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Community interpreting: breaking with the 'norm' through normalisation

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the concept of norm, that has been widely applied in Translation Studies, has been extended to the field of Community Interpreting. From this approach, community interpreting is explained in relation to the socio-historical contexts in which it takes place and the normative framework that shapes it. We also explore how the current situation of de-regularisation affecting this activity in many countries hinders the development of a specific norm framework for community interpreting and as such its consolidation as an independent discipline. Not only that, it also affects the very nature of the activity as interpreter's performance and product is defined by norms and values held by other agents involved in interpreter-mediated encounters. In these cases universities can play a very important role as a norm-setting authority by providing research, training and informative activities.

KEYWORDS

Community interpreting, translation norms, interpreting norms, professionalisation.

Over the last 15 years, there have been reports of advances in the field of community interpreting from academics and professionals alike. With the increase in specialised conferences, research activities, publications and training courses, Community Interpreting has developed as a branch of Interpreting Studies in its own right. Additionally, the global movement of populations and the resulting increase in the number of multicultural societies has set in motion a process of community interpreter professionalisation that is being reflected in the emergence of educational programmes, interpreters' associations and accreditation systems. However, there is still a long way to go before it is possible to agree entirely with the statement by Harris that "the right to communicate with the powers that be in one's own language has become a right not a concession," (Harris 2000: 1) and be able to add to this statement that this right is enshrined with quality control guarantees. The reality is that there are still many issues to be investigated, many interpreters to be trained, and many sectors of society to educate about the complex nature of community interpreting, and above all, the importance of (and the risks of no-) professionalisation. The provision of quality controlled interpreting still continues to be an issue that poses problems that require satisfactory solutions in many countries, most noticeably in areas where immigration and the influx of foreigners is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Having reflected on this, Ozolins develops a continuum to represent how countries respond to interpreting needs and outlines responses that range "from those that deny existence of the issue (an ever diminishing number), through countries that rely on *ad hoc* services, to generic language services, to fully comprehensive responses of training, service provision and accreditation." (2000: 22)

In this paper, our focus is on the situation of community interpreting among the second group of countries, those in which community interpreting professionalism has not yet been recognised and validated by any governing body. According to Ozolins, a characteristic of these countries is that “There is no concept of training, little thought of accreditation or registration, but response to an immediate need is given by using available bilinguals,” (2000: 23) even in those areas, such as the courts, in which linguistic services may be guaranteed by law. In other words, these countries lack a set of specific and generally accepted interpreting norms that can be used to regulate the community interpreter process and their product. Put bluntly, non-professionalised interpreting is ‘the norm’. If a great many of de facto community interpreting problems arise from the ‘normalisation’ of a lack of norms, then it would probably be wise to first look at the concept of norms widely applied in Translation Studies. By doing so, we aim to explain the nature of community interpreting and its relationship to the social context in which is embedded and the different normative levels that determine it. We will also consider the importance of establishing a set of norms for community interpreting, process and product norms, in order to guarantee professional independency and quality performance. Universities can play a very important part in this processes as a norm-setting authority, providing education and by raising awareness of the creation and adherence to community interpreting norms.

The concept of norm in Translation Studies

The concept of norms was initially conceived in the social sciences, not within the field of Translation Studies. According to the social sciences, norms define appropriate reciprocal behaviour based on consensus and, as a consequence of this, the types of actions they regulate give shape to the institutional framework within a society. Therefore, within the social sciences norms are not seen as a limiting factor, but rather norms play an important role in social organisation. This concept of norms is applied across different disciplines, a fact which demonstrates its interdisciplinary relevance and applicability for understanding a wide range of human behaviours.

This notion of norm has been one of the central concepts in Translation Studies. The evolution of Translation Studies has shown that translation (understood in the widest sense of the word) is influenced and constrained by different factors much more complex than the linguistic differences existing between the two languages involved. Any translation activity is a human activity that takes place in a social, cultural and historical situation, and—just as with any other social behaviour—is regulated by norms (Schäffner 1999: 7). Consequently, it is necessary to recognise and accept that any universal and objective criteria that are relied upon to validate and assess products and processes involved within the discipline

are therefore embedded in normative frameworks that have been shaped historically and socially.

Despite their directive character, norms are not perceived as formal regulations that are vertically imposed. On the contrary, norms are normally acquired through repetitive behaviour, not through the imposition of laws and their enforcement, as such norms depend on deductive activity to take place when experiencing repetitive behaviour patterns. Regularity implies that a specific behaviour is preferred over another one in a specific situation of a given type by the majority, if not all, members of a community (Toury 1978: 84). Among a variety of options, "a particular course of action is more or less strongly preferred because the community has agreed to accept it as 'proper,' 'correct' or 'appropriate.'" (Hermans 1996: 31) This preference defines what is considered correct and as such, it can then serve as evaluative criteria. Norms mediate between the individual and the collective, between the individual's intentions, choices and actions and collectively held beliefs, values and preferences. Because of this, norms play a very important role in the interaction between groups of people (Hermans 1996: 26-27). The normative *power* of norms should not be understood from a Manichaean perspective but in Foucaultian terms because they not only have a repressive force but also a creative one:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault 1984: 61)

Toury was the first to introduce the concept of norms to Translation Studies (1978) as a tool to define the existence of the translation concept in specific historical contexts and describe equivalence relationships. Norms are, "the intermediating factor between the system of potential equivalence relationships and the actual performance, i.e., the reason for the functioning of certain relationships as translation equivalence." (1981: 24) They may also have an explanatory and predictive value that is closely related to the descriptive function of translation norms by providing a source of explanation for the choices and decisions that translators make. Other authors such as Chesterman (1993) and Komissarov (1993) have added an evaluative function to the descriptive and explanatory values of norms conceived by Toury. They argue that description allows us to discern the notion of correctness, but once we know the correctness criterion that determines textual and traductological behaviour in a specific context, it can then be evaluated by looking at its degree of adherence to that criterion. And finally, translation norms also play a guiding and problem-solving role. At every level, the translator is engaged in a decision-making process in which s/he has to choose one option from among a set of alternatives in the knowledge that every

decision will affect all subsequent decisions. Norms serve to delimit the scope of acceptable deviance within a process or a product and consequently they would guide the translator's performance if s/he wanted to produce a text accepted not just as a translation, but a correct translation in the receiving system. Nevertheless, there may be more ways than one to produce a correct translation:

What one section or community or historical period calls correct may be quite different from what others, or some of us today, may call correct: Correctness in translation is relative—linguistically, socially, politically, ideologically. (Hermans 1999a: 85)

Norms affect the whole process of translation from the selection of the text to be translated to the very choice of words by the translator and they "can be expected to operate not only in translation of all kinds, but also at every stage in the translating event, and hence to be reflected on every level of its product." (Toury 1995: 58)

Hermans talks about at least three normative levels: firstly, and at the highest level, sit general cultural and ideological norms which are applied throughout the larger part of a community; secondly, translation norms arising from general concepts of translatability which guide translator's work; and thirdly, the textual and other appropriateness norms which prevail in the particular client system for which individual translation caters (1999b: 59). Apart from those translation norms that specifically determine the process and product of interlinguistic transfer, there are then other types of norms and constraints belonging to other spheres with a wider scope of applicability that need to be taken into account in order to understand translations as socio-cultural products embedded in specific historical circumstances. These are questions of ideological, cultural, political and economic policy and involve those factors that characterise the socio-cultural context that frames the translation process.

Community interpreting as a norm regulated activity

Community Interpreting is perhaps one of the communication processes where the complexity and multi-functionality of norms that operate at different levels and that influence aspects of total—not just translational—social behaviour can be most clearly perceived. Various authors have paid attention to the idea of translational norm in Interpreting Studies (Shlesinger 1989, Harris 1990), although mainly applied to the study of conference interpreting. Despite the methodological difficulties pointed out by Shlesinger (1989: 112-113) it is generally agreed that norms play a part in the interpreting process and product, and its linkage with situationality and communicative context.

We find ourselves far then, at least in the academic world, from conceiving of community interpreting as a process that is exclusively

linguistic in nature. It is seen as a complex institution-driven intercultural communication process (Ozolins 2000) where the social dimension and the relation that it establishes with institutions and power is a determining factor:

Interpreted communicative event is only a piece of a larger whole, does not happen in a social vacuum but it occurs within one institution that is permeable to the mandates of society, various layers of institutional and societal influences surround the ICE adding to its complexity. These norms and societal blueprints get reconstructed and funnelled to permeate the interactions that occur within the boundaries of institutions adding to the complexity of the interaction. (Angelelli 2008: 149)

Consequently, trying to know and analyse the different levels of norms that influence and determine community interpreting in any given circumstance will enable us to describe and explain its position in a specific historical context.

It is obvious then that community interpreting takes place under the influence and restrictions of different mechanisms of control that are linked to specific institutions which impose economic, political and social requirements. Their specific demands and value systems determine the existence of interpreting practices among other issues. What defines what is socially, politically, culturally and ideologically feasible, acceptable and desirable in a specific society and historical period are general cultural and ideological norms, questions of social, cultural, economic, and political policy (Hermans 1999a: 59). As a result, questions emerge about a government's degree of ideological commitment to designing immigration policies¹; the social and institutional awareness of foreign populations' linguistic difficulties; the provision of different types of linguistic measures such as community language learning programmes, the editing of bilingual material, interpreting and translation services²; society's opinion about the provision of interpreters, whether it is positively viewed or not³; and so forth. All these factors, despite being external to the actual practice of interpreting, define and shape community interpreting activity and the criteria used by professionals and clients to assess it.

Following Hermans's normative levels, translational norms come into play at a lower normative level than those of the general norms just discussed and consequently have a narrower scope of applicability. Interpreting norms specifically govern existing interpreting policy, interpreters' professional behaviour and the resulting product. This would correspond with Toury's preliminary and operational translation norms⁴. Interpreting policy involves various considerations, such as the type or mode of interpreting used—in-person interpreters vs. telephone interpreting, consecutive vs. bilateral interpreting, etc.; the specific sphere in which interpreting is provided and the degree of compulsion—legal, health, social service, etc.; within each field, which situation exists and in which language combination interpreting takes place—specialist consultations vs.

a general consultations in the case of the medical setting, or criminal cases vs. civil cases in a legal setting; when not all languages are covered, are mediating languages allowed; the interpreters, their professional position and expected role—professional vs. non-professional, free-lance vs. contracted staff, advocate vs. impartial role, and so on. These preliminary norms, to use Toury's term, are specifically related to the interpreting process itself but they come into play before an interpreter-mediated event takes place.

Finally, at an even lower norm level a set of constraints operates that particularly influence an interpreter's decisions during the act of interpreting itself. These are textual norms and correspond with Toury's operational norms, and would determine the selection of textual and linguistic material as equivalent of the corresponding source-language material, in terms of faithfulness of the text as well as its syntactic, semantic and pragmatic form.

However, we should keep in mind that the existence of these normative levels does not define a scale of professional autonomy for the interpreter who advances from the contextual or pragmatic influence to a linguistic equivalent. The social and institutional dimension of the mediated encounters is, for instance, obvious at all these levels, due to the active participation of social agents who represent the different fields of human activity (education, healthcare, police) in which interpreting is enmeshed.

Translation involves a network of active social agents, who may be individuals or groups, each with certain preconceptions and interests. The translative operation is a matter of transactions between parties that have an interest in these transactions taking place. For those involved in the transfer, the various modalities and procedures that go with it presuppose choices, alternatives, decisions, strategies aims and goals. Norms play a crucial role in these processes. (Hermans 1996: 26-27)

From this normative structure it should not be inferred that there is a unidirectional influence from general and superior authorities towards specific and functional decisions. All the agents and participants, in their professional scale and position, exercise agency and power which materialise through different behaviours that may alter the outcome of the interaction. The same is true when socio-cultural sensibility, 'political will' or economic circumstances influence professional practice, its self perception and discipline articulation, and interact with the context redefining the degree of general opinion. Due to its dialogical nature and that it occurs within institutions, nearly all the agents take an active part in the community interpreting process in a literal sense. The text is generated as the encounters unfold, as such the participants' presence and interests will influence the way interpreting is carried out at the same time as spontaneously shifting perceptions of the act as well as the expected consequences and standards of the agents.

Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that the three normative levels operate together and a lower degree of development in any one of them may result in it being overshadowed by another one. In societies where community interpreting practice is still 'in the making' and there is little corporate consciousness and internalised translational normative development, it is likely that the political and economic normative aspects are given more relevance, and that interpreter's performance norms may even become confused with the professional norms of the communicative settings where the encounter is enmeshed.

Validating community interpreting norms

According to Chesterman, a society establishes norms for a translative activity on the basis of two factors: a group of individuals considered competent and professional whose translation behaviour is accepted as standard-setting and norm-setting; and on a group or set of accepted texts that fulfil the recipients' expectations and fit the desired standards of quality of a translated text (1993: 7-8). The resulting norms are a set of professional or process norms and a set of expectancy or product norms.

There are societies where neither the existence nor the need of a differentiated group of professionals or experts possessing a special competence to interpret in public service settings is recognised, and users do not have specific expectations about a correct and appropriate interpreter-mediated event. This situation is quite frequent in Ozolin's second group of countries where the demand for community interpreting is quite recent and responses rely on ad hoc services that give rise to different consequences. This may also arise in Ozolin's third category, where a fully comprehensive system has been put in place but it is not applied equally across sectors, and even within public sectors but across geographical boundaries. One consequence is that the community interpreting sector is left without a system of coherent and unified professional norms. There is no regulated interpreting market in which trained interpreters have exclusive rights to interpreter positions in institutions or agencies. The suggestion is that if anyone can do it, why then should interpreters be granted the prestige associated with professional status for doing work that anyone knowing a foreign language can perform? The implication of this is that when a profession lacks certain professional qualities such as specific skills, training or certification, it proves difficult to maintain an overall sense of professional status.

However, the problem is not only a 'corporate' or 'union' one. When a group is not recognised as having any specific authority in the practice of its function, the interpreter's translation behaviour cannot be accepted as standard-setting, even in the mind of those agents directly involved.

In relation to the second factor, it has already been said that it is necessary for a situation to occur regularly in order to establish a certain textual and behavioural pattern and to develop a notion of what is correct, acceptable and appropriate for a given communicative situation. Norms operate from expectations that fit the desired standards of quality arising from an authorised professional practice. But there are situations in which users of community interpreting have not developed concrete expectations about what an interpreter-mediated encounter should be like and the three parties involved in the interaction may not have a shared understanding of what is correct and appropriate.

Interpreters operate in a complex and dynamic context and a field of competing norms and views.

Indeed, perhaps community based interpreting is one of the fields in which the contradiction between practitioners' views of the translation process—understood in its widest sense—and society's views come most clearly into focus. (Valero and Martin 2008: 3)

Various interests are being pursued alongside individual desires and expectations, that is to say, there are different types of requirements originating from both sides of the interaction that are different and often incompatible:

When a new situation arises, an individual agent may have to make an interpretive judgement in deciding whether it falls within the scope of one norm rather than another. Indeed, there may be more than one possibility, and the agent may have a reason or an ulterior motive for referring to one norm rather than another. (Hermans 1996: 34)

It seems then, according to norm theory, that community interpreting is what is regarded and assessed as correct and appropriate by practitioners and agents involved in the process. But what happens when that definition is linked to expectations and norms belonging to different but adjacent fields?

We have already mentioned that any weakness in one of the norm levels will result in another norm spreading to compensate this fact, or even the importation of neighbouring professional norms. In the cases in which there is a lack of community interpreting norms, when there is no community interpreting culture that guarantees a minimum level of interpreter expertise or credentials (and only a working command of the language is required) or quality performance, we see a blurring of the line between an interpreter's and the other professionals' roles, roles that "the interpreter ought not to occupy, in order to protect their face, and guard against inadvertent alterations." (Cambridge 2005: 141) The interpreter's role begins to overlap with those of the mediators, nurses or secretaries or other colleagues who have some form of linguistic 'competence'. The interests of the other agents who are involved and who hold positions of

power end up inhibiting how professional interpreting is carried out, and as such these interests do not produce balanced situations and interpreter's face is at risk. These interests also serve to reinforce the application of the norms that enfold the communicative situation and these are precisely the ones that specific community interpreting norms should compensate. The validation criteria of any interpretation should not be based on the privileged conceptual position of either party involved in the communication process. The application of norms unconnected to the field of community interpreting not only affects its product, but also its nature. Importing expectations, desires and evaluative criteria from other areas only serves to highlight the hierarchy of one of the parties, precisely the one that is in a privileged position of power.

If no action is taken in light of a lack of specific interpreting norms, we run the risk of normalising practice and behaviour that do not provide any guarantees of professional service, which in turn legitimises de-professionalisation, and the practice of a profession without adequate training.

The importance of a norm setting authority

In short, we could say that not only do norms help us understand (describe and explain) the nature of community interpreting, they also influence their very existence (guide and solve problems). Without their own professional norms based on the authority attributed to certain practices and individuals, we are only able to speak about the process of linguistic transfer that is more or less functional within the institutional framework, but never specifically about community interpreting. 'Normalising' the discipline, not in the sense of making what happens in it normal but rather subjecting it to norms, will guarantee professionalism and in return this professionalism will guarantee the very existence of the discipline.

Norms assure various things: on one hand, the balance needed between both parties to ensure real communicative acts; on the other, the interpreter's professionalism and the correction of his or her work according to guidelines and a code of ethics that set out respectable behaviour; and, lastly, professional autonomy from the other parties involved which, to close the circle, enables them to avoid siding with one or the other party and ensure previously mentioned balance. Without a doubt, an experienced and professional interpreter, invested with authority and recognition, will feel more confident than a non-professional interpreter in ignoring the wishes and suggestion of a particular party, i.e. a lawyer or doctor.

If, according to what we have mentioned, norms are derived from professional activity that is invested with authority, in the case when the profession has not yet reached the level of development necessary to

enjoy such authority it is important that interpreting norms are validated by a different authority to that in which the activity takes place. It is at this moment when the university may take on an important role as a regulatory authority. It is important to understand that authority in this case is also not unidirectional and vertical. Teaching, including in this phase of community interpreting consolidation, must not and can not only teach norms but also develop and train the critical skills of students and practising professionals regarding current 'normal' practice. That is to say, we must educate our interpreters and our society. Education provides knowledge and skills; it also deepens understanding, reinforces standards and leads to consensus. Universities can and should take on the responsibility of coalescing all these activities. They relate as much to reflective practice and self criticism as to raising the profile of trained professionals. Both these factors are essential to achieving the level of professionalism in which norms are rooted.

There are many varied educational activities orientated towards the creation and respect of community interpreting norms, activities that should simultaneously spread in many directions. It is worth highlighting a few among them:

1. Formal education, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, is one of the most promising routes for establishing, achieving and extending the social recognition and professionalisation of community interpreting. The inclusion of a specific module in translation and interpreting degrees, for example, would allow the consolidation of community interpreting as a discipline positioned at the same level of specialisation as conference interpreting ⁵(5). On the other hand, the existence of postgraduate courses aimed at improving professionalism that also include a component of investigation and research will allow recycling and the permanent training of practising professionals and the specialisation of students via the acquisition of interpreting performance norms. These postgraduate courses will provide the student with the tools, knowledge and criteria necessary for achieving pragmatic equivalence in transference processes, and re-establish the interlinguistic and intercultural communication in each circumstance according to ethical and deontological principles.

2. Complementing community interpreting training programmes through the provision of a cross section of material aids related to the professional fields to ensure a basic knowledge of subjects such as the legislation, structure, functions and norms of legal and healthcare institutions; or knowledge of the settings, agents, protocol and contexts which characterise this interpreting discipline. Beyond the teaching benefits alone, the participation of specialists on these courses, specialists who come from the fields involved in mediation processes, creates a channel for creating and spreading the professional norms outside of the industry but within the professional environment.

3. Actions strictly within the academic framework at the same time demand an increase in awareness that deals with formation, as much inside and outside of the professional field of community interpreting. The process of adapting university studies to the Bologna Declaration has generated the existence of practical work experience (practicum). These practicals allow tutored professional activity within a business, institution or competent organisation for each course. Without a doubt, there are many opportunities to spread norms among professionals directly involved in interpreter-mediated encounters, at the same time as putting into practice professional activity that allows the development of models of behaviour and resulting products that should be followed. Practical not only allow theory acquired in the classroom to be applied in real situations, but also to see firsthand the variety of values, expectations and norms used by the parties involved and observe how they affect the interpreting process. They provide the ground for the interpreter's professional norms to interact with the expectations of the users regarding the product and behaviour.

4. The educational process should also take place through conferences, workshops, open days about the profession, and the results of investigation carried out in this field. This link between investigation and training will benefit greatly from professional practice, generating a very productive cross-fertilisation process as pointed out by Hale (2007: 197). We must not forget that if norms are normally derived from professional activities, their authority is supported by the development of critical exercises that are encouraged by the act of carrying out research.

5. Finally, it is important to design focused training activities aimed at 'educating' the agents involved in community interpreting. It is important to make nurses, doctors, judges, police officers, etc... aware that they face a specific communication situation in which the interpreter acts as a work colleague who has been trained to facilitate their work, given that no matter how qualified they may be, it would not be very effective if the message did not reach its intended recipient. In the end, a correct medical prescription, informed educational act, or a just legal resolution would all be ineffective if not understood and taken on board by the recipient. It is important to teach them how to work with interpreters and understand the difference between intercultural and interlingual communication (interlinguistics), and monocultural and monolingual encounters. All agents should assume that an effective communication process is a shared responsibility and that a coordinated approach is essential (Corsellis 2008: 120-121), not only for the benefit of the user but also for the public services and for the accomplishment of their goals.

Conclusion

Due to its historical and social evolution, community interpreting is becoming a professional activity in its own right. However, strengthening the discipline does not only depend on the quantitative growth in the number of communicative situations where it could be required, but also on the development of a set of specific norms that should be applied to those situations in order to guarantee professionalism for the users. At first glance, community interpreting is characterised by the settings in which it takes place—hospitals, police stations, schools, etc..., and also the institutional nature and much protocolised character of these settings and the services offered. These factors, together with the de-regularised situation of community interpreting in many countries, encourage the perception of community interpreting as a simple process only involving an interlinguistic transfer that can be governed by already existing norms surrounding the communicative context as it takes place, as if it were simply any other monolingual encounter. The exportation and application of norms from other fields negatively affects community interpreting practice as well as awareness of its intricacies, its strength and development as a discipline, and its normative development. Paradoxically, the norms that provide a professional activity with authority arise from the very professional activity authorised and legitimised by those same norms.

Consequently, the development of norms in a fledgling discipline, as is the case of community interpreting in some countries, requires this vicious circle to be broken before progress can be made. This can only be achieved if an external institution is granted the authority and power to do so. Universities have to take on that responsibility by providing education and awareness programmes that are aimed at interpreting students, new and already practising professionals, and any other agents involved such as those providing and demanding services. Besides this training and commitment to providing information, research into community interpreting needs to be encouraged as it is the only way, at least in the initial stages, to achieve authorised norm development.

An understanding, at all levels and by all parties, that specific norms guarantee not only the rights of the user but also the smooth running of the services provided, will contribute to the accomplishment of development goals, equality, and integration; something that many governments never tire of discussing. It will also allow for professional autonomy and professionalism among interpreters and largely guarantee their professional competence.

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Biography

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¹ Take as an example the evolution of Spanish immigration policy in relation to the ideological position of different Spanish governments since the 80s. At the beginning, the focus was on controlling the flow of immigrants, but has since progressed through to the development of mature integration policy that incorporates many aspects of a social nature. The current government has established and approved the *Plan estratégico de ciudadanía e integración 2007-2010* (Citizenship and Integration Strategy Plan). Substantial funding has been invested in this plan over a period of four years for the purpose of benefiting autonomous communities and local authorities responsible for integration in their locality. It is intended to serve as a framework and platform for coordinating the diverse measures needed for the integration and reception of immigrants. For information visit:

<http://www.mtas.es/es/migraciones/Integracion/PlanEstrategico/Docs/PECIDDEF180407.pdf>

² For example, in this document more stress is placed on the need to teach immigrants the language of the host community than on the provision of linguistic support services. The provision of interpretation is limited to the healthcare field so that access to the healthcare system is guaranteed, and also to programmes fighting domestic abuse.

³ To this respect, it is interesting to point out the disapproving reaction from the medical profession in the Canary Islands when confronted with a tender raised by the Canary Island Government for telephone translation contracts for patients who do not speak Spanish. The sum of the potential contract was two hundred and fifty eight thousand euros (*La Opinión* Tenerife, 17th May 2009). Similarly, negative opinions and reactions can be found in the digital edition of this article with some feeling that the spending cannot be justified, especially as there is no similar service for Spanish citizens who travel abroad. Many contributors mention that the money would be better spent elsewhere on more pressing issues. The online article can be found at

http://www.laopinion.es/secciones/noticia.jsp?pRef=2009051700_9_219751_Sociedad-gastara-258000-euros-traductores-para-pacientes

⁴ There are different classifications of translation norms, the most important being those developed by Toury (1978, 1995) and Chesterman (1993, 1997). Toury (1980: 53-7; 1995: 56-61) distinguishes three types of translation norms: preliminary norms, initial norm and operational norms. *Preliminary norms* concern the existence and nature of a translation policy (the choice of source texts, source authors' languages, etc,) and the directness of translation (a society's degree of acceptance or tolerance of intermediate translations). *Initial norm* concerns the translator's basic choice between adhering to source text (language and culture) norms and adhering to the norms prevalent in the target language and culture. This decision would lead to a translation that is "adequate" with respect to the source text or to a translation that is "acceptable" within the target culture. Finally, we have *operational norms* that concern the decisions made during the very act of translation. These norms are divided into matricial norms, that have to do with the distribution of the linguistic and textual material, and textual-linguistic norms that affect the selection of specific textual material to formulate the target text.

⁵ An informal survey about Community Interpreting taken by postgraduate conference interpretation students from the University of La Laguna made obvious not only their lack of knowledge about the complexity of this speciality, but also their conviction that training for conference interpreting automatically qualifies someone to carry out community interpreting with the only added difficulty being the need for a sound knowledge of specific vocabulary from the wide range of fields worked in.