Speaking in Tongues: Language across Contexts and Users

Guest Editor
LUIS PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ

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GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

Throughout the nineties, the field of Translation Studies (TS) assumed a high profile within the broader domain of language-related scholarship. This consolidation process, however, proved unable to resolve some of the controversies that have hindered the development of TS for decades. On the one hand, there is the constant need to refine previous descriptions of the relations between Linguistics and TS and challenge the central role of the former as the major research paradigm empowering the development of the latter (Baker 1996). On the other hand, the recurring schism between translation academics and professionals, who remain stuck on their immediate concerns and, in many cases, oblivious of the mutual advantages that would result from a more intense interaction between both groups. Shuttleworth (1996) aptly summarizes this scenario as follows:

[G]oals and objectives can vary considerably within the discipline. Of course, Translation Studies has been enriched by dint of possessing such a multi-faceted nature. However, at the same time, this very nature has meant that there is still considerable lack of agreement on the irreducible minimum of concepts which should form the foundation on which to build [...] The result of such a situation has often been that different branches of the discipline have at times experienced with widely different methodologies [...] (1996:vi).

The field of TS remains in the same state of flux at the turn of the century. Methodological diversity prevails and the concerns of scholars and practitioners are still a long way from reaching a significant degree of convergence. In fact, one may reasonably argue that recent social and technological developments warrant a new approach to the study of translation and interlingual communication.

Speaking in Tongues approaches the field of TS at a crucial moment when the combined effect of the increasing globalization of social and economic activities and the constant developments in translation technologies is pushing to the fore new issues and constraints on interlingual communication that cannot be overlooked either by scholars or professionals. The aim of this book is to place the reader at the heart of investigations into the nature and process of translation in an internationalized scenario where (i) the consolidation of multilateral institutions and multinational corporations has triggered off a struggle between globalization and localization; (ii) the information and communication technologies are both the means to enhance translation productivity and the main source of employment for professional translators; (iii) the new media and communication technologies provide a whole range of ways to interact with others, both in leisure and academic settings. Furthermore, being the second volume of the English in the World series, this book is also intended to explore the increasingly stronger status of English as a *lingua franca* that is used worldwide in a variety of functional contexts and may, at some point, undermine the very foundations of the translation and language industries.

The papers in this volume reflect, as one may expect, the wide variety of «goals and objectives» of the translation community, including both theoretical descriptions of translation phenomena in specific genres and settings as well as highly practical explanations aiming to enhance the quality of translator training techniques and raise the status and professional profile of translators and interpreters in the community. More specifically, the scope of the book ranges from Systemic Functional Linguistics to Discourse Analysis, from Intercultural Rhetoric to Post-structuralism. The examples chosen by all the authors inevitably account for their own interests, opinions and types of texts for which and from which they have developed their own descriptions and stances.

The collection of articles has been edited to recognise the wide array of perspectives informing the field of TS and is of direct interest both to any linguist, translator or other social scientist working in the study of interlingual communication and to those designing and buying translation technologies for professional purposes.

Luis Pérez González Villaviciosa de Odón, September 2003

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