

The Production of Translated Texts for Migrant Minority Communities. Some Characteristics of an Incipient Market

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ABSTRACT

The production of translated texts for migrant minority communities which are culturally and linguistically differentiated is a requested way of communication nowadays. This study is devoted to translation for migrant communities in Spain, a country which is experiencing deep changes regarding both the structure of societies and the forms of establishing relationships between people. A quick continuous increase in the flow of people from Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia is forcing government and non-governmental organisations (NGO) somehow related with migrants to develop initiatives to overcome a wide range of barriers (linguistic, socio-cultural, political, economic, and so on). The production of multilingual texts is an incipient reality. First, a brief introduction regarding the translation into minority languages and cultures will be provided; second, a tentative classification of the types of texts typically translated will be presented; and third, some characteristics of the materials translated will be analysed. Finally, we will posit some general conclusions and suggestions for further research on the nature of translation as socio-cultural practice in public services.

KEYWORDS

migration, intercultural communication, Spanish Public Service translation, empirical research, case study

1. Introduction

Our global panorama is experiencing changes regarding both the structure of societies and the way human relationships are established. These changes (greater mobility of people, better communications, multicultural societies, mingling of people with different languages and cultures in a short period of time and a limited space, etc.) provoke new challenges that claim for some new solutions. Language is often one of the main barriers and the production of materials in the minority languages might be one of the solutions to the problem of communication.

Recent publications on Public Services Interpreting and Translating (PSI&T) (Valero-Garcés & Mancho Barés 2002, Brunette *et al.* 2003, Valero Garcés 2003, 2005, Garzone & Viezzi 2002, Rudvin 2003, Russo & Mack 2005) offer a valuable contribution to the different problems and strategies developed not only in countries whose emerging multicultural societies arise from to a constant influx of migrants and refugees (e.g. Spain, Italy, Greece), but also in those countries more used to immigration which are now experiencing a higher rate of arrivals (e.g. Germany, Britain, France). Some of these strategies go from emergency solutions on a *ad hoc* basis to the provision of interpreters in public and

private sector institutions. They include the development of an accreditation system and the gradual recognition of community interpreting and translating (CI&T) as a specialised professional activity.

CI&T is also recognised as having some specific characteristics (See Mikkelsen 1996, Pöchhacker, 2002, Roberts 1997, Wadensjö 1998) such as cultural distance, asymmetrical power relations, and diverse educational backgrounds between the two interlocutors that the translator or interpreter has to deal with. This distance also imposes some specific restrictions and implicitly leads to some consequences that might imply/suggest racism, lack of equal opportunities, pressures on minority ethnic groups and so on. In this context the role of the translator and interpreter (T&I) can be highly influential.

As far as we know more research in this field has been conducted in interpreting than in translation. The main conclusions that derived from some of these studies on the complexity of the interaction (Berk-Seligson 1990; Metzger 1999; Roy 2000; Angelelli 2004) point out to two main positions:

a) the traditional view of interpreters who have no participatory role in the interaction (i.e. who is portrayed as a conduit or as a ghost).

b) the more recent view of interpreters as essential partners, co-constructors to the interaction, as a co-participant to the interpreted communicative event (Berk-Seligson 1990; Metzger 1999; Roy 2000; Angelelli 2004).

In the case of translation, we could not find studies of this kind even though within the field of Translation Studies there is certainly an increasing interest in the specific type of activity of translating for migrant communities, which has begun to receive academic attention only in the last twenty years. This is, without any doubt, an arena within Translation Studies where translators act as social agents, intercultural mediators, and ideological links. Our hypothesis is that these two tendencies mentioned about for interpreting are also visible in the case of translation. That is:

a) the consideration of the translator as a professional responsible for transferring a text from one language to another following the traditional principles of fidelity and adequacy;

b) the consideration of the translator as an intercultural mediator bridging the gap between two cultures and languages, whose role is to favour understanding between the different groups involved, and their diverse cultural and ideological values. This second tendency makes us think, first, about the translator's degree of intervention and, secondly, about the extent to which this intervention/mediation is consciously directed or unconsciously filtered.

This paper will explore the production of translated texts in the context of public services for migrant minority communities before analysing tendencies present in the TTs. Before focusing on the texts and their translations it is interesting to mention some of the diverse factors that may affect the production of TTs, especially when intended for minority groups who are linguistically, culturally and often socially differentiated. Our experience shows that some of the most influential factors are the nature of the source text (ST), the role of the social agent who initiates the translation process, the role of the translator as intercultural and interlinguistic mediator, the lack of resources and tools for translating the terminology involved, and the type of texts that are commonly translated.

The target text production is dependent on many factors: the ST because may be a culturally-marked text; the translator may not be sufficiently prepared or may decide to intervene through choices/strategies which may have a specific effect in a particular socio-cultural situation, likely to have cultural and ideological implications. As Hatim and Mason (1997: 146) point out, the translator acts in a social context and is part of that context. And they conclude: "(...) it is in this sense that translating is, in itself, an ideological activity". The social agent who initiates the translation process may also have a strong influence on the translator's decisions as we will explain in the following pages, taking as a sample the situation in Spain.

Somehow, insufficient attention to all these factors, combined with the lack of resources and tools for translating the relevant terminology, may lead to insufficient quality in view of the needs of the migrant users. Consequently, the translation of documents used in public services may not fulfill the intended purpose for the intended users regarding socio-communicative purposes. In what follows we will try to check this hypothesis taking the situation in Spain as a case study.

2. Translating for migrant communities: what and how

Before focusing on the texts and their translation, we will explore who initiates the translation process, which types of texts are translated, and the nature of the translation.

There are typically two initiators or agents interested in the production of translated documents:

- 1) government bodies responsible for healthcare, legal, educational or administrative matters,
- 2) NGOs, trade unions or associations of migrant communities, or private institutions or people in contact with migrants (e.g. banks, enterprises, farmers).

The types of texts that are typically translated are mainly service guides, information brochures and official and semi-official documents, containing:

- a) information on social or institutional services, describing their functions, access, etc;
- b) healthcare or administrative texts on a wide range of subjects, some of them essentially informative, such as general information on vaccination, pregnancy or how to regularise one's situation in the country;
- c) official and semi-official documents (school reports, business transactions, rent agreements, contracts of sale and purchase, etc.).

As for the nature of the translation, it can be also diverse:

- 1) a translation from a ST in Spanish;
- 2) an adaptation of a ST for a specific community;
- 3) the publication of an original document in the language of a migrant community.

2.1. The agents of translation for migrant communities

The agents of the translation are mostly bilingual, have been living in Spain for a certain period of time, but have not received specific training on T&I. They nevertheless have wide experience in this field, as previous studies reveal (Valero Garcés 2003, 2004). Most of them work or have worked as volunteers in NGOs or humanitarian organisations, and some have also worked occasionally for the government (50%). They also usually help their family members, friends or people from the same ethnic group as volunteers, this activity being the main source of their experience. Their educational background is quite diverse, as they range from being illiterate to holding university degrees. When asked about the main difficulties they find in their work as translators and interpreters, a high percentage of people mention problems in the case of language for specific purposes (legal, administrative, educational, medical...). Most volunteers working as interpreters have less experience in translation, and even mentioned that they do not like translating but that they do it when they are requested.

They also feel that their task goes far beyond literal translation and that they have to explain technical words, very specific expressions or cultural concepts. In the case of a written text, they have to look for expressions or the most appropriate synonyms for the intended readership. Some examples will be given later.

2.2. Types and characteristics of translated texts

An attempt at a general classification regarding the type of texts that we may find in Spain leads us to establish the following groups:

- Official documents
- Service guides
- Information brochures

A succinct overview of the characteristics of these types of texts will serve as an introduction to the analysis of the production of multilingual materials for minority communities.

2.2.1. Official documents

These are documents published by government bodies whose purpose is generally to provide information to citizens or immigrants on laws or topics which they need to be familiar with in order to regularise their situation in the country or to integrate into the host society. In this sense, we may mention the example of *Guía para el proceso de regularización de los extranjeros* ('Guide for the process of regularisation of foreigners'), published in 2000, and *Proceso de normalización de trabajadores extranjeros* ('Foreign workers normalisation process') published in 2005 by the *Administración General del Estado* ('Government Administration') in several languages.

Another type of official document which is increasingly common in diverse languages is the application form needed to ask for different services, such as, for instance, applications for the residence and work permit, which require personal data, accommodation data and information related to the legal situation of the applicant in Spain. The languages in which we may find these texts are usually English, French, Arabic, Romanian, Chinese and Russian. In some cases, such as for example in order to sit the driving test, people can ask to have the information and sit the test in any language of the European Community.

Other examples include:

- *Formulario a cumplimentar por los viajeros procedentes de Marruecos, Argelia, Túnez, Ceuta y Melilla, de conformidad con el Artículo 5 de la Orden de 11 de marzo de 1999 por la que se adoptan medidas cautelares en relación a la fiebre aftosa*, ('Form to be filled in by those entering from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Ceuta and Melilla, pursuant to Article 5 of the Order of 11 March 1999 adopting precautionary measures on foot and mouth disease')– form in Spanish, English and French.
- *Formulario de Denuncia (complaint form)*, published by the *Ministerio del Interior, Dirección General de la Policía* ('Interior Ministry, Directorate-General for Police'), in bilingual versions (Spanish + one of: German, French, English, Russian, Polish, Chinese, Arabic, Romanian, Bulgarian).

As for the characteristics of the TTs regarding the role of the translator and the two tendencies previously mentioned before, that is, a) the translator's responsibility for transferring a text from one language to another following the traditional principles of fidelity and adequacy; or b)

the role of the translator as an intercultural mediator bridging the gap between two cultures and languages, favouring understanding between the different groups involved and their diverse cultural and ideological values, we must say that the general tendency observed in the translation of official documents is literal translation, probably influenced by the very nature of STs where cultural information is not usually included. Personal data, lists of documents to be marked with a cross, lists of complaints to tick, names of institutions which –even though they may pose a problem for the translator when there is not a corresponding institution in other country– are usually literally translated. For example *Ministerio del Interior* is generally translated in official documents as 'Ministry of Interior,' instead of 'Home Office.'

2.2.2. Service guides.

These documents are generally published by city councils, NGOs and regional governments. Their main goal is to facilitate knowledge and the use of resources, though sometimes they are also employed as a way of making these institutions known, obtaining a certain prestige or justifying a budget, frequently limited, which conditions the final product. In broad terms, guides are targeted at the migrant population, but usually they are also employed by the providers of services. Guides are, indeed, an informative instrument which is also a means which helps to integrate migrants in the receiving society, due to both their contents in several languages and their accessible style.

Guía Informativa para Inmigrantes de Alcalá de Henares ('Informative Guide for Immigrants in Alcalá de Henares') is a good example. This guide was first published in 1997, the European Year Against Racism, by the Department of Healthcare and Social Welfare of the Alcalá city council, and several NGOs, such as Cáritas or the Polish Association "White Eagle" (very well known in Alcalá), helped in this project. The content is presented in four languages: Spanish, Romanian, Polish and Arabic, thus catering for the majority of the present non-Spanish-speaking migrant population. The information is organised by theme into nine chapters: housing; education and training; employment and social security; healthcare; social services; legal issues and documentation; women's issues and associations; and useful telephone numbers. In 2002 an updated guide was published, and in 2006 the publication of a new guide has been announced. Although the contents are similar, however, some changes have taken place in the production of the TTs.

According to one of the representatives of the Department responsible for the publication, the first guide was translated by volunteers who did not have any –or very little– experience in this kind of activity: acquaintances from an NGO or neighbours of other immigrants; in the case of the second guide they tried to contact the same people. Some of them were the same

but had more experience as intermediaries, and others were new; in both cases people who have been working as intermediaries for them or for some other public services in the area chosen, even though they did not have any specific training as translators not even as interpreters.

In the case of the third guide announced for a near future, they are still in the process of revising the contents of the ST. As for the translations, they will be done by the members of the translation network at the University of Alcalá. This network is made up of professional translators, teachers, former students and students of FITISPOS (the group in charge of the research and training in interpreting and translating in public services. See <http://www2.uah.es/traduccion>).

Further examples include the *Guía de Salud para Inmigrantes y Refugiados (Health Guide for Immigrants and Refugees)* published in 1999 by IMSERSO (Instituto de Migraciones y Servicios Sociales –Institute for Migration and Social Services) in Spanish, English, French, Arabic and Chinese, containing information on subjects related to healthy eating, body care and personal hygiene, mothers' and children's health, mental health and advice on when to see a doctor. These sections include specific information on infectious diseases, 'bad habits', birth control, etc, accompanied by illustrations featuring people from different ethnic groups and cultures. These were repeated in the different language sections, irrespective of whether, for example, the text was in Arabic but the pictures featured Chinese people. The booklets were produced in large format on quality paper, and each included a language pair (e.g. French-Arabic or English-Spanish). The texts were written in a familiar style in the second person; the translations were rather literal, and at times reduced the texts effectiveness by not taking into account the cultural sensitivities of the target community. This was an expensive operation involving a considerable budget, certainly higher than for other NGO-produced publications.

Other booklets produced by this service and/or by OFRIM (*Oficina Regional para la Inmigración de la Comunidad de Madrid* –'Madrid Regional Immigration Office'), a body depending on the Madrid autonomous region, include a five-language brochure on the census setting out immigrants' rights and duties, a consumers' guide, a guide to the euro, and a guide about the consumers' rights, all with similar characteristics.

In this particular case, Darina, (personal communication, October 2005), a student of the online course on Interlinguistic Communication and Translating/Interpreting in Public Services at the University of Alcalá and a reviewer of the translation into Russian, comments:

The author of the translation has done it well. Everybody can understand the text. No information is added or deleted. Perhaps some words are compressed, such as for instance 'product or apparatus' in Russian, which is translated as 'something'; or when in Russian says '...bad working of services' the translation says 'working of services', omitting 'bad', on the basis that you don't complain for good working [sic]. The only thing I consider as not adjusted to the ST is the translation of 'brickwork', which in Russian says 'building reparation'. Perhaps the translator should have used 'constructions' –*stroitelstvo* (in Russian), because I think that the ST refers to constructions in general, not to building reparation in particular.

Another type of document published in 2005 is the *Guía Básica Multilingüe de Atención al Paciente* ('Basic Multilingual Guide for Patient Services' Spanish-Arabic, Spanish-Bulgarian, Spanish-French, Spanish-English, Spanish-Romanian, Spanish–Russian), a project that was funded by the government of *Comunidad de Castilla-La Mancha*. This is an addition to the corpus of documents translated by the working group of FITISPOS at the Universidad of Alcalá). The aim of the Basic Multilingual Guide is to help health professionals, patients and those accompanying patients find the right terms or basic concepts during a consultation or at any other moment: it is a small-format guide which can be carried around by the health professional concerned. It includes a basic parallel-text bilingual questionnaire allowing patients to provide data on their medical history and symptoms. Its purpose is to move beyond the situation of non-communication that typically occurs when the patient is from a minority language community. It is not, however, intended to replace the ever more essential figure of the interpreter, but to facilitate the initial contact.

Three more guides of this type have recently been introduced and produced by the FITISPOS group in eight different languages (Spanish, Arabic, Bulgarian, French, English, Polish, Romanian, and Russian). These are: *Guía Multilingüe de Atención a Mujeres Embarazadas* ('Multilingual Guide for Pregnant Women'); *Guía Multilingüe de Atención a Menores (Pediatria)* ('Multilingual Guide for Paediatrics'); and *Guía Multilingüe de Atención al Inmigrante en los Servicios Sociales* ('Multilingual Guide for Immigrants and Social Welfare issues'). These publications are part of a bigger project which include three more multilingual guides, two of them dealing with risks at work (housekeeping and construction) and the other one containing commonly used expressions (questions, answers, specific vocabulary related to types of documents used, etc.) in the interviews between the authorities and refugees or asylum seekers.

The whole project is an attempt to give a very basic answer to communication problems on those areas or aspects of life identified through research conducted by the FITISPOS group (See Morena and Valero Garcés 2005, Valero Garcés 2006): health care for children and pregnant women, immigrants work conditions and illegal immigrants and asylum seekers´ legal conditions. The intention is not to replace the interpreter, not always available and not always trained, but to offer a first remedy when needed and to call the attention of the authorities to

the fact that more resources must be provided. It must be pointed out that some support from official institutions such as the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare has been given, although more is needed.

As for the tendency observed in the rendering of the information, it is worth mentioning that there are instances when the translator of a specific language has chosen an approximate equivalent in the TT rather than the literal translation, considering that the intended reader of the TTs will not be able to understand its meaning. This is the case with 'cataracts' and 'testing the level of sugar in one's blood (*glucemia*)' in Bulgarian. Before making any comments to the translation, we should add that immigrants from Bulgaria in Spain usually have a middle-low educational level, due to their poor social and economic original background. The translator justified the strategy she chose.

In the case of the first example, that is *cataratas* in the section of medical history (page 53), the translator (Ivaila, personal communication, December 10, 2005) prefers to use both terms, the scientific equivalence *катаракта*, and in brackets the most popular name, which is *перде на очите*, that in Spanish would mean a 'veil' or 'blanket on the eyes'. Taking into account the broad range of possible patients and the fact that it is not compulsory that they have knowledge on medicine issues, the clarification of the term with its common term seems to be necessary.

The second example shows another case in which the translator has substituted the literal translation by another which is better known for the general audience: 'glycemia' (page 58). When it says "We do a glycemia (sugar test)", the equivalence is *глицемичен профил / изследване (glycemia profile/test)*, which is very technical in Bulgarian, mostly used by specialists. In order to facilitate the patients' understanding, because he/she may belong to diverse socio-cultural groups, age, gender, educational, geographical and thus dialectal origin, instead of translating glycemia the translator prefers to use the colloquial term, that is, *анализ на кръвната захар*, that in the ST is placed in brackets as 'sugar test'.

Other similar examples can be found in the following documents:

- *Guía Informativa para Inmigrantes Residentes en San Fernando de Henares. VIDA SANA VIDA BUENA*. ('Information Guide for Immigrants Resident in San Fernando de Henares. LIVE HEALTHILY, LIVE WELL'), San Fernando de Henares municipal council, Health and Environment Department –published in Spanish and Romanian, 2004.

- *Guía de recursos (Guide of resources)*, Centre for Social Care to Immigrant People (Centro de Atención Social a Inmigrantes, CASI); Regional Plan for Immigration at Madrid Community 2001-2003. OFRIM – in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, English and French.

- *Basic Guide on Legal Resources for Women who are Victims of Domestic Violence*, 2003 Madrid Region, Ministry of Employment, Directorate-General for Women's Affairs) in French, English, Russian and Arabic.

The health department of the *Comunidad Valenciana* (the regional government for the Valencia Community) has also published a certain amount of material. A main example is the *Guía de Salud para inmigrantes magrebíes* ('Health Guide for Maghrebi Immigrants', 2000), in Spanish and Arabic.

This is an adaptation of an earlier publication, *Guía de salud para inmigrantes magrebíes de la Comunidad Autónoma de Murcia* ('Murcia Region Health Guide for Maghrebi Immigrants').³ This guide was sharply criticised when it appeared, on the grounds of the lack of respect shown in the content (e.g. it refers to how to wash the foreskin –p. 10, and recommended levels of sausage consumption –p. 24). Also, the text was written in classical Arabic, a form which is not accessible to all Arabic speakers, since, as is well known, spoken Arabic (the dialectal variants corresponding to each Arabic-speaking country or region) is one thing and written (classical) Arabic is quite another. Strong protests were registered by several NGOs with the (then existing) *Servicio de Atención al Inmigrante* ('Service for Attention to Immigrants') of the *Generalitat Valenciana* ('Valencia regional government'), and the guide was withdrawn.

The relevant point is to notice that the problematic cultural references were in fact present in the ST, and then literally rendered without further reflection or consideration into the TT.

2. 2. 3. Information brochures

These documents are generally published by official bodies such as the *Instituto de Migraciones y Servicios Sociales (IMERSO* – 'Institute for Migration and Social Services'), a service of the national Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs, or by the regions in cooperation with *INSALUD (Instituto Nacional de la Salud* – 'National Institute of Health') or with NGOs, or trade unions and even with private companies (telecommunications, banks) or people connected with migrant population. These documents, like the guides, vary in their origins, objectives and budgets, 'translator's' expertise (many are simply bilingual without any specific training) and this diversity is liable to be reflected in the end-product. They concern a wide range of subjects and they are being produced ever more frequently, although they still remain insufficient.

Indeed, as an example we can mention the information leaflet (2004-05) published in Valencian, Spanish, Arabic, French, English, Russian, Romanian, Chinese and German by the Valencia regional Ministry of Culture, Education and Sport (*Conselleria de Cultura, Educación y Deporte*). This leaflet includes data on commonly used educational terms (a type of glossary), addresses and telephone numbers for the *Oficina de Acogida al Alumnado Inmigrante* (Reception Office for Immigrant Pupils), guidelines on the educational system in the region, the relevant courses for different ages, the organisational structure of the educational institutions, child enrolment in a school, documentation requirements, and dates of the academic year and class timetables.

The Social Action Department (*Concejalía de Acción Social*) of the Alicante city council, in cooperation with the EQUAL project of the European Social Fund and in the framework of publicity campaigns concerning access to social entitlements, has produced multilingual leaflets in Spanish, French, Russian and Arabic versions, on regularisation, education, health, co-development, primary social services, housing, culture, migrant women, employment and associations. These leaflets provide basic information on the subject concerned, and, above all, give contact addresses and telephone numbers for NGOs and institutions for the area in question.

More documents are gradually being translated. Thus, in November 2005 the National Institute of Statistics published a leaflet in Spanish, Arabic and English as a reminder to immigrants to register again in their local councils following the local Government Act to get a residence permit.

Other information brochures are published by NGOs, trade unions or immigrants' associations. These may take the form of brief guides to those organisations services, e.g. the booklet produced in Spanish, Arabic and Chinese by the *Centro de Información para Trabajadores Extranjeros* (CITE – 'Information Centre for Foreign Workers') belonging to the *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO) trade union, or that published in French on TB prevention by the Madrid city council. These brochures are generally produced in response to concrete needs, in specific conjunctures and with varying budgets. In spite of their effectiveness, they are rarely reprinted, which make them quite ephemeral difficult to find.

2.3. As a way to conclude

All in all, regarding the content and quality of all these corpus of texts, we may once again evoke (at least up to a point) that the two tendencies observed in a previous study (Valero Garcés, 2002) and in the previous sections of this paper still seem to be true although a more detailed study would be necessary in order to delineate some substantial concluding points. Briefly, these tendencies are:

1) The material produced by institutions tends to take the form of texts that reflect a higher budget and offer a translation that is rather literal which means that the culture implicit in the ST (content choice, register, ways of expressing, etc.) is rendered literally by the translator without further reflection or translation strategy. As a consequence, TTs often lack sensitivity with respect to the target culture. This includes a) reproducing drawings or graphics from the original text without taking into account those images message; b) using expressions or mentioning subjects which are taboo in other cultures; c) failing to take account of the target public (which may not be literate); d) including cultural references that clearly reveal lack of awareness of the target culture.

2) The texts produced by NGOs or associations of particular ethnic groups/immigrant communities are more likely to be adapted to the socio-cultural realities of the recipients. In other words, the translator is translating the culture of the ST and revealing his/her own culture of translation and a functional rendering that above all needs to take into account the target context. Also, and paradoxically, these low-budget documents tend to be more effective, even though they tend to have a limited distribution, with low print-runs, and to be produced using lower-quality materials. As an example of this type of (sometimes very ephemeral) material, we may mention the posters and other information put up on the walls of underground stations or telephone booths used by immigrant communities. In this sense, Sonia Álvarez (personal communication, February 2005), a student of the online course on Interlinguistic Communication and Translating/Interpreting in Public Services at the University of Alcalá, explains, as part of a class exercise:

As regards texts produced by NGOs, I've seen some in town, and especially in my quarter. I live in Madrid in the Lavapiés quarter, which has one of the highest immigrant concentrations in the Madrid region.⁴ The ONGs put up posters and seem to be communicating very directly with the immigrants: the posters may not be good quality, but they're highly visible and, above all, accessible. I've seen a lot of posters, particularly, put up in phone-booths which are much used by the migrant communities.

Furthermore, regarding the tendencies we are highlighting, two NGO members of different origins (one Moroccan and the other one Russian), free translators, who often translate and interpret as volunteers, and students of the online course on Interlinguistic Communication and Translating/Interpreting in Public Services at the University of Alcalá (October 2005) declare that:

- Imad:

Indeed the texts translated into minority languages are less sensible to the specific culture. For example, they do not take into account the differences that exist between standard Arabic, which is official for Moroccans, and the **amazight**

(bereber) dialect of **RIF**, or the **`DARIDDYYA'** language spoken by most of the Moroccan people.

Institutions do not make these differences and the work they produce is 100% in standard Arabic, because the other dialects do not have written representation. Therefore, all these texts are not going to be understood by the population they are targeted at.

Most times, organisations tend to inform orally in their headquarters, arranging meetings also in small towns, where there is often a bar where people tend to go to have a drink or a coffee and be helped, listened to, oriented in aspects they need. This free work is usually more effective in order to communicate with an illiterate audience, or speakers of languages and dialects that don't have written representation. Also, regarding texts, those produced by organizations usually are more respectful to cultural aspects, and more adapted to the socio-cultural reality.

- Darina:

In order to translate, as it happened in Australia, the Administration had to produce a message understandable for a large group of people with diverse viewpoints, people from different realities. It is necessary to take into account the language of the target audience and also its relation with the extralinguistic world, so that a text may be understood.

Regarding translations for minority groups, it will be more difficult for the Government to know these groups, whereas the aim of minority translators is to produce a text understandable into a language and a culture they really know. They will be able to distinguish between diverse sense nuances, choose a word with appropriate connotations, etc.

Majorities do not always know minorities.

3. Conclusions and further considerations

Obviously and like any other corpus-based analysis, this study remains open to any complementary results that might emerge from another corpus. We are of course aware of this. However, we believe this is a first step towards further work.

The situation of translation and interpretation in the public services in Spain may be extrapolated to other countries which have received, in large numbers and over a short time period, people from communities whose languages and cultures differ from the host culture.

Our societies are increasingly aware of the emerging multicultural social and cultural reality, and are therefore making their first gradual steps in the study of a hitherto neglected area, namely interlinguistic communication.

In the case of written communication or the production of multilingual material, documents are beginning to appear translated into various languages. These texts have a specific and very relevant communicative

function, but as we have tried to show in this paper through a small sample, they are insufficient and sometimes problematic. Our research evidences that, basically, when the ST contains cultural references, the tendency is to render them literary without further reflection or consideration into the TTs. Literal translation is the dominant strategy in official documents, while in documents produced by NGOs, or ethnic communities, more cultural sensitivity is shown. All in all, the case study leads us to conclude that the ideology of translation put forward by the texts produced by official services do not take into serious consideration the translation of the culture and ideology present in the texts, and tend to produce generalising and simplifying documents that most times are insufficient and poor in communicative terms. On the contrary, the texts produced by NGOs and similar organisations, more concerned with the socio-cultural contexts of the target audiences, display an ideology of translation which is aware of the challenges of the translation of culture, trying to face it with respect and communicative purposes.

There is an increasingly visible interest in this type of translation and interpretation, considered as an additional mechanism or means for facilitating communication between the majority and those with a limited knowledge of the mainstream language or the language used in the public services. However, even in those countries where the professionalisation of these activities has been under way for years, numerous obstacles remain –especially, in our view, barriers of an economic, social and educational nature. The translator is an essential element –highly influential– in the communication chain. The strategies he/she uses in producing a TT may determine the nature of the text and their effect. To ensure quality in TT and effective communication requires a specific education and professional recognition. What is needed, then, is a new awareness on the part of society and institutions. This is where we are at the moment.

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Dr. Dora Sales (dsales@trad.uji.es) is Lecturer in the Department of Translation and Communication at the University Jaume I of Castellón (Spain). Her research interests and publications are in translation studies, information literacy and intercultural communication and mediation. She graduated in English Philology and holds a PhD in Translation Studies, with a dissertation on transcultural literatures (*Puentes sobre el mundo: Cultura, traducción y forma literaria en las narrativas de transculturación de José María Arguedas y Vikram Chandra*. New York/Bern/Frankfurt: Peter Lang, published in 2004). She is a practising literary translator specialised in Indian contemporary fiction.

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NOTES

¹ The research carried out by Carmen Valero Garcés for the writing of this paper is part of the following projects: 1) "Análisis de la problemática comunicativa interlingüística y propuestas de formación en el Hospital Ramón y Cajal de Madrid" (2004- 2005) (UAH OI 2004/010), a study of the quality of communication between healthcare staff and foreign users at one of the biggest hospitals in Madrid city, as well as the development of training proposals, financed by the Universidad de Alcalá (Madrid region), Spain; 2) "La mediación intercultural en la atención sanitaria a la población inmigrante. Análisis de la problemática comunicativa interlingüística y propuestas de formación" (2004-2007) (HUM2004-03774-C02-02-FILO), a study of the quality of communication between healthcare staff and foreign users, and the development of training proposals, financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education.

² The research carried out by Dora Sales for the writing of this paper is part of the following projects: 1) "La mediación intercultural en la atención sanitaria a la población inmigrante. Análisis de la problemática comunicativa y propuestas de formación" (04/07) (HUM2004-03774-C02-01-FILO), a study of intercultural communication problems between healthcare staff and foreign users, and the development of training proposals, financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education, 2) "*Repertorio informatizado crítico-bibliográfico sobre comunicación y mediación intercultural*" (04/05) (GV04A-717), financed by the Generalitat Valenciana, and 3) "*Creación de una base de datos bibliográfica para la mediación intercultural: Documentación sobre inmigración y traducción e interpretación*" (04/06) (P1 1A2004-10), financed by the Universidad Jaume I (Castellón, Spain); projects 2 and 3 deal with the creation of an on-line bibliographical database on intercultural mediation and translation/interpretation in public services.

³ The Russian version of this guide was never published: it was withdrawn prior to publication in the wake of the problems generated by the version for Maghrebi people (information supplied by the former *Servicio de Atención al Inmigrante de la Generalitat Valenciana*; 'Service for Attention to Immigrants of the Valencia Region').

⁴ Lavapiés is, indeed, the most multicultural quarter in Madrid, and perhaps in Spain.