

Transformations following the HSI Faculty Seminar Spring 2018

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Course: SPA231 Interpretation 1

1 Introduction

When I applied to take part in the HIS Faculty Seminar, my “transformation” proposal focused on improving students’ competence in the use of different registers applied to interpreter training. Over the course of the seminar, my transformation went through a transformation process itself. In the following paragraphs, I present some definitions and facts to contextualize the course and the transformation, and the transformations themselves.

2 The course, Hispanic students and their linguistic profile

2.1 Translation and Interpretation

Translation and interpretation are both translatory activities. Whereas translators work with written texts, interpreters work with the spoken word. Translation and interpretation are related in so far as both activities involve conveying meaning expressed in a language in a different language, but the differences between the two are worth highlighting: oral vs written source and target texts; space and time constraints (interpretation takes place at the same time or very close after source text production, and often in a shared space when it is face-to-face, or via telephone or videoconference when it is remote); cognitive, interpersonal and emotional demands, (im)possibility of editing, and access to resources, to name but a few. Both activities, though, require linguistic and discursive competence in the both the source and the target language. In the case of our students, they need to be fluent in English and Spanish and have awareness of linguistic and discourse aspects. Our students, as it is the case of many practitioners, normally learn both activities, although separately, i.e. in different courses.

2.2 The course: SPA231 Interpreting 1

The transformations proposed apply to the SPA231 Interpretation 1 course (Fall 2018) and will be followed by transformations to the SPA 333 Interpretation 2 course (Spring 2019), a continuation of SPA231 for most students. SPA231 Interpretation 1 and SPA333 Interpretation 2 are the two introductory interpretation courses in which students develop interpretation techniques for the four main modalities: liaison interpretation (interpretation of dialogue-based interaction), sight translation (oral translation of a written text), consecutive interpretation (the interpreter listens to the speaker for 2-4 minutes while taking notes, the speaker pauses and the interpreter delivers the message in the other language); and simultaneous interpretation (the interpreter listens to the speaker and interprets into the other language at the same time, normally whispering or through interpreting equipment, without the speaker having to make

pauses). These techniques are developed in specific domains and contexts in which interpretation is often required (medical, legal, education), and students need to learn domain-specific concepts, procedures and terminology, but specialization *per se* comes at a later stage. SPA231 Interpretation 1 precedes specialization in legal interpretation and SPA333 runs parallel to the first legal interpretation course of the two required for the specialization.

2.3 Translation and Interpretation students

Students enrolled in SPA231 Interpretation 1 are typically Hispanic (100% in the Fall 2017). Most students use Spanish as a “heritage language” and can thus be described as “heritage speakers”. According to Benmamoun, Montrul and Polinsky (2013), “...the term heritage speakers typically refers to 2nd generation immigrants, the children of first generation immigrants, living in a bilingual environment from an early age.” Although each student has a different language learning background, their bilingual profile can be described in most cases as that of a heritage speaker.

Having been raised in bilingual (multilingual) and bicultural (multicultural) contexts since they were born, from a very early age or for a significant number of years, is certainly an advantage. However, our students’ bilingual profile does not mean that their competence is equally solid in both languages, or across registers and domains. Language competence in English has been mentioned as a concern throughout the HSI seminar sessions. Some students are (or feel) Spanish-dominant, others are or feel English-dominant, but most of them are dominant in one language or the other language depending on the context and purpose of communication. Some students feel very comfortable using English in education settings and Spanish at home, while others feel more comfortable using English or Spanish at different points over the course of the same conversation.

Other related phenomena that are part of our students’ language profile are code-mixing (inserting words in “the other language” while having a conversation in a given language); code-switching (switching from one language to another half way through a sentence or idea, or between ideas); using false friends (cognates that look similar but mean something else); and using the syntactic structure of “their other” language. These phenomena are common in language contact situations, as it is the everyday linguistic reality of our students. However, distinguishing between one language and the other is crucial when performing translation and interpretation.

The gaps in bilingual competence mentioned above, which are primarily context and situation dependent, are often a source of anxiety for our students. Whereas their pronunciation and fluency in both languages make them feel and sound native-like in both languages, once they are faced with interpreting and translation tasks, they find themselves unable to find the right word, phrase or construction; mixing syntactic structures; or applying the same strategies in both languages to achieve a particular effect -something that may or may not work across languages.

3 Transformation 1: implementing a textual and discourse-analytical approach

My first transformation focuses on targeting a specific need observed among our Hispanic students, namely the need to develop awareness of textual and discourse features, and competence in identifying different language registers and discourse features in context.

Language registers are language varieties that are context-dependent (interlocutor, situation, purpose) rather than user-dependent, as would be the case of dialects. In the domains and communicative situations in which interpretation takes place, specialized language varieties (jargon) are often used -and intersect with the register. In addition, as in any situated interaction, different registers are used by participants over the course of a communicative event. This is the case, for example, of discourse in a court hearing: frozen language (written-based, read out loud or memorized), formal language, casual language and intimate language are used in the same event -when procedures are followed, legal aspects discussed, descriptions made or recordings of intimate situations played, respectively. The ability to identify, use and transfer registers in two languages requires time and an in-depth understanding of how languages work. As mentioned above, our Hispanic students often have not only different levels of competence in their two languages, but also different levels of competence in different language registers and familiarity with different genres.

Together with discourse competence in different registers, students need to learn about the practices, procedures, concepts and “ways of being” of the discourses that pertain to the contexts in which interpreting takes place. What students often see as gaps in their lexical availability is often related to gaps in both context-specific knowledge and the discourse practices used in it, including concepts, principles, terminology and phraseology.

In the process of switching from one language to another that is inherent to interpretation, students experience difficulties in using a register and structures that are appropriate in the target language. Language is interpreters’ main tool. Interpretation involves both mastering at least two languages and switching from one to another, as well as having the tools to use an adequate register after the switching process. This last requirement might entail using different strategies in different languages. Interpretation students tend to adopt either a formal register by default in the target language, regardless of the register of the source text, or a very informal register. Some students tend to think that using a formal register is “better”, others use the register they are more used to using in the target language, and others focus on getting the message across without paying attention to form. Although at the initial stages transferring ideas without omitting information or changing the meaning prevails, students need to develop an awareness of the form of their interpreted renditions -and of the effects that “saying the same thing in a different way” may have upon interaction, as numerous studies of community and legal interpreting have shown (Berk-Seligson 1988, 2017; Hale 2014; Mikkelsen 2016).

3.1 What does the curriculum transformation involve?

The main aim of this “transformation” is to enhance students’ awareness and competence of different registers and discourse practices in both languages, so that they are better equipped to develop interpretation (and translation) skills. In order to do so, the transformation involves

integrating activities and tasks that will help students to identify, use and translate different language registers and discourse structures.

The need to place emphasis on scaffolding, integrating diverse resources that represent the diverse backgrounds of students, and reinforcing the link between what they learn and how they will use it in society, have been recurrent themes over the course of the HSI Faculty Seminar. I have taken these priorities into account in my efforts to transform the syllabus and the approach by adapting them to accommodate a structured discourse-analysis element.

Textual and discourse-analytical activities will be used throughout the semester in a systematic way, and will be domain-specific, i.e. students will develop discourse-analytical and register use skills applied to the interpretation domains included in SPA231 Interpretation 1, and from contexts that are familiar to them and relevant for their future career: immigration/legal, education, and medical settings.

Relevant forms, transcripts of dialogues and documents pertaining to the interpretation domains included in the course will be used. The materials selected are authentic and domain-specific:

- Written texts include existing forms, documents, texts from websites, brochures, etc. used in the different domains. In order to make students familiar with John Jay Services that can be of use to them beyond the language and interpreting learning purposes of the course, information about Single Stop, Counseling Services Center, and other Wellness and Resources services will be used as analysis materials. In addition, the immigration domain, texts used in immigration clinics and consultations, documents on DACA (e.g. available at The Legal Aid Society, CUNY School of Law's Immigrant and Non-Citizen's Rights Clinic, among others); forms used in hospitals and clinics in NYC.
- Dialogues for interpreting scenarios include authentic dialogues extracted from discourse-analysis and conversation-analysis studies in the domains included, as well as scripts of simulations used in interpreter training (which are based on authentic dialogues).

The activities will be sequenced as follows, and include:

- Guided discourse-analytical activities (in class): analysis of context, interlocutors, text structure, purpose, register(s), terminology and phraseology.
- Three individual discourse-analysis assignments (graded), one per domain. (See Discourse Analysis Assignment 1 below).
- Expansion activities (bilingual discourse competence, mainly via home assignments): activities aimed at comparing discourse features of different registers in both languages and developing bilingual awareness and competence.
- Systematic analysis of textual and discourse features of interpretation dialogues and materials used in interpretation practice.

DISCOURSE-ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT 1**TEXTO**

Título: *Legal Resources for John Jay Students*

Fuente: <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/legal-resources>

4 LEGAL RESOURCES

If you have immigration related questions, there are resources available at John Jay, CUNY, and from many non-profit organizations that provide free or low cost, high-quality and confidential immigration law services.* Below is a list of some resources that are available to assist you.

4.1.1 Resources within CUNYCUNY CITIZENSHIP NOW

CUNY Citizenship Now provides free, high quality, and confidential immigration law services for CUNY students and other New Yorkers.

4.1.2 Resources at John JayJohn Jay College Wellness Center Legal Aid

The John Jay Wellness Center provides access to a lawyer from Legal Aid Society every Wednesday from 4-7 by appointment.

Legal Aid Society

The Legal Aid Society's Immigration Unit provides free legal services. Fact Sheet on Immigration Executive Orders: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#).

Latin American and Latina/o Studies Department, Room 8.63.00 NB

The professors below can assist you in accessing the right legal support for your particular situation.

Professor Isabel Martínez | imartinez@jjay.cuny.edu

Professor José Luis Morín | jmorin@jjay.cuny.edu

4.1.3 Legal Relief

An estimated 15-18% of DACA-mented individuals qualify for another sort of legal relief or way to remain in the country legally. Non-DACA individuals including both students and their family members also have options of which they may not be aware.

Immigration Screenings at John Jay

Dr. Martinez (Dept of Latin American and Latina/o Studies) arranges immigration screenings on and off campus for students and families periodically. Please contact her at imartinez@jjay.cuny.edu if you're interested.

Long-Term Immigration Remedies Every Undocumented Young Person Should Know about (E4FC Guide)

The guide will familiarize you with the six common immigration remedies.

E4FC DREAMer Intake Service

When you're ready, you can take E4FC's free, confidential, online screening tool. You can expect the results (legal memo) of the screening in 2-4 weeks. Once you receive your legal memo, you can take it to a local community legal service provider or immigration attorney to

explore potential immigration options. Note that the wait for online screening results is longer than an in-person screening.

4.1.4 Other Legal Resources

NYU School of Law Teach-In and Know Your Rights Presentations

A deeply informative series of presentations ensuring that you know your rights in the event of a raid, detention and deportation proceedings, or police encounter. It also includes ways to prepare for the new presidential administration if you have a criminal record, have DACA, are undocumented, and more.

New York State Office of New Americans

New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo established the Office for New Americans (ONA) to assist newcomers to New York State who are eager to contribute to our economy and become part of the family of New York State.

New York State Office of New Americans Immigration Hotline; 1-800-566-7636

The New Americans hotline is a **toll-free**, multi-lingual hotline. The hotline provides live assistance in more than 200 languages. Anyone can call the hotline for information and referrals, regardless of citizenship or documented status. Calls to the hotline are confidential and anonymous.

Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services

Catholic Charities provides legal consultations, representation and assistance to documented and undocumented newcomers of all nationalities, ethnicities and religions. All matters are treated professionally and confidentially.

United We Dream

United We Dream, the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation, organizes and advocates on behalf of immigrant youth and families, regardless of immigration status.

Immigrant Defense Project

IDP's services include legal advice, impact litigation, legal training, post-conviction relief, Padilla support center, defender support, advocacy, and community defense. For free legal helpline call 212-725-6422.

New York Immigration Coalition

The New York Immigration Coalition organizes and advocates on behalf of immigrants.

4.1.5 To Report Hate Crimes

Governor Cuomo's Hate Crimes Reporting Hotline: 1-888-392-3644

New York City's Hate Crimes Task Force: 1-646-610-5267

<http://www.thenyic.org/immigration> *Please beware of fraudulent and deceptive practices by persons posing to be lawyers, such as those claiming to be "notarios." When in doubt about a person or organization's legitimacy, check with a knowledgeable and reputable source, such as one above, before you proceed.

FICHA DE ANÁLISIS

1. Antes de leer el texto, abre el enlace a la página web de la que se ha extraído y completa:

Página web fuente: institución/organización	
Describe el tema principal de la información disponible en la página web	
Lectores: ¿a quién va dirigida la información?	
Autor(es): ¿puedes averiguar quién ha escrito el texto?	
¿Cuál crees que es el objetivo principal del texto?	

2. Lee el texto y busca en él:

Dos fragmentos que hablen directamente al lector del texto para informarle de lo que puede hacer.	1.
	2.
Dos fragmentos que faciliten información sin dirigirse explícitamente al lector.	1.
	2.
Dos fragmentos en los que se intenta tranquilizar al lector.	1.
	2.
Dos fragmentos en los que se advierte al lector sobre un riesgo.	1.
	2.

3. Analiza el siguiente fragmento del texto:

An estimated 15-18% of DACA-mented individuals qualify for another sort of legal relief or way to remain in the country legally.

¿Este fragmento da consejos, da instrucciones, informa o intenta persuadir a los lectores?	
¿Por qué crees que los autores decidieron incluir esta información en el párrafo?	
¿Cómo se podría decir “ <i>An estimated</i> ” de otra forma en inglés? Simplifica la expresión.	

<p>¿Cómo le explicarías a alguien el significado de “<i>DACA-mented</i>”? No traduzcas la expresión: <u>explica</u> con tus propias palabras lo que significa.</p>	
<p>¿Cómo le explicarías a alguien el significado de “<i>qualify</i>”? No traduzcas la palabra: <u>explica</u> con tus propias palabras lo que significa.</p>	
<p>Traduce el fragmento. Para ello, debes empezar como te proponemos a continuación:</p>	<p><i>Se estima que...</i></p>
<p>4. Terminología, estructuras sintácticas y traducción:</p>	
<p>¿Qué tienen en común estos dos fragmentos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (...) <i>free or low cost, high-quality and confidential immigration law services.</i> * - (...) <i>the largest immigrant youth-led organization</i> 	
<p>¿Cómo los traducirías a español?</p> <p>Busca expresiones que “funcionen” en español, no dejes que te afecte la forma del original. Por ejemplo, que en inglés <i>youth-led</i> se pueda expresar de este modo no quiere decir que al traducirlo al español tenga que tener el mismo formato (“.....”).</p>	
<p>(...) <i>servicios</i></p>	
<p>(...) <i>la organización</i></p>	
<p>Traducción de terminología y fraseología: traduce a español los siguientes términos y unidades fraseológicas.</p> <p>Propón traducciones que mantengan tanto el significado del original como su corrección en el tipo de texto en el que aparecen, para lo cual puede que tengas que “despegarte” de la forma del original en inglés.</p>	
<p><i>non-profit organization</i></p>	
<p><i>legal support</i></p>	
<p><i>Fact Sheet</i></p>	
<p><i>legal relief</i></p>	
<p><i>immigration screening</i></p>	
<p><i>a raid</i></p>	
<p><i>detention</i></p>	

<i>deportation proceedings</i>	
<i>Hotline</i>	
<i><u>In the event of a raid...</u></i>	
<i><u>Regardless of immigration status</u></i>	
<i><u>Note that...</u></i>	
<i><u>Please beware of fraudulent or deceptive practices...</u></i>	

4 Transformation 2: Research on Interpreting for Hispanic students

The second transformation affects the research element in the course. Having a research element in the course is not something new, but its treatment has been transformed to address two aspects:

1. The first aspect is the inclusion of research outputs in both English and Spanish and relevant for our Hispanic students. As in most disciplines, English is the main language of publication in Translation and Interpreting Studies. In order for students to get more familiar with academic English and Spanish, and with themes that are relevant to both the course and their Hispanic background, students will have to read and analyze five articles selected by myself. The articles selected include three articles in Spanish and two in English, all of them related to interpretation in either the US context or in a Hispanic country, written by Hispanic and non-Hispanic authors, both male and female, and each of them tackling a different theme.
2. The second change is related to the assignments, which will require students to read five articles, take part in five discussions (written), and in a group presentation (oral):
 - a. Students will read five papers over the course of the semester.
 - b. For each paper, every student will have to contribute to a discussion on a Blackboard discussion forum. Students will be divided in groups of 3-5 people, depending on student numbers.
 - c. After the end date of each discussion, a student from each group will be selected by the instructor.
 - d. The students selected from each group will work together on crafting and give an oral presentation, which will include:
 - i. A summary of the research study.
 - ii. An analysis of the main themes, views and points emerging in the different discussion groups.

Research papers and reading order:

1. Howard, R., Andrade Ciudad, L., & de Pedro Ricoy, R. (2018). Translating rights: The Peruvian Languages Act in Quechua and Aymara (Forthcoming). *Amerindia*, 40(1), 219-245.
2. Stallaert, C., & Kleinert, C. (2017). México y Bélgica: interpretación para la justicia en países multilingües vista a través del enfoque intercivilizacional y decolonial. *TRANS. Revista de Traductología*, (21), 219-234.
3. Borrero, N. (2015). Bilingual and proud of it: College-bound Latinos/as and the role of interpreting in their success. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 38(1), 6-22.
4. Buendía, C. T., Martí, M. I. A., del Pozo Triviño, M., & Ávila, L. A. (2015). Hacia una especialización en interpretación en el ámbito de la violencia de género: investigación, formación y profesionalización. *MonTI. Monografías de traducción e interpretación*, 139-160.
5. Galaz, S. D., & Portuguese, C. L. (2016). La omisión en interpretación simultánea: ¿fallo involuntario o estrategia comunicativa? *Onomázein: Revista de lingüística, filología y traducción de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*, (33), 427-455.

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Benmamoun, E., Montrul, S., & Polinsky, M. (2013). Heritage languages and their speakers: Opportunities and challenges for linguistics. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 39(3-4), 129-181.

Berk-Seligson, S. (1988). The impact of politeness in witness testimony: The influence of the court interpreter. *Multilingua, Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, 7(4), 441-439.

Berk-Seligson, S. (2017). *The bilingual courtroom: Court interpreters in the judicial process*. University of Chicago Press.

Hale, S. B. (2004). *The discourse of court interpreting: Discourse practices of the law, the witness, and the interpreter*(Vol. 52). John Benjamins Publishing.

Mikkelsen, H. (2016). *Introduction to court interpreting*. Routledge.