space constraints on communication. From the perspective of someone studying the profession itself, access to information has become easier, yet technology has also created barriers to access that did not exist previously. In an increasingly global world, it has also become obvious that content has to be culturally meaningful to the ways of knowing of different communities.

That leads to these kinds of research interests in the disciplines studying communication:

1. Are there culturally sensitive ways of transferring knowledge?
2. What obstacles block the transfer of knowledge between cultures?
3. What enables a culturally meaningful transfer of knowledge between cultures?
4. How can we best train future professionals so that they can effectively contribute to this type of knowledge transfer?

One way to see how the field of translation has situated itself with regard to these questions is to look at how translation compares to other academic disciplines with similar interests.

At the very simplest level, the content and the delivery of course content has changed with the adoption of new technology in these fields. At another level, new areas of research have been added, including reflection on the responsibilities and relevance of the discipline itself and the professions associated with it. As the “communication” professions have moved toward contracting rather than salaried positions, both the day-to-day organization of work and the institutionalized practices of entering the workforce, gaining experience, and being promoted have changed.

Power relations inherent in organizational structures change as the organization of work changes, and the intrinsic values associated with professions that produce knowledge products change with reorganization as well. While technology has challenged all communication professions with change, the responses across these fields have been very different. This paper is about those differences in translation and disciplines close to translation. How has translation as an applied field adapted (or not) to changes in the profession, and what, if anything, does current research say about these transformations?

The broader issue of cross-cultural knowledge transfer also raises questions about mandates and missions for academic and public institutions. For example, is curriculum market driven or research driven or both? How does the territory of the profession and the field get defined and redefined? How are professionals prepared for contract versus salaried work? Is there congruence between research and teaching interests? Who is responsible for how much skill development in a world of changing technology? How do interdisciplinary interests mesh with disciplinary aspects of training and research?

### **The Unforeseen Effects of Technology**

One example of how missions can be changed comes from the field of journalism. The fact that news is accessible on-line does not necessarily mean that people have greater access to news or

that there is more work for journalists. The search engines that provide news take their information from traditional wire services. Newspapers, with the exception of services conceived to reach new audiences, make money by bundling existing paper information for targeted interests. This directed marketing is a way of making the money that didn't flow from internet advertising. In fact newspapers have seen a dip in advertising revenue as services like Craigslist and e-Bay have captured the classified ads that would have gone to papers. This loss means cutting back, and that has begun to mean less reporting of the expensive kind—maintaining foreign bureaus and devoting lengthy periods to in-depth investigative reporting. Therefore the rewards of the profession for many practitioners and for would-be practitioners are diminishing as journalists see themselves replaced by interactive populist blogs and see the more prestigious and intellectually rewarding opportunities reduced. One could say that rationalization has had the side-effect of assigning a gate-keeping function to the industry as a whole, rather than just to editors.

Technology has, on the other hand, made it possible for newspapers to cross language boundaries to reach new potential subscribers. By making their web versions interactive, newspapers can allow readers to choose their language of preference. *The New York Times* has begun to do this on a small scale by moving into interactive video production. In its bilingual media clips, the on-line version of *The New York Times* lets the events unroll in Spanish, unlike a news broadcast on an English language TV station which would use voiceover to reach the mass of English listeners.<sup>1</sup> The actual reporting is carried out through English subtitles and consecutive interpreting into English. On the one hand this can be viewed as an opening up to a pluralistic American society. From a different perspective, the question of knowledge transfer, the focus on local interest stories represents a different mission from the empowerment of readers. Rather

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1 For example from the *The New York Times*, Feb. 28, 2007: INTERACTIVE FEATURE: House Afire: A Bilingual Multimedia Story Meet some of the members of Ark of Salvation, a storefront Pentecostal church in Harlem. *Vea esta presentación interactiva bilingüe en la Web.*

than providing hispanophones with an analysis of the same major events as is covered in the front pages of the paper, the web delivers a recording of community events.

### **Information Studies: Reinventing the Profession**

In a sense journalists are not like librarians, technical writers, and professional translators who identify with the perception that they are invisible, because they can hope to earn a byline. But journalism is a good foil for comparison with a field which has redefined its mission in quite a different direction, certainly as a result of technological changes but also under the influence of new directions in research. The field of information studies, formerly library science, has the same issues as translation in that it provides training for future professionals and therefore needs to look at how changes in technology might affect practices in the workplace. These include the technical aspects of functions like indexing, cataloguing, and making decisions about access to resources. As is the case with translation studies, information studies is offered on the graduate level as well, and reflection on cognitive, historical, and sociological aspects of the profession do not necessarily feed into the professional curriculum.

A further parallel with translation is the role of academic training in setting agendas for what knowledge is considered pertinent, and where behaviour needs to be constrained to conform to a professional persona. The peculiar relationship between professions and the abstract knowledge that is taught in training programs has been explained by Andrew Abbott (1988, p. 53) in terms of a disassembled form of custodianship whose criteria are not practical clarity and efficacy, but logical consistency and rationality.

Just as translation theory has moved from a consideration of translation as object to translation as subject in the sense of Foucault's notion of the construction of subject-positions, information studies is looking at how libraries are defined and define themselves, how information differs from knowledge, and how libraries and other sources of information build a mechanism of inclusion or participate in exclusionary practices.

Rather than a given, the role of libraries is now seen as culturally and socially determined (Caidi, 2004). Constructs such as literacy which until very recently have been interpreted in terms of English writing and reading (and certain other skills) have been expanded to take into account immigrant practices and the strategies of the marginalized as they try to satisfy their information needs (Chu, 1999). To explain this in terms of an everyday situation, if I go to a restaurant with someone and forget my reading glasses, I have to ask the other person to read the bill for me. No one judges my degree of literacy or entitlement. But in the case of someone who cannot read English, even if that person can function well by having another member of their community provide them with information, we do a top-down needs assessment and determine that the person needs a literacy or an E.S.L. class.

As in other disciplines, translation included, there has been a new understanding that the discipline has not paid enough attention to diasporic communities. In fact, the notion of a diasporic community itself is misleading as this presupposes a group with a common culture or language. This is now seen as masking the true information needs of people who may be very different from each other in terms of, for instance, whether they have just arrived in the country, have support in place, as well as have sufficient educational, financial, and emotional resources to be able to participate fully in their new environment.

It is no longer acceptable to assume that forms of delivery that serve the centre will serve people with different language or cultural backgrounds. For example, in the past libraries might have had foreign language collections, but those collections had to be accessed via a catalogue search in the same way as English-language items, by author or title. It is not obvious first of all that new immigrants whose needs are for basic services—housing, applications for government services, etc.—will find what they need in the foreign language section, even if it exists, or that they will be able to enter the appropriate terms even if the information is there. In terms of electronic cataloguing the language used to access the material is still an issue as is the way the system itself requires that material be organized and displayed. This has

become apparent both from the restrictions of the technology and from the recognition of the new role that libraries need to play in reaching out to all members of the community.

One suggestion has been that diasporic communities be invited to contribute material that could then be archived and made available through the library system (Komlodi, Caidi, Nadia, and Wheeler, 2004 and Caidi and Allard, 2005). Another is that samples of material be provided in languages other than English so that people could judge whether the material was what they needed or wanted.

Because funding for public services is being cut, libraries have had to reinvent themselves as resources. The provision of computers for public use was meant to counter what was seen as a major block to knowledge transfer, what was termed the digital divide. It soon became clear that providing access to computers was not enough to ensure that all members of the population had access to the kinds of information they wanted.

Some of the blocks to knowledge transfer have to do with culturally preferred ways of accessing knowledge. There are emotional issues that stop people from seeing the library as a public space in the same sense as a park or other recreational space. There are cultures where it is the role of the male to bring outside news into the home, and others where certain members of the community are consulted for advice as they would be in the country of origin (Metoyer-Duran, 1993). And there are skill issues: there are people who function in English for specific purposes, but whose English or computer skills or understanding of the way information is organized in a library or in a computer system are not developed to the extent that they can simply sit down and find what they need on the computer. To change the perception of what libraries are there for, libraries have expanded the kinds of programming and courses they offer. Current research also speaks of a mission of contributing to social inclusion, both through the local institutions and by considering the ethical dimension in bibliographic classification systems (Beghtol, 2002).

## **Information and Responsibility to the Audience**

In terms of the role that technology plays in facilitating or interfering with the transfer of knowledge, information researchers have pointed out that the digitization of cultural material makes this material available to an international audience. But what is the goal of making this material more accessible to an international audience? If the goal is let people see what the museum or art gallery holds, English or French, in the case of Canada, is enough. If the goal is for people to learn more about the cultural artefacts themselves or to increase tourism, visitors to the sites will need multiple language access and multiple paths of access and perhaps even annotations.

Given the importance of informatics to information science, it is ironic that library systems themselves can present such a barrier to access. The explanation is that systems are commercial products and that where the management of systems is compartmentalized, research does not necessarily make its way into the marketplace right away. However it is clear that the situation is changing and that the technology is becoming more oriented to readers' needs.

To see the difference between the approach oriented to the library focus and the approach oriented to the user, suppose that you were looking for information on the sociology of the professions and came across the name Thomas Gieryn. Here is how a web search works with a traditional library system. First you reach a home page that requires you to look for—and recognize—the option Browse search. That takes you to the search page in Figure 1 where you enter the name.

However if you make use of your normal habit with computers and hit the *enter* key, you won't get any relevant information. This system requires you to classify your query by author, title, etc. The instructions that tell you this come after the space where you would probably hit *enter* the first time. The layout of information on the page is not intuitive, and the conceptualization of information is still in terms of library classification.



Figure 1 Search page with a library focus

YORK UNIVERSITY **redefine THE POSSIBLE**

Prospective students Current students Faculty & staff Alumni Visitors

SEARCH THIS SITE | LIBRARY STAFF DIRECTORY | CONTACT US

York University Libraries > Catalogue > Search the Library Catalogue

[Go Back](#) [Catalogue Help](#)

**Search the Library Catalogue**

[Browse Search](#) [Keyword Search](#) [Call No. Search](#)

Search:  library:

**TITLE** **AUTHOR** **SUBJECT** **PERIODICAL**

1. Enter term(s):
2. Click on a search type button (do not press Enter):

Use the **Keyword Search** button on the upper right of the page when you do not know the exact author, title, subject, series or periodical title and when you want to combine keywords.

Use the **Basic Search** when you know the author, title, series, periodical title, or Library of Congress Subject Heading. You will retrieve items that start with your search terms.

- Enter the first words of the title (omitting initial articles), subject, series or periodical title.
- When searching for an author, enter the last name followed by the first name or initial.

Click on [Catalogue Help](#) for more information.

Figure 2 Results of a search in a library focused system

YORK UNIVERSITY **redefine THE POSSIBLE**

Prospective students Current students Faculty & staff Alumni Visitors

SEARCH THIS SITE | LIBRARY STAFF DIRECTORY | CONTACT US

York University Libraries > Catalogue

[Go Back](#) [New Search](#) [Backward](#) [Forward](#) [Print Capture](#)

**Search Results -- Quick Search**

2 records were found for your search on 1 through 2.

Use check boxes ☐ below to mark list items for Print/Capture.

#1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HM 48 M46 1982</b>	copies: 1 (SCOTT)
<a href="#">View</a>	Social research and the practicing professions	at YORK
	Merton, Robert King, 1910-	pubyear: 1982
#2 <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Q 171 S367</b>	copies: 1 (STEACIE)
<a href="#">View</a>	Science and social structure : a festschrift for Robert K. Merton	at YORK
	Merton, Robert King, 1910-	pubyear: 1980

Figure 3 Search page with a user focus

The screenshot shows the 'Basic Search' interface of the University of Toronto Library Catalogue. At the top, the header includes the UTL logo and the text 'UNIVERSITY of TORONTO LIBRARY CATALOGUE'. Below the header, there are navigation links: 'home >> catalogue', 'Back', 'Help', and 'EXIT'. The main search area is titled 'Basic Search' and includes a link to 'go to advanced search'. It features a search form with the following elements: a 'Find items' section with radio buttons for 'containing' (selected) and 'starting with'; a text input field containing 'Gieryn, Thomas'; a dropdown menu for 'in any field'; a 'Search' button; and a 'library:' dropdown menu set to 'ALL'. Below the search form, there is a 'Search tip:' section with instructions on punctuation and capitalization, examples of correct and incorrect search terms, and links for 'More tips' and 'General help'.

home >> catalogue

Back Help EXIT

**Basic Search** » go to advanced search

Find items ☒ containing ☐ starting with

Gieryn, Thomas in any field Search

library: ALL

**Search tip:**

You can omit punctuation and capitalization.  
Example: **whos afraid of virginia woolf**  
Exception: keep hyphens in hyphenated words or phrases. Example:  
Find items starting with **many-valued logics** in title.

[More tips](#) [General help](#)

Figure 4 Results of a search in a user focused system

The screenshot shows the 'Search Results' page of the University of Toronto Library Catalogue. The header is identical to Figure 3, but includes a 'Refine' link and a 'Selected Items' checkbox. The main content area is titled 'Search Results' and displays the results for the search 'any field "Gieryn, Thomas" search found 3 titles'. The results are listed in a table with three entries, each with a checkbox, a title, the author, the year, and a 'Details' button. The first entry is 'Cultural boundaries of science : credibility on the line' by Gieryn, Thomas F., published in 1999. The second entry is 'Theories of science in society' by Cozzens, Susan E., published in 1990. The third entry is 'Social research and the practicing professions' by Merton, Robert King, published in 1982. Each entry also includes a brief description of the item's location and availability.

home >> catalogue

Back Help Refine

☒ Selected Items EXIT

**Search Results**

any field "Gieryn, Thomas" search found 3 titles

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Cultural boundaries of science : credibility on the line</b> Gieryn, Thomas F. • Summary • Review <a href="#">Details</a>	1999
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Theories of science in society</b> Cozzens, Susan E. • Review <a href="#">Details</a>	1990
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Social research and the practicing professions</b> Merton, Robert King, 1910- <a href="#">Details</a>	1982

Similarly the results page in Figure 2 puts the call number in focus and tells you about the results of the search (two results found) before giving you the results.

A more user-oriented system is constructed so that you can enter the minimum of information as in Figure 3. And when the search is successful the information which you get has been conceptualized and highlighted in terms of your needs, for example whether the book is currently in the library or checked out.

### **The Changing Field of Technical Communication**

Good interfaces are designed the way good technical writing is written. The starting point is always the task the reader wants to accomplish, the problem he or she needs to solve. As a discipline, technical communication made its way into universities on the strength of linguistic, rhetorical, and psychological research. This research led to the standardization that is known as structured documentation. Most of that research work was based exclusively on English, and structured documentation was forced through translation on most of the world, regardless of whether its step-by-step procedures violated the rhetorical patterns of the host languages.

The results of research into what blocked and what facilitated the understanding of instructions from a rhetorical perspective fed into the courses in technical communication that produced writing professionals. This linguistic research was carried out by individuals or small groups, and it did not involve major funding or the necessity of working directly with industry.

Then the computer industry became aware of the importance of identifying potential glitches before products went to market, and usability testing labs were the result. The findings of this research still fed into training programs, but the research itself required more funding and key alliances with business. With the move to computer networking and increased computer memory it became possible to eliminate paper documentation in

favour of on-line help files. The organization of entries required different kinds of skills from the organization of connected text.

The management of knowledge content separate from questions of platform and ultimate form of distribution also required sophisticated technology skills, and these questions drew business and university interests together to look at new ways of sharing and storing knowledge. What had started as the field of technical communication thus moved through a period where it was known as information design to what is now a separate field of knowledge or knowledge and information design centered on research.

In the meantime the pragmatic needs of industry were met with more sophisticated layout and design and project management tools. Large projects required different kinds of tools than home word processors, and teams of writers needed the ability to share large amounts of documentation.

What effect has this had on the training of professional and technical communicators? First, universities can teach about the principles of layout and design, but training on sophisticated software designed for industry use is done outside academic institutions in non-credit workshops. That has left the academic programs to make some of the same choices as the field of translation: talking about some kinds of dedicated software rather than training students to use complicated programs well. The cost of licenses, the amount of time it takes to learn certain programs, and the amount of programming and systems knowledge needed in some cases makes it impossible to cover everything that industry might want. On the other hand, it is clear from dropping attendance at professional conferences that the focus on technical complexities is seen as less of a learning opportunity than when the issues were more about the nature of human understanding.

Academic programs can focus on the simulation of workplace practices, for example require familiarity with layout and design principles, style guides, team projects, project planning, and consultation with product developers. And as in the professional world, members of teams are chosen to compensate

for each others' strengths and weaknesses. If one member of a team knows how to use a graphics package well, the rest of the team can relax, compared to the traditional view that made everyone in a class equally responsible for learning everything. From the perspective of the market, graduates are still being hired and promoted rapidly. That is not to say that writers do not have to know more about technology than they ever did before. But it is still possible for graduates to be hired with entry level experience and writing and thinking skills. They just have a steep learning curve on the job.

The difference with the field of translation has to do with the way the work is organized. Technical writers more often work on the premises of the companies who hire them, even on a contract basis. Contract work is often better paid for technical writing than salaried work, and there are well-established ways of posting consulting, training, and project work locally. There are opportunities to learn on the job as on-going training is part of the new reality in an economy that needs to create new products and services.

### **Translation as a Profession**

In the field of translation one cannot speak of markets and technological change without considering the role of government either in direct support of the sector as with tax incentives in Ireland or language policy. While Canada has a multicultural policy, the policy addresses culture and not language rights (Government of Canada, *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*). Although it is up to individual countries to fund initiatives, the European Union does have a policy that concretely supports diversity in language (Commission of the European Communities, *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity*, 2003).

English and French are the only official languages in Canada and most translations in the country take place between these two languages. In both government and industry, translation departments used to be the norm. Though some industries with global reach may have moved their translation elsewhere to reduce costs, the need to comply with domestic regulations and

meet dialect expectations means that translation work has been outsourced but stayed largely in the country. With enough work between the official languages to ensure a domestic market, it is not hard to understand why government attempts to encourage global efforts in the language industries sector have not been successful.

This underlines the point that Brian Mossop (2006) has made, namely that the effects of technological change and globalization are not the same all over the world. It is clear, however, that there will be a gap when more experienced translators retire, and already because of outsourcing the old system that in effect made employers responsible for integrating recent graduates into the profession is no longer in place. When there were more middle management positions in industry, translators could look forward to promotion to a supervisory role. Now with the industry being made up essentially of freelancers, the rewards are different. Freelancers are reluctant to lose revenue by taking on work study placements and may not have the space and equipment to share work in any case. Unlike the case with technical writing, the field has been reluctant to assume the consequences of the growing gap between what government and industry say they want and what the university can provide.

It is quite different for a business to invest in new equipment or training than it is for an individual. In the case of translation memory the benefits of technology are passed on to the client who imposes a revised pricing structure for redundancies in texts (Translator X, 2004). It is clear that people with a background in technology who can solve their own computer problems are in a sense more productive since dealing with formatting, file preparation, etc., now takes a substantial amount of a translator's time. But taking advantage of time-saving features offered by software, like typing over the original text to preserve proper names, for example, changes the translation process itself (Asadi and Séguinot, 2005). Therefore increases in efficiency can decrease the likelihood of the translator reconceptualizing a text in the target language, and increasing the potential for knowledge transfer. In organizational studies this has been referred to as the deskilling effect of technology (Westwood

and Linstead, 2001). As one of the rewards of translating is the opportunity to understand what one is reading and to be creative, there is an alienating effect in the loss of these opportunities.

The role of translation in knowledge transfer is thus very complicated. As with journalism, the power relations in the institutions involved determine the mission. The owners of a full-service language agency may be able to offer parallel writing that will allow for the simultaneous release of a multilingual product rather than traditional translation, and in this case there is a greater chance that a team of writers will have access to the actual product or to the people who can answer questions about the product or service than would be the case with translation. Whether a product is localized is again a choice that gets decided by a client in conjunction with an agency that can provide the service.

We do not train students to mount full-service agencies or even to network in the ways that underlie successful international investment (Yeung, 1997). Courses are market driven. As technology changes in the workplace, students are expected to keep up with the changes but not all technology can be taught or taught to the level of expertise expected by the marketplace. Work placements help students understand marketplace demands but again they are being prepared for existing roles.

University training promotes the separation of self and role in the teaching of marketplace skills, requiring that assignments be delivered as they would be on the outside—respect for deadlines, no guessing at meaning, etc.—but it also contributes to the submissiveness associated with the field. It does this in part through the use of the terms coined in the field that carry emotive connotations, terms like ‘adequate’ and ‘appropriate’ translation. Similarly, the concept of loyalty suggested by Christiane Nord (1997, 2001) to correct the client-subservient potential of *Skopostheorie* has both an inherent asymmetry and a value judgment attached to it. Conceived as an improvement over the word ‘faithful’ which has an object focus, i.e. which focuses on the relationship between texts, it focuses on the people involved in the whole of the translation exercise.

This formulation of the translator's role in terms of moral responsibility to others refers to what would normally be considered the private rather than the public self. This is consistent with the new business view that says (James Champy, cited in Gee, Hull, and Lankshear, 1996, p. 17) that people in today's world of work will be hired not for what they know but for what kind of people they are.

The concept of loyalty limits initiative in the self-identity of a translator. It is perhaps this kind of prescription in training rather than personal characteristics that leads to the statement by Roger Chriss on his website *Translation as a Profession* that translators are poor negotiators and poor marketers.

Until recently the specifics of the way the workplace constrains the exercise of the profession and the reasons why the business of translation operates as it does did not receive much attention (Cronin, 2003 and Mossop, 2006). Arguments from the profession about translators being best suited to perform certain functions reinforce the message that there is a natural social order in which other people are better suited to take on the managerial and entrepreneurial functions than the translator who does the work. Again to refer to Foucault's notion of the construction of subject-positions and the role of organizations, management as a subject-position is enabled by the discourses that are part of translator training (Westwood and Linstead, 2001, p. 9). These are not presented as issues of control but as practical necessity and the social meaning is hidden.

Thus while university research has supported a more socially-inclusive role for training in the area of community interpreting, for example in the work of Cecilia Wadensjö (1992) and the publication of the *California Standards for Healthcare Interpreting* by the California Healthcare Interpreters Association (2002), management of organizations that hire community interpreters are reluctant to expand either their training or their role. The arguments against a brokering or mediating role for interpreters and lengthier training are that it would be more



difficult to manage the interpreters and the interpreting situation and that interpreters would then expect to be paid more.

So moral responsibility or ethics is defined in a research-training model in one way, for example in article 6 of the code of ethics proposed by The California Healthcare Interpreters Standards (2002) on *Cultural responsiveness*:

Interpreters seek to understand how diversity and cultural similarities and differences have a fundamental impact on the healthcare encounter. Interpreters play a critical role in identifying cultural issues and considering how and when to move to a **cultural clarifier** role.

And as a totally productivity-centered way by management, as in article 2 from the code of ethics of the The Association of Canadian Corporations in Translation and Interpretation which reflects the business side of the language industries. It says that members will: (...) *maintain such systems and equipment, and ensure that they are technically proficient, as required by modern communications and information technology.*

Professional associations work on behalf of their members, and in most of Canada there has not been a willingness to admit people who work in languages of lesser diffusion. This is partly due to the problem of testing their language competence, partly a prejudice against people for whom this will only be part-time work. This adds to the problem of ensuring quality and equal opportunity to have information made available in all languages spoken in the country.

Research in translation studies feeds into graduate programs, but with the exception of work on terminology and translation technology, including the delivery of internet courses, it has not yet had the effect of reorienting the profession as in information studies. Neither has it split off into a separate research area divorced from the original profession as with technical communication.

As a response to what globalization has meant to people as individuals, we might look at Deborah Cameron's (2000, p. 78)

reference to people having to become someone they do not want to be “*someone they cannot easily integrate into their ongoing narrative of the self, because it strikes at their self-image and self-esteem.*” What seems to be happening in the discipline of translation is a commitment on the part of individual scholars and some scholarly associations to engage both personally and professionally in work that is politicized. One example is the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies which offers differential fees for membership according to the country of origin of the applicant. There is a general effort to support the teaching of translation in other than European languages, and publications point out the need to encourage translation into English of non-European languages so that information starts to flow into the west. These are ideological positions quite separate from initiatives to support global economic growth.

In other words, the questions that were posed in the introduction to this article about culture and the transfer of meaning have been posed less as training issues and more as personal moral issues. There is an indication that research is moving in new directions with the growth of transcultural studies but for the moment that movement is not affecting the factors defining the mission of the profession and the market focus of training for the profession.

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**ABSTRACT: Translation and the Changing Profession: A Cross-Disciplinary Perspective** — Disciplines that deal with the selection, dissemination, and translating of information have had to adapt to changes that have come with the adoption of new technology. On the one level there has been a reflection in research on the responsibilities and relevance of the discipline itself and the professions associated with it. The “communication” professions have also shown a concomitant movement toward contracting rather than salaried positions, and so both the day-to-day organization of work and the institutionalized practices of entering the workforce, gaining experience, and being promoted have changed. Power relations inherent in organizational structures change as the organization of work changes, and the intrinsic values associated with professions that produce knowledge products change with reorganization as well. While technology has challenged all communication professions with change, the responses across these fields have been very different. This paper is about those differences in translation and disciplines close to translation. How has each discipline adapted (or not) to changes in the way its profession has evolved, and what does current research say about these transformations?

**RÉSUMÉ : La traduction, une profession en mutation : perspective trans-disciplinaire** — L'avancement technologique a grandement influencé les disciplines qui doivent sélectionner, propager et traduire l'information. Sur le plan de la recherche, on peut constater la présence de nombreuses réflexions quant à la responsabilité et à la pertinence de la traduction et de ses professions connexes. Désormais, dans le grand domaine des communications, on choisit de travailler à contrat plutôt qu'en entreprise, ce qui entraîne de nombreux changements, que ce soit dans l'organisation de l'emploi du temps ou dans les possibilités d'avancement traditionnelles telles que les promotions basées sur l'ancienneté. Ces changements remettent en question les relations de pouvoirs propres aux structures organisationnelles de même que les valeurs intrinsèques que l'on associe à ces professions. Bien que toutes les professions qui transmettent un savoir et produisent de l'information aient été influencées par l'avancement technologique, la réponse à ces changements n'est pas la même pour l'ensemble du domaine. Cet article s'intéresse à ces

différences. Les disciplines doivent-elles, elles aussi, faire face au changement à mesure que les professions évoluent? La recherche s'interroge-t-elle, à l'heure actuelle, sur ces transformations?

**Keywords:** knowledge transfer, professionalism, multi-cultural, organizational change, technology.

**Mots-clés :** transfert des connaissances, professionnalisme, multi-culturel, changement structurel, technologie.

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