



A Space for Translation: Thresholds of Interpretation

Presentation Details	
Title of Paper:	Spaces for Exchanging and Learning: Translation in a Community Context
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Abstract:	<p>The Bourdieu-inspired concept of Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger), or CoPs, dates from the early 1990s; it has stirred up some interest in translation studies, however much of what has been written focuses on web-based translator communities (e.g. Zhang and Watts, 2008). Online platforms are a trend of the digital age: what of Communities of Practice as real-life spaces, though, since CoPs actually have, as Lave and Wenger concede, existed for a very long time?</p> <p>Considering this, I look at the translation magazine <i>Renditions</i> with its international network of contributors, and explore to what extent this example may be seen as a CoP, and how such a working environment can influence a translator’s professional experience. It is also acknowledged that geographical proximity is not a necessary condition for a CoP to thrive. Hong Kong, where <i>Renditions</i> is based, acts as a physical base only for part of the magazine's personnel - taking these facts on board, can the team that builds around a translation magazine also be considered a CoP?</p> <p>This paper, therefore, looks at a (literary) translator's working environment from a community-oriented perspective. I argue that, although translating does indeed involve a considerable amount of individual work, the image of the “lone” translator generated by the often used singular “the translator” fades out once a translator “is seen as a socially situated actor participating in multiple communities” (Mason, in House, 2014: 39): not just one but several communities, therefore, that arguably have some impact on every translator’s professional experience and activity.</p>

References

- House, Juliane (ed.) (2014). *Translation: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zhang, Wei and Stephanie Watts (2008). "Online Communities as Communities of Practice: A Case Study." *Journal of Knowledge Management* Vol. 12 Issue: 4, 55-71.

Author's Biography

Caterina WEBER is a PhD candidate from the University of Nottingham, UK (School of Sociology and Social Policy). She holds a BA in Chinese Studies and English Language and Literature from the University of Geneva, Switzerland, studies which included one year of Chinese language courses in Chongqing. Caterina moved to the UK in 2006 to take a MSc in Chinese Business and International Relations at the University of Sheffield. She then worked as a project coordinator at the Confucius Institute at the University of Sheffield before embarking on a PhD, while continuing to pursue her interests in Chinese language and arts.

Caterina's main research interest is literary translation from Chinese to English, with focus on the role some of the widely acknowledged differences between these two languages and their respective cultural contexts can play in a translator's work.