This is a contribution from

Cultus:

The Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication

2021: 14

© Iconesoft Edizioni Gruppo Radivo Holding

This electronic file may not be altered in any way.
The author(s) of this article is /are permitted to use this PDF file to generate printed copies to be used by way of offprints, for their personal use only.

Exploring and expanding the plus of translators' power: Translatorial agency and the communicative constitution of organizations (CCO)

Gary Massey

Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

Abstract

Recent research from Organization Studies highlights the frequently unnoticed power of translators as they shape organizational and corporate identities and develop their own roles. Their function in conveying meaning across linguacultural barriers gives them a profoundly agentic role in the strategic and operational communication that takes place within multilingual organizations, but also in the way an organization presents, brands and markets itself to target groups and markets in other linguistic cultures. Research at the interface between international corporate communications and translation demonstrates a distinct demand potential for the added-value intercultural and transcreative skills that professional human translators have. The communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) provides a viable framework for exploring the agency of translators, but until now, CCO-oriented studies have focused on paraprofessionals working in organizational fields other than translation and rarely mention professional translators or, when they do, depict them as invisible conduits involved in a hermetic process of neutral, wholly faithful translation akin to transcoding. This article considers how a CCO framework for investigating translatorial agency can and should be extended to professional translation, thereby providing a key to empowering professional translators in the organizations using their services. It proposes linguistic ethnographic and (network) action research methods to investigate factors that inhibit and promote translators' agency in delivering effective multilingual organizational and corporate communications for international companies and institutions.

Keywords: translatorial agency; professional translation; corporate communications; organizational communication; communicative constitution of organizations.

1. Introduction

A widespread misconception about translation is that it is a mechanistic, neutral transcoding process from one natural language into another, fully and faithfully preserving an invariant core of meaning across languages and cultures. This is, of course, a hugely reductive view. It completely ignores the inevitable cultural filtering (cf. House 2014, 68-70) and interpretation consciously and unconsciously undertaken by the human translators themselves "that inevitably varies source-text form, meaning, and effect according to intelligibilities and interests in the receiving culture" (Venuti 2019, 1) as well as the situated nature of translation as a purpose-driven, socio-cognitive activity involving multiple actors, factors and interests. The latter include those of clients, receivers and end-users of translators' work, from private individuals to corporate bodies and public organizations. Moreover, as has long been identified by research from the field of cognitive translatology (e.g. Muñoz Martín 2016; Risku 2010; Ehrensberger-Dow and Massey 2019a, 2019b), the translation processes and products are themselves deeply contextualized both in translators' individual workplace settings and in the wider, complex socio-technical environments of the organizations they work for, whether as staff, agency or freelance translators.

It is in such organizational contexts that Organization Studies has described translators as having the plus of a "hidden power" (Piekkari *et al.* 2020, 3015) as they reshape meaning through the chain of the interpretative decisions they make when they translate. This is seen to endow them with key agentic roles in the operational and strategic communication that takes place within organizations reliant on more than one language (Piekkari *et al.* 2020; Koskinen 2020b), but also in the way that an organization presents, brands and markets itself, its services and its products to target groups and markets in other linguistic cultures.

The value that translatorial agency could add to organizations is, however, inhibited by three major factors. The first is the invisibility of the translator's role. This has been nurtured, on the one hand, by the non-specialist public's misunderstanding of what translation involves. However, as Venuti (2019) repeatedly observes, such an "instrumentalist" conceptualization of translation has also been promoted by a widely held professional self-concept of neutral, non-interventionist translation sustained by mainstream translation theories, training practices and professional ethical codes. The second barrier is

the relatively strict linearity of prevailing models that guide translation service provision. Translation typically takes place after a source document has been produced, with translators rarely involved at the document drafting stage, with only limited feed-forward mechanisms and with very restricted, mediated channels for providing feedback or advice (Massey and Wieder 2019; 2020). This places severe constraints on the agency of translators as linguistic and intercultural experts in the internal and external communication processes of organizations operating in multilingual and international contexts. The issue is further compounded by a third inhibiting factor, which is the way organizations traditionally model communication and structure their communication processes. Corporate communications, in particular, has largely aimed at a fully aligned, integrated and consistent communication that regulates employees to an extent that denies them participation and empowerment (Christensen *et al.* 2008). Its underlying models for communication are predominantly linear, reducing communication to a conduit between sender and receiver and reinforcing a "sender-biased view on communication that ignores or at least downplays the interpretative propensities and capabilities of the alleged receiver" (Christensen and Cornelissen 2013: 50-51).

This article explores the barriers to, and the benefits of, an expanded operational and more strategic role for translators and translation in organizations, one that takes fuller advantage of value-adding human intervention. It considers how CCO, communicative constitution of organizations theory, and translatorial agency research can be extended to professional translation, thereby providing a key to empowering professional translators in the organizations using their services. Finally, it proposes that a combination of translatorial linguistic ethnographic and (network) action research methods should be used to investigate factors that inhibit and promote professional translators' agency. This will provide a solid empirical basis on which to develop, validate and apply models, processes and practices that are capable of delivering effective, quality-assured multilingual, international organizational and corporate communications.

2. Translatorial agency in organizations

A growing research field in Organization Studies has been translation between natural languages in organizational settings performed by paraprofessional translators (e.g. Piekkari *et al.* 2013; Chidlow *et al.* 2014; Ciuk and James 2015; Tietze et al. 2017; Koskela *et al.* 2017; Ciuk *et al.* 2019; Piekkari *et al.* 2020; Koskinen 2020b). The research done has shown how the language resources and the translatorial repertoires of members of an organization decisively affect their positions and roles at the workplace, and it has indicated the way they can use their translatorial agency to advance personal and organizational goals (e.g. Ciuk and James, 2015: 573; Koskinen, 2020b; Piekkari *et al.* 2020: 1322).

The study by Piekkari *et al.* (2020) is especially enlightening. Among other things, it addresses the performative functions of the decisions made by paraprofessional interlingual translators as they communicate and transfer organizational practices across language boundaries to receiving organizations. The researchers identify strong "directive" and "concluding" effects of translatorial agency, that is to say those effects that send organizations in particular directions and that close down alternative interpretations of messages (Piekkari *et al.* 2020: 1315). They also pick up on work done by Tietze *et al.* (2017) in identifying translators' creativity and capacity for innovation in organizations, which they regard as a fruitful area for future research. There is evidence to indicate that paraprofessional translators, being unconstrained by professional norms, codes of conduct and the self-concepts engrained in professional translators' habitus, might push the boundaries of conventional professional translational behaviour (Koskinen 2020b) by exerting more agency and adopting more adaptive and creative translation strategies than professional translators. Tietze *et al.* (2017), for instance, describe how a paraprofessional translator creatively deals with English terms for which he can find no equivalent in his native Slovak tongue by omitting large parts of the source text and embellishing it with invented examples. This and other cases are cited by Piekkari *et al.* (2020: 1319-1324), who contrast the creative and innovative approaches of paraprofessional translatorial agents, "more visible on the organizational scene", with the "invisible activity" of professional translation. They (Piekkari *et al.* 2020: 1315) claim that "the *skopos* of the translation is often likely to be much more personal than for professional translators

rendering their services to clients, and the former can therefore be expected to take on more agentic roles".

Piekkari *et al.* (2020: 1315) adopt the basic position that the task of the professional translator is to produce an optimal text to maximize the *skopos* or intended purpose of those commissioning a translation. While very few translation scholars or practitioners would dispute these functionalist underpinnings of professional translation, the complex, dynamic range and layers of activity that professional translators are called upon to perform demands a more nuanced approach to their roles and responsibilities in any given situation. Most obviously, the *skopos* might well require adaptive or transcreative approaches from the translator, for instance – but by no means solely – in reputational or marketing communication. Thus, the creative solutions ascribed to the paraprofessional in Tietze *et al.* 's (2017) study lies very much within the professional translator's scope, as the now established professional field of transcreation (e.g. Pedersen 2014, 2019) demonstrates. Indeed, the increasing shift in demand for human translation towards user-centrism, intercultural mediation and adaptive, transcreative work (Katan 2016, 2018; Koskinen 2020a; Liddicoat 2016; Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2017; Suojanen *et al.* 2014) as well as ethically grounded risk management in translation and post-editing work (Canfora and Ottman 2015; Nitzke *et al.* 2019) strongly suggests that the entire profession must adopt a more identifiably interventionist role in the agency that translators exercise. Alongside finely honed technological and digital literacy skills, the intercultural competence that forms a basic part or prerequisite of current translation competence models (e.g. EMT 2017) and the intercultural mediation inherent in translators' work (Liddicoat 2016) make them very well positioned to do so.

This appears to be corroborated by the preliminary results from in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with communication managers in large international companies (Massey and Wieder 2020). Three initial interviews, all in German, took place in 2019 as part of an ongoing study, currently interrupted by the 2020 pandemic, aimed at investigating the intersections between corporate communications and translation in a selection of international corporations and public organizations based in Switzerland. The interviewees were sent the questions in advance, which were subsequently used as the basis for an open discussion of the various issues raised. The questions, translated into English, are listed in summary form below:

- How do you organize your international corporate communications, and why?
- What are the positive and negative points about the way it is organized?
- Where do you see the greatest challenges in international corporate communications?
- What culture-related and language-related issues are you facing?
- What competences are expected of you/your staff?
- Are you satisfied with your/your staff's competences?
- How do you see the future? Will you/your staff need different competences?

The first cluster of results reveals issues related to the way strategic international communication management is structured and organized. In brief, the data show that complex coordination and controlling processes between headquarters and local units are needed to ensure that global strategic messages have in fact been adequately communicated to all stakeholders in the target culture. One reason for these extensive processes is that the majority of communications staff lack the target culture and target language knowledge and competences to enable more streamlined, decentralized processes to be put in place. These, of course, are typically the core strengths of professional translators, who have the distinct aptitude to play a much more integral part in co-developing strategic communications output and assuring its quality. As one senior communications manager put it:

> I believe we should do more to reintegrate the local touch, also in companies that operate worldwide. Although we should, of course, try to adapt and to standardize as much as possible and also to ensure that we convey our external image in language and visuals, the way our brand is perceived, as uniformly and congruently as possible, this is precisely why, I believe, we need much more of the local touch. On the one hand, we in Corporate Communications have to understand much more what the particular sensitivities [are] at local level, but on the other, they [i.e. the local branches] have to understand why we have certain commitments. […]
> I believe we need a better exchange [of thoughts, views, ideas, etc.] and a back and forth in all directions. I also believe that we should have confidence in again doing much more in local languages. But that will only work if, in the first place, it is clear what requirements there are on the part of Corporate Communications, and secondly, the trust is also there [to say] "ok, I can't speak Mandarin, but I know exactly that our

> colleagues have captured the nuance that this press release should have." That is often the crux.
> We are sometimes very specific about our wordings on the subject of translation in particular – in the end, the nuances must be appropriately translated. It is not easy to sit together with someone and say "we should translate this like this or like that." It only works that way if you know each other and know where your needs are. For me, that can only result from a better exchange [of thoughts, views, ideas, etc.] and also, in turn, from understanding particular cultures. (Author's translation of the original German transcript).

The second set of preliminary results concerns the profile of international communication specialists. The interviewees concur that specialists should not only be familiar with the principles of communication management and digital channels, but also need extensive skills in foreign languages, including a near-native command of English and, ideally, fluency in at least one other language. They should be able to oversee communication quality in the organization's key languages, have adequate knowledge of target cultures and possess sound intercultural skills. Organizational knowledge and work experience, project management skills and a thorough understanding of basic business principles are also mentioned. Here, too, translators are by default well suited to assume key agentic roles in international communication management once they have covered the necessary foundations in business and management.

The "hidden power" of agentic translation therefore appears to represent an untapped resource that, with appropriately re-designed structures and processes to manage and assure the quality of communications output, can effectively and efficiently help organizations to develop internally, and at the same time reach out to target groups and markets worldwide. Paraprofessional translators could be systematically trained and professionalized both to develop and sustain corporate identities within multinational, multicultural, multilingual organizations, and to convey strategic messages externally across linguistic and cultural borders. More pertinently, improved recognition from, and integration in, the organizations for which they work could empower professional translators to act as key translatorial agents in multilingual international corporate communications.

3. Factors inhibiting professional translatorial agency

However, tapping the plus of this resource is not as straightforward as it might appear. Achieving the necessary empowerment and agency for professional translators entails fundamental changes to the processes, models and mindsets that shape current quality assurance practices in translation and corporate communications. In particular, the more effective deployment of translators and translation in the service of organizations is inhibited by three principal factors, all of which bear important implications for the quality of strategic communications output in multilingual organizations with international or global operations.

The first derives from self-concept issues in the translation profession itself, which tend to shore up non-specialist misconceptions about what professional translation actually involves. Survey data (Katan 2011, 2016; Massey and Wieder 2019, 2020) does indeed show that a large proportion of professional translators do not possess a self-concept conducive to adopting more creative mediatory or advisory roles. Two international surveys of translators by Katan (2011, 2016) in 2008 (n= 890) and 2015 (n=388) have shown a relatively constant 60% of respondents agree absolutely with minimum intervention, source-text fidelity and adherence to source-text style, while only 30% at most consider it usual to actively mediate the reader or actively account for cultural differences (Katan 2016, 370). It is therefore hardly surprising that, in relation to the first of the two surveys, Katan (2011) identifies repeated traits of a low-autonomy profession (LAP) in the respondents' perception of their professional roles and responsibilities. Key aspects of Katan's results are echoed in those of a 2017 Swiss survey of translation professionals reported in detail by Massey and Wieder (2019), who are among the few researchers to have broached the complex interplay between corporate communications, translation and translatorial agency. Indeed, the interviews mentioned in the previous section have been designed to follow up on the results of their initial research. Based on an online survey among translators and translation project managers (n=190), on the one hand, and organizational communication professionals (n= 59), on the other, their study focuses on the particular form of agency represented by the feed-forward and feedback flows between communications professionals, professional translators and translation project managers working in Switzerland. As such, it provides insights

into translators' own awareness of their agentic role as providers of feedback and advice from their position as experts in intercultural communication and mediation. The results showed that professional translators (and translation project managers, the vast majority of whom have been trained as translators) themselves provide very limited feedback to communications professionals on the (strategic) adequacy of the source-texts. The survey also included an item on how translators saw their professional role. Despite indications of a fundamentally assistive and adaptive role awareness, the aggregate responses ranked overt mediatory, co-creative and advisory roles lowest, whereas the less agentic categories of fidelity to source-text writers' intentions and meeting client requirements, document specifications and project-management standards scored highest.

The combined results of these surveys have been ascribed to the priority given to source-text fidelity found in a large number of ethical codes of practice among professional translation and interpreting associations worldwide (Katan 2016: 369-371; Schäffner 2020: 66). The situation is neatly summed up by Lambert (2018: 269, 284-285), who critiques the "fictional construction of the translator as a neutral conduit" that these unrealistic codes perpetuate and suggests that they should more properly be adapted to "proliferate an empowering image of translation as an active, multi-faceted activity that requires expert knowledge and judgement, while openly exploring its inevitably manipulative basis". As we have already seen, this mindset also pervades Organization Studies, where researchers explicitly express a fundamentally instrumentalist view of professional translation (e.g. Piekkari *et al.* 2020: 3013-3014). In so doing, they are thus themselves subscribing to the conceptualization of professional translators' roles and responsibilities that Venuti, Katan and others have taken such issue with.

The second factor is the linearity of prevailing models and standards to assure the quality of translation service provision. For example, the ISO 17100 (2015) quality standard for translation services, the "lynchpin document for the certification of translators and translation service providers" (Wright 2019: 31), lays down a strictly linear process of twelve components encompassing pre-production, production and post-production processes with little possibility of direct interactions between the translators, commissioners, authors, clients and end-users. This substantially restricts the agency of translators' linguistic and intercultural

expertise in organizational communication processes. Further results from Massey and Wieder's (2019) study throw the situation into sharp relief. They reveal that translators' and translation project managers' access to the communication strategy is very limited, that translators and translation project managers receive hardly any advice on how to contribute to the organization's communication objectives, and that communication specialists are to a large extent unaware of the strategic value and function of translation that organizations as a whole have now recognized for some time (Massardo *et al.* 2016. 10). It goes without saying that these impediments severely limit the effectiveness of translators as they work to implement an organization's communication strategy.

Closely related to the limitations imposed by the linear processes of translation service provision is the way that organizations model their communication processes, the third inhibitory factor. It comes as no surprise that the lack of consideration that Organization Studies has given to the productive value-adding agency of professional translation is matched by its almost total absence from corporate communications theory, research and practice (Massey and Wieder 2019, 2020). The monolithic organizational identity that corporate communications pursue, in which the parts are metonymic manifestations of the whole, and vice versa, give rise to a conduit-like linearity of communication models that have been convincingly critiqued by Christensen *et al.* (2008), Christensen *et al.* (2008) and Christensen and Cornelissen (2013). This appears to have cemented a concept of professional translation as a neutral, conduit-like process of transferring the invariant semantic core of a unified corporate brand across languages and cultures. It is because of such a mechanistic perception of communication design and an instrumentalist conceptualization of the translation process that organizations do not see the need to integrate translators and the competences they can bring to bear more fully into corporate communications. Instead, translators continue to be perceived as transcoders of pre-defined messages and are thus positioned at the very end of the planning and design chain.

The initial research by Massey and Wieder (2019: 2020) provides salient indicators of current restrictions, but also tentative ones of future possibilities. In follow-up interviews conducted just after their 2017 survey with three professionals working in Switzerland, an institutional staff translator, a commercial staff translator and a freelancer, the former

two stressed the constraints on their agency imposed by organizational structures, processes and the corporate communications mindset (cf. Christensen and Cornelissen 2013: 45-48). It was the freelancer who, when working directly with long-standing clients on a basis of trust rather than through a translation company or agency, exerted substantial agentic influence on the development and translation of messages, documents and campaigns by receiving systematic feed-forward and providing continuous feedback.

Indeed, her descriptions came closest to the iterative, interactional role of translators that forms the core of the user-centred translation (UCT) model recently developed in Finland (Koskinen 2020a; Suojanen *et al.* 2014), and which seeks to position the translator squarely as an expert interlingual, intercultural mediator able to develop, shape and deliver user-centred messages. The UCT model (Suojanen *et al.* 2014: 3-6) envisages a coalescence of translation and user-centered design processes derived from usability studies. It involves a non-linear, cyclical mode of operation whereby translators analyze the users of their texts and recursively evaluate the usability of their work through interactive stages of translation, revision and quality assessment. Approaches, strategies and solutions are continuously re-evaluated in the light of new knowledge and experience gleaned from information fed forward, mental modelling, heuristic evaluation and usability testing, systematic stakeholder feedback and follow-up reception research. In terms of iterativity, interaction, stakeholder involvement and knowledge exchange, it shares key aspects of process design with Massey and Wieder's (2019: 75-76) proposal, developed in part from Hofmann's business-process and quality-assurance model (2012), to position translation professionals closer to the strategic level and processes of corporate communications management and to integrate them, as experts in intercultural linguistic mediation, seamlessly and interactively in the design, development and co-creation of international corporate communications output.

4. A research agenda for professional translatorial agency

Massey and Wieder's (2019, 2020) pilot and follow-up research was designed as a first foray into the interface between translation and corporate communications in order to ascertain the viability and scope

of future interdisciplinary endeavours in what is a patently under-researched field. It has uncovered some of the factors that inhibit and promote professional translators' agency in delivering effective multilingual organizational and corporate communications for international companies and institutions. Parallel research from Organization Studies on agency among paraprofessional translators has enriched those initial insights. Extending the interdisciplinary scope of the research agenda to encompass frameworks, models and methods from this and other disciplines promises to reveal more about the actual and potential agentic roles of professional translators in the organizations that employ them.

From a Translation Studies perspective, the theory that has implicitly and explicitly framed the more productive lines of Organization Studies research into translatorial agency is CCO, an approach that is gaining increasing momentum in the broader field of organizational communication, though one which seems to have remained relatively unknown in the closely related branch of corporate communications. Broadly speaking, CCO provides an emergentist framework for organizational development that is predicated on the assumption, increasingly validated by empirical research, that organizational identities evolve and change through the polyphonic multiplicity of the voices that constitute them (Christensen and Cornelissen 2013: 63-66; Schoeneborn *et al.* 2019). Indeed, when identifying the shortcomings of the current corporate communications ideal, it is CCO that Christensen and Cornelissen (2013: 63-66) propose as the touchstone for re-examining and deconstructing the reification of organizational identity and prescriptive univocality inherent in the models that have until now dominated the way corporate communications specialists think and act.

In the international and multicultural contexts of organizational communication, the multiple voices constituting an organization include the paraprofessional translators that have, as a result, been the subject of the CCO-oriented research described in Section 2. But those voices also comprise the professional translators that organizations employ, be it as internal staff or externally contracted freelancers. In the increasingly open and participatory communicative ecology observable within the wider world of global social media, where traditional role distinctions between senders and receivers, stakeholders, target groups and cultures are blurring fast, the continued predominance of top-down, monolithic approaches to organizational and corporate communications must be

seriously questioned. The research done to date on paraprofessionals demonstrates that CCO provides a viable theoretical framework for exploring the agency of translators within the communicative ecologies of organizations. But given that, on the evidence of the researchers themselves, the exclusion of professional translators appears to be based on a fundamental misconception of what professional translation actually involves, that focus should logically be widened to embrace the professionals as well.

Various studies have been undertaken to investigate organizational roles and responsibilities of professional translators, though the particular question of their agency has yet to be specifically described, analyzed and evaluated. Pioneering examples of workplace-based ethnographic research, recently labelled "translatorial linguistic ethnography" by Koskinen (2020), are presented by Risku (2016), Koskinen (2008) and Pedersen (2016, 2019), focussing on a commercial translation agency, an institutional translation unit at the European Commission, and on transcreational processes, spaces and interactions at a marketing agency, respectively. These and other studies have adopted the traditional ethnographic methodology of following and observing the actors, asking them about their activities and experiences by interview and questionnaire, and recording the results in field notes, protocols, analyses, and so forth. The specifically translatorial and linguistic elements of the ethnography are generated by following, collecting and examining the textual and communicative data produced. It almost goes without saying that these observational and analytical methods can be equally fruitfully deployed to ascertain the forms, degrees, conditions and possibilities of translatorial agency in the communicative ecologies of organizations.

However, an agenda to research the reality and potential of professional translatorial agency in organizations also implies the ultimate goal of acting to realize the value it can add. For the research to have a transformative effect, descriptive observational and analytical ethnography needs to feed into a developmental cycle of participation, action and evaluation. It is here that the ethnography can and should be joined up with action research. The combination has already proven itself an effective methodology in sociologically oriented Communication Studies, from which workplace-based Translation Studies has a considerable amount to learn.

Guiding examples are reported in Tacchi *et al.* (2003) and Foth and Hearn (2007), where ethnographic methods used to research actions, interactions and effects in communicative ecologies are underpinned by the classic action research cycle of planning (to improve a practice), doing or acting (to implement it), observing (to describe its effects) and reflecting (to evaluate outcomes). Tacchi *et al.* (2003) develop and apply ethnographic action to research, understand and develop Information and Communications Technology (ICT) projects in India. The methods (Tacchi *et al.* 2003: 51-102) that were used to collect data cover the common ethnographic techniques of following, observing, asking, recording and analyzing: participant observation and field notes, in-depth and group interviews, participant diaries and self-documentation, questionnaire surveys, published information and documentary material on the locality where the project was situated. All along, participatory feedback mechanisms were built into the research process to gather richer information about the project and the organizations engaged in it. Building on this design, Foth and Hearn (2007) developed their own approach to what they call network action research. In their study of the communicative ecology in inner-city apartment buildings, individual residents and their immediate social clusters engaged with one another and the researchers in a peer-to-peer mode of exchange. They created a network of inquiry that at once generated research data and fed them back into the action research cycles of intervention and reflection (Foth and Hearn 2007: 752-753). Both groups of researchers applied three layers or focal points of analysis and interpretation to their data – the technological (the devices and connecting media that enable communication and interaction), the social (the people and the social modes of organizing them) and the discursive (the messages, ideas and themes constituting the conversations and narratives of the communicative ecology). All three of these can, of course, be effortlessly mapped, directly and consistently, to the organizational communicative ecologies in which the socio-technical activity of professional translation is situated, both physically – in the case of staff translators – and virtually – within agency and freelancer networks.

Communication Studies therefore provides a ready methodological template for taking the research on the organizational agency of professional translators a step beyond the preponderantly descriptive approaches hitherto applied by researchers from Translation and Organization Studies. It can inform an agenda that seeks not only to

investigate the factors that inhibit and promote translators' organizational agency, but also to act on the results in order to transform the profession in the best interests of the organizations it serves.

5. Concluding remarks

The melding of translatorial linguistic ethnography and (network) action research within a CCO framework has the power to alter the perceptions, processes, agency and roles of translation in organizations, both paraprofessional and professional. By pursuing a research agenda that traces the production of multilingual output in public and commercial organizations through the complex web of actor interactions to its reception by audiences and end-users, researchers and practitioners can come together to describe, analyze, evaluate and optimize organizational models, processes, practices and products. They thus have the opportunity to empower professional translators to make fuller use of their capacities and to adopt more visible, agentic roles in the service and best interests of the organizations that employ them. Preliminary but partial work on translation and international corporate communications has rendered some encouraging results (Massey and Wieder 2019, 2020). They suggest that, by ensuring that the structures, processes and incentives are in place to promote rather than constrain the agency of translators, organizations are likely to be able to shape the affordances that sustain the emergence of corporate identities and the adequacy of the way these are communicated across linguistic and cultural borders, not only operationally but also strategically.

Although more extensive research is self-evidently needed, the indicators at this early stage are that this can be achieved if certain conditions are met. In the first place, organizations need to overcome their simplistic view of translation as a mere transcoding process and see translators for what they can be: adaptive, creative linguistic and intercultural experts with the profoundly agentic potential to shape and convey not only operational textual material but also organizational identities and strategic messages for both internal and external target groups and markets. Second, the translation profession must break with a traditional instrumentalist conceptualization of itself and the "illusion of neutrality" (Lambert 2018) in which it shrouds the roles and responsibilities of its members. Finally, while organizational and

corporate communications should continue to embrace a CCO perspective that breaks up the univocal linearity of their current communications ideal, the linear processes governing translation service provision must also be remodelled to permit sustained, meaningful interactions and unmediated feed-forward and feedback flows. This will lay the basis for developing standards, structures and practices that allow professional translators to adopt an expanded role as active agents in an iterative, interactive process of multilingual text production, adding a visible plus to their strategic value for the organizations that employ their services.

References

Canfora, Carmen, and Angelika Ottmann. 2015. "Risikomanagement für Übersetzungen" [Risk management and translations]. *trans-kom* 8, no. 2: 314-346. http://www.trans-kom.eu/bd08nr02/trans-kom_08_02_02_Canfora_Ottmann_Risiko.20151211.pdf (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Chidlow, Agnieszka, Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki, and Catherine Welch. 2014. "Translation in cross-language international business research: Beyond equivalence". *Journal of International Business Studies* 45, no. 5 (June): 562-582. https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2013.67 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Christensen, Lars Thøger, and Joep Cornelissen. 2013. "Bridging corporate and organizational communication: Review, development and a look to the future". In *Organisationskommunikation und Public Relations*, edited by Ansgar Zerfass, Lars Rademacher and Stefan Wehmeier, 43-72. Wiesbaden: Springer VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18961-1_3 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Christensen, Lars Thøger, A. Fuat Firat, and Simon Torp. 2008. "The organization of integrated communications: Toward flexible integration". *European Journal of Marketing* 42 (April): 423-452. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560810853002 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Christensen, Lars Thøger, Mette Morsing, and George Cheney. 2008. *Corporate Communications: Convention, Complexity and Critique*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446214466 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Ciuk, Sylwia, and Philip James. 2015. "Interlingual translation and transfer of value-infused practices: An in-depth qualitative exploration". *Management Learning* 46, no. 5 (December): 565-581. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507614560304 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Ciuk, Sylwia, Philip James, and Martyna Śliwa. 2019. "Micropolitical dynamics of interlingual translation processes in an MNC subsidiary". *British Journal of Management* 30, no. 4 (October): 926-942. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12323 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Ehrensberger-Dow, Maureen, and Gary Massey. 2019a. "Socio-technical issues in professional translation practice". In *Translation Practice in the Field. Current Research on Socio-cognitive Processes*, edited by Hanna Risku, Regina Rogl and Jelena Milosevic, 105-122. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/bct.105.06ehr (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Ehrensberger-Dow, Maureen, and Gary Massey. 2019b. "Translation workplace-based research". In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Technology*, edited by Minako O'Hagan, 354-369. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315311258 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

EMT Board. 2017. *European Master's in Translation: Competence Framework 2017*. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/emt_competence_fwk_2017_en_web.pdf (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Foth, Marcus, and Greg Hearn. 2007. "Networked Individualism of Urban Residents: Discovering the communicative ecology in inner-city apartment buildings". *Information, Communication and Society* 10, no. 5 (October): 749-772. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180701658095 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Hofmann, Sascha. 2012. *Prozessgestützes Übersetzen. Vom funktionsorientierten Übersetzungsprozess zum GP-Modell für die Dienstleistung Übersetzen* [Process-supported translation. From the function-oriented translation process to a business-process model for translation service provision]. Lichtenberg: Harland Media.

House, Juliane. 2014. *Translation Quality Assessment. Past and Present*, I Edition. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315752839 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

ISO 17100. 2015. *Translation Services — Requirements for Translation Services*. Geneva: International Organization for Standardization. Available at https://www.iso.org/standard/59149.html (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Katan, David. 2011. "Occupation or profession: A survey of the translators' world". *Translation and Interpreting Studies. The Journal of the American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association* 4, (January 2009): 108-209. https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.4.2.04kat (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Katan, David. 2016. "Translation at the cross-roads: Time for the transcreational turn?". *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice* 24, no. 3 (August): 365-381. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2015.1016049 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Katan, David. 2018. "Trans*latere* or trans*creare*: In theory and in practice, and by whom?". In *Translation or Transcreation? Discourses, Texts and Visuals*, edited by Cinzia Spinzi, Alessandra Rizzo and Marianna Lya Zummo, 15-38. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

Koskela, Merjia, Kaisa Koskinen, and Nina Pilke. 2017. "Bilingual formal meeting as a context of translatoriality". *Target* 29, no. 3 (September): 464-485. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.16017.kos (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Koskinen, Kaisa. 2008. *Translating Institutions: An Ethnographic Study of EU Translation*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759760 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Koskinen, Kaisa. 2020a. "Tailoring translation services for clients and users". In *The Bloomsbury Companion to Language Industry Studies*, edited by Erik Angelone, Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow and Gary Massey, 139-152. London: Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350024960.0011 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Koskinen, Kaisa. 2020b. "Translatorial linguistic ethnography in organizations". In *Managing Multilingual Workplaces: Methodological, Empirical and Pedagogic Perspectives*, edited by Sierk A. Horn, Philippe Lecomte, and Susanne Tietze, 60-78. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429431128-6 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Lambert, Joseph. 2018. "How ethical are codes of ethics? Using illusions of neutrality to sell translations". *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 30 (July): 269-290. https://www.jostrans.org/issue30/art_lambert.pdf (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Liddicoat, Anthony J. 2016. "Intercultural mediation, intercultural communication and translation". *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice* 24, no. 3 (February): 354-364. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2014.980279

Massardo, Isabella, Jaap van der Meer, and Maxim Khalilov. 2016. *Translation Technology Landscape Report. September 2016*. De Rijp: TAUS.

Massey, Gary, and Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow. 2017. "Machine learning: Implications for translator education". *Lebende Sprachen* 62, no. 2 (October): 300-312. https://doi.org/10.1515/les-2017-0021 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Massey, Gary, and Regine Wieder. 2019. "Quality assurance in translation and corporate communications: Exploring an interdisciplinary interface". In *Quality Assurance and Assessment Practices in Translation and Interpreting,* edited by Elsa Huertas-Barros, Sonia Vandepitte and Emilia Iglesias-Fernández, 57-87. Hershey, PA: IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-5225-3.ch003 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Massey, Gary, and Regine Wieder. 2020. "Harnessing a hidden power: International corporate communications, translators and translatorial agency". Peer-reviewed paper for the *14th GEMandL International Workshop on Management and Language*, EM Strasbourg Business School, 4-6 May, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342477833_Harnessing_a_Hidden_Power_-_International_Corporate_Communications_Translators_and_Translatorial_Agency (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Muñoz Martín, Ricardo. 2016. "Reembedding translation process research: An introduction". In *Reembedding Translation Process Research*, edited by Ricardo Muñoz Martín, 1-20. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.128.01mun

Nitzke, Jean, Silvia Hansen-Schirra, and Carmen Canfora. 2019. "Risk management and post-editing competence". *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 31(January): 239-259. https://www.jostrans.org/issue31/art_nitzke.php

Pedersen, Daniel. 2014. "Exploring the concept of transcreation — transcreation as 'more than translation?'". *Cultus: The Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication* 7: 57-71. https://www.cultusjournal.com/index.php/archive/16-issue-2014-v-7-transcreation-and-the-professions (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Pedersen, Daniel. 2016. *Transcreation in marketing and advertising: An ethnographic study*. Ph.D thesis. Aarhus: Department of Business Communication, Aarhus University.

https://pure.au.dk/portal/files/99715430/Transcreation_in_Marketing_and_Advertising_An_Ethnographic_Study1.pdf (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Pedersen, Daniel. 2019. "Managing transcreation projects: An ethnographic study". In *Translation Practice in the Field. Current Research on Socio-cognitive Processes*, edited by Hanna Risku, Regina Rogl and Jelena Milosevic, 43-59. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/bct.105.03ped (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Piekkari, Rebecca, Susanne Tietze, and Kaisa Koskinen. 2020. "Metaphorical and interlingual translation in moving organizational practices across languages". *Organization Studies* 41, no. 9 (September): 1311-1332. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840619885415 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Piekkari, Rebecca, Denice Ellen Welch, Lawrence Stephenson Welch, Jukka-Pekka Peltonen, and Tiina Vesa. 2013. "Translation behaviour: An exploratory study within a service multinational". *International Business Review* 22, no. 5 (October): 771-783. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2012.12.004 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Risku, Hanna. 2010. "A cognitive scientific view on technical communication and translation. Do embodiment and situatedness really make a difference?". *Target* 22, no. 1 (July): 94-111. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.22.1.06ris (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Risku, Hanna. 2016. *Translationsmanagement. Interkulturelle Fachkommunikation im Informationszeitalter*. 3rd ed. Tübingen: Narr.

Schäffner, Christina. 2020. "Translators' roles and responsibilities". In *The Bloomsbury Companion to Language Industry Studies*, edited by Erik Angelone, Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow and Gary Massey, 63-90. London: Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350024960.0008 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Schoeneborn, Dennis, Timothy R. Kuhn, and Dan Kärreman. 2019. "The communicative constitution of organization, organizing, and organizationality". *Organization Studies* 40, no. 4: 475-496. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618782284 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Suojanen, Tytti, Kaisa Koskinen, and Tiina Tuominen. 2014. *User-Centered Translation*. London: Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315753508 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Tacchi, Jo, Don Slater, and Greg Hearn. 2003. *Ethnographic action research*. New Delhi: UNESCO Office New Delhi. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000139419 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Tietze, Susanne, Carole Tansley, and Emil Helienek. 2017. "The translator as agent in management knowledge transfer". *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 17, no. 1 (April): 151-169. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470595817701509 (last accessed 20 July 2021).

Venuti, Lawrence. 2019. *Contra Instrumentalism. A Translation Polemic*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Wright, Sue Ellen. 2019. "Standards for the language, translation and localization industry". In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Technology*, edited by Minako O'Hagan, 21-44. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315311258 (last accessed 20 July 2021).