

Digital workshop on non-professional/paraprofessional translation in professional practices

Friday 10 December 2021

Organised by the research group *Navigating Languages in Professional Practices* at the Department of Language and Literature, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

Programme:

9.00

Welcome by the organizers

09.10 – 10.05

Kaisa Koskinen, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences, Languages Unit, Tampere University, Finland:

Creative fieldwork methods for paraprofessional translation practice

10.05 – 11.00

Susanne Tietze, Department of Management, Sheffield Hallam University, UK:

In the soft underbelly of the organization: roles, dilemmas and coping strategies of paraprofessional translators in business contexts

Coffee break

11.15 – 12.10

Victoria Susanne Nydegger Schröder, Department of Professional and Intercultural Communication, NHH Norwegian School of Economics:

With a “licence to adapt”: exploring international corporate communication in Keolis

Lunch

13.00 – 13.40

Inger Hesjevoll Schmidt-Melbye/Annjo K. Greenall, NTNU:

The localization process of a mobile app offering health-related advice to parents with infants: some preliminary results

13.45 – 14.30

Annjo K. Greenall/Gøril Thomassen Hammerstad, NTNU:

Paraprofessional translation in the public sector in Norway: stressful chore or welcome break from regular duties?

Abstracts

Creative fieldwork methods for paraprofessional translation practice
(Kaisa Koskinen)

The presentation will chart the use of fieldwork methods in translation studies, past present and future. I will then focus on paraprofessional translation in particular, i.e. people who translate as part of their regular work in another professional capacity. This group has received increasing attention both among organisation scholars and in translation studies. The particularities of researching paraprofessional workplace practices of translation will be discussed and the necessity for "translatorial linguistic ethnography" (Koskinen 2020) will be highlighted.

In the soft underbelly of the organization: roles, dilemmas and coping strategies of paraprofessional translators in business contexts
(Susanne Tietze)

Within the business disciplines such as international business and organization and management studies, multilingualism and its consequences has been established as a respected field of inquiry. Likewise, a turn to translation, has more recently begun to gain traction and with it questions about 'who translates what' and 'to which consequence' are emerging as a *leitmotif* for academic inquiry. In this talk I will outline the contemporary status quo with regard to the treatment of translators and translation within the broad field of international business, organization and management studies. In particular, paraprofessional translators are shown as agentic and dual role holders, who can wield their translation skills in order to generate, manipulate and even direct the strategic intent of some organizational stakeholders. However, in this talk I stress in particular the precarious and conflicted experience that such paraprofessional translators undergo; an experience which often leaves them elated, as well as bruised; successful, as well as vulnerable.

With a "licence to adapt": exploring international corporate communication in Keolis
(Victoria Susanne Nydegger Schröder)

In my ongoing PhD project, I explore international corporate communication in Keolis, a French multinational corporation. The first study of my project zooms in on the communication of corporate core values. The case of Keolis is interesting because while MNCs often tend to be reluctant to allow any adaptations to their international corporate communication, Keolis encourages their subsidiaries to translate and adapt their global Corporate Value Statement (CVS) to local business contexts. To find out what might happen when subsidiaries are given such "a licence to adapt", I set out to uncover translation shifts between Keolis' global version of its CVS in English, and radically rewritten local versions in Denmark and in India. I used a discourse analytical approach including Social Actor Analysis to identify the translation shifts, before using knowledge about Keolis' business context, local subsidiary context and the GLOBE cultural dimensions to uncover possible explanations behind these shifts. The findings

suggest that subsidiaries may choose to make adaptations that are in line with group policies, using the value terms as vessels to fill with select corporate content that is relevant and important for them. Currently, I have finished collecting ethnographic data from Keolis consisting of the observation of an online meeting between HQ representatives and communication professionals in European subsidiaries, and semi-structured interviews with meeting participants. In this workshop presentation, I will present both the first study of my project, and the freshly collected data, and I look forward to discussing how this data may be used to contribute to the area of corporate communication in international multilingual contexts.

The localization process of a mobile app offering health-related advice to parents with infants: some preliminary results

(Inger Hesjevoll Schmidt-Melbye/Annjo K. Greenall)

Our study was initiated by a Norwegian company promoting research-based health information through a mobile application and a related website. Wanting to expand their target group to English-speaking parents and sell their product on an international market, they became conscious of the cultural specificity of their content and potential risks involved in its translation. Thus, rather than turning to unpaid or cheap services, they decided on using professional services with solid quality assurance measures in place. Simultaneously, they developed an interest in drafting some general guidelines for how to approach the localization process, both for their own benefit, and that of other, similar companies. They therefore approached us, as translation scholars, proposing a close collaboration as they were preparing to link up with a professional translation agency. They felt that a research focus throughout the process would provide a valuable opportunity for accumulating knowledge that could later be shared with other start-ups. Through a combination of interviews, TAP-recordings of the translator's and the quality assurer's work, and observation of one of the translation agency's project managers, we have gained insight into the communication and negotiation routines of the many agents involved in this particular translation commission. Our preliminary results show a strong willingness to collaborate, as well as solid, professional work being carried out both within the translation agency and by the freelancers. However, we have also detected some challenges, 1) to do with the communication between the parties involved, such as insufficient information about the envisioned target group given to the translator and quality assurer; and 2) to do with the practical workflow; for example, problems with access to the original format of the text in the app and some inconveniences arising from the translation tool being used. We therefore observe the need for a more detailed and clear commission/translation brief from the company to the translation agency and a better synchronization of the technological systems they each use.

Paraprofessional translation in the public sector in Norway: stressful chore or welcome break from regular duties?

(Annjo K. Greenall/Gøril Thomassen)

In this study, we present some results from a pilot investigation of Norwegian paraprofessional translators in the public sector regarding their educational and language backgrounds ('who are they?'), working environment ('what are their 'real' jobs?'), paraprofessional translation practice ('who commissions their translation tasks, how often do they carry out translations, what kinds of texts do they translate, etc. '), and their thoughts on and attitudes to this practice ('positive or negative?'). A mix of group and individual interviews have been carried out with employees in NTNU's administration, the police, and a

large, state hospital (more are planned). The findings so far yield a multitude of interesting detail regarding the differences in language management and language tasks between the three institutions. On an overall level there seems to be dissatisfaction with the lack of resources allocated to the task in the cases where there is a lot of this kind of paraprofessional work. At the same time, however, it is often carried out by people with language degrees who ended up landing administrative jobs and especially for them, the task may be perceived positively, as something that is relevant to their educational backgrounds, and that adds interesting variety to their working day.