

**TRANSLATION, MULTILINGUALISM AND CULTURAL MEDIATION
IN URBAN SOCIETIES¹**

Assumpta Camps (ORCID 000-0002-0276-0762)
University of Barcelona

I.

Intercultural studies has undergone tremendous development in recent times, taking shape as a discipline and, especially in the European and North American academic world, becoming a field of study in itself.

Until the late 1980s, intercultural relations were generally approached from linguistic ethnography, linguistic anthropology and comparative literature. Later, once translation had become a discipline in itself, approaches started to be made from the perspective of translation studies and have developed in line with the recent evolution of the subject. Most recently, intercultural relations have taken the form of a field of research within communication theory, with practical applications (i.e. directed towards developing intercultural competence) of social scope within the Council of Europe’s language policy.

Anthropology has often been seen as “cultural translation”. Especially since the mid-1980s, the contact between cultures and questions of cultural interpretation that emerge in the representation processes, in the creation of cultural stereotypes and, in general, in the construction of Alterity, have been addressed from this perspective. It is from these early theoretical formulations that the study of cultural reception and transmission is being defined.

A decisive part in this process is taken by the establishment of Cultural Studies as a multidisciplinary, critical approach that tackles the study of literature and culture from a

¹ This paper has been written within the Project “CRET - Grup de Recerca Consolidat” (2014SGRC-14), carried out by A. Camps as Main Researcher.

much wider perspective (involving semiotics, ethnology, linguistics, literature, ideological analysis, sociology, etc.), questioning the assumptions commonly accepted in western critical tradition.

During the 1990s, with contributions from critics such as Stuart Hall (1997) and Edward Said (1996) along with others from postcolonial studies, particularly fertile in the analysis of intercultural relations, a field of study was shaped and instruments defined for critically analyzing the discourse of those intercultural relations, studying them in the light of the relations of dominance, exclusion, power and control, as well as interrelation and dependence, in which they occur in practice.

From this point of view, semiotics, to the extent that it includes the encoding and symbology of the cultures reflected in the texts, provides very useful ideas as regards how to approach the study of intercultural relations. The same can be said for critical discourse analysis, linguistic pragmatism, Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics, and argumentation theory. In all cases, what we find is a notion of language as a social practice, which gives great relevance to the context of use, directing itself not only to the study of implicit relations of power, discrimination and control, but also to analyzing the representation of the Alterity, cultural presuppositions and stereotypes, which manifest themselves in discourse construction, plus the processes of cultural transmission and transfer, translation as mediation between cultures and the transformations that take place in the texts during the translation process and the ideological context in which this takes place, affecting the transmission of meaning.

The adoption of this “cultural approach” in translation studies since the end of the 1980s has brought about a paradigm shift and with it recognition of the communicative and intercultural nature of translation, helping to shape it as a discipline in itself.

II.

In our day, multiculturalism and the challenges that go with it appear primarily in the city. It is urban space that is the quin-

tessential location in which to see the hybrid, global world, resulting from recent migrations and population flows, that we live in; the space where the Other, in all its plurality and different perspectives and conditions, holds sway and demands all its attention, often from the confrontation of positions or even open conflict between them. In the circumstances, difference and how to deal with it (but also how to reflect it discursively and transmit it) becomes a central issue.

Reflecting on the material space of translation, especially on the city as the translation space, and more so if that city is a frontier city, or one where language minorities or minority languages coexist, has in recent times introduced new perspectives into the debate on translation. As Sherry Simon rightly pointed out recently, all cities are multilingual, but some are also translational, and they present a continuous evolutionary interrelation between the different languages used in them, which are located on different planes of relevance in relation to this urban space as a whole (Simon 2013). This notion of the city as a linguistically divided space, “a location for ‘distancing’ -where communities develop their distinct independent identities-”, contrasts with its opposite notion, in recent approaches to translation of Simon: that is the city as a location “for furthering -the cultural encounters that are a pervasive force in modernity”. In certain cities like Calcutta, Trieste, Barcelona, and Montreal this situation demonstrates the ways in which translational practice has shaped the literatures of divided cities (SIMON 2012).

Social transformations like these in our globalized world have involved a change of paradigms that can also be seen in the field of translation and in the way it is addressed. Indeed, for this reason, translation appears to be more and more immersed in “complex, difficult negotiations in which cultures, customs, world-views and languages overlap” (VIDAL CLARAMONTE - MARTÍN RUANO 2013: 3).

As some of the thought and critiques have made clear in recent times, certainly the term “translation”, in its philosophical consequences, involves the very relation with the Other, the negotiation between the language and culture of one and the

language and culture of others. Indeed we could understand the transformation that the concept of translation has undergone in recent years as an attempt to translate into the “Other”, an attempt in which one can see reflected the crisis in the concept of subject and Alterity.

The subject/object relation has always been key in the movement underlying the very notion of translation, whether we consider it as *translatio* -in other words “shift”, “transfer”, but also “transposition” and “metaphor”- or as an action of *transfere*, understood as “transferring”, “displacing”, “transcribing”, but also “transforming”, “making different”, “using a term in a different sense”. Hence the reconceptualization of the concept of Alterity and the centrality of its position in postmodern thought has transcended translation studies and greatly influenced contemporary thinking on translation and its discourse.

Rather than Alterity, today one speaks of “*secondary otherness*” in an attempt to lay the foundations for plurality, to combine the one and the many, in these multicultural times and contexts. Even to the point of proposing mutual translation between cultures, a blend of the one and the many in a “sameness” (for Clifford), or in a new articulation of the own set up on the basis of an identity influenced by the memory of the other.

The decisive factor, inherent in any cultural experience -a factor in Wolfgang Iser’s view ultimately implicit in a crisis of culture- is the need to tackle Alterity. Understanding the “crisis” - a concept, incidentally, intimately related to the concept of “critique”- following Iser, as a synonym for self-reflection deriving from:

- a) The failure of our culture as a possible framework for our interpretations;
- b) The disruptions in the cultural dialogue between the own and the other;
- c) The vicious circle, with frequently unpredictable effects, between investigation and demand of Alterity; and
- d) The element of self-transformation.

In this respect it will be interesting for us to analyze the narrative between alienation and assimilation reflected in that theoretical and textual “journey” -the constant transgression of the limits between the own and the other, the one and the many, presence and absence- that takes place in any intercultural context and underlies the very phenomenon of translation.

Dealing with the subject of the relation with the other, Stierle (STIERLE, in BUDICK 1966) proposes the highly political, even diplomatic, model of Dante’s notion of “*cortesia*”. A notion that, while opening the way to a possible dialogue with the other, also involves recognizing the difference without transforming it into an identity fetish. To put it another way, this notion of “*cortesia*” expresses a will to understand that goes further than the tendency -seen all too often- to blindly reaffirm the own identity of the parts. But is that a utopian space in between cultures?, an aspiration that is not sustained in the practice of intercultural dialogue?

All cultural translatability crashes head-on into the resistance to the essentialism of our notions of “own” and “other”, what we are (or believe we are), and what we are not (or believe we are not). The same cultural untranslatability is at the root of the concept of identity as a cultural construction. Identity is, in fact, sustained in a “construct”. However, far from essentialist positions, the important thing in intercultural -and also “intracultural”- relations is that this “construction” emerges and manifests itself in the very failure to know the “other”, highlighting the intrinsic need to integrate the notion of Alterity. Despite the origin of all identity in cultural speciation -or “pseudo-speciation”- what is true is that, ultimately, this identity ends up becoming a normative self-definition because of the experience of a hyper-alienation. From this point of view, which assumes that language is, first and foremost, a vehicle for communication and interrelation with the world, it is a good idea to question any concept of identity that is sustained in a view that is univocal, definitive and, in the final analysis, exclusive.

In contexts of transit such as these, which produce complex figures of identity and difference -inside/outside, inclu-

sion/exclusion- what is theoretically innovative, as Bhabha pointed out, is to focus attention on the articulation of cultural differences, those “in-between” spaces that provide new signs of identity in our times, because it is precisely in the emergence of these interstices -in the “overlap and displacement of domains of difference”- that cultural value and its exchange are negotiated, sometimes dialogically, sometimes antagonistically. This interstitial passage between fixed and immobile (self)identifications of identity opens up the possibility of overcoming any essentialist identity via a cultural hybridity in which difference is unaccompanied by hierarchy, whether imposed or assumed. The need to theorize about the cultural signification underlying intercultural phenomena, to analyze the restrictive notions of identity and Alterity in any cultural exchange, becomes, if possible, more obvious than ever in these global times.

When we talk about the crisis of Alterity (the crisis of articulation between the one and the many, the own and the other), we refer to the failed attempt to “imagine” the Other. Any formation of cultural specificity and identity necessarily generates Alterity, which may involve isolation, exclusion, even *aversion* and abomination. Culture understood in this way would constitute a set of strongly preserved untranslatabilities, opposite which there emerges a *possible* culture of translation and cultural mediation, of “version” as opposed to “*aversion*”. This presupposes that we consider a plural social ascription (on different levels), that we contemplate the possibility of a cultural syncretism based on, at least, a double cultural belonging (the own and the general), in which translation is established as metaphor “par excellence”. In this sense we need to speak of “interculturality” or “pluriculturalism” rather than multiculturalism, of inclusion rather than exclusion, or rather of the need of cultural mediation.

However, is this space “in between” cultures a space of fullness or emptiness, of presence or absence? Does it not perhaps refer to a kind of negativity in itself untranslatable? And also, does the intercultural interaction thus formulated not suggest to us a two-directional movement, rich in potential, but at the same time not free of danger? Is it possible, at the end of the

day, to place oneself in that intermediate space?

In this respect it is worth remembering here, among other things, Maria Tymoczko's (2003) reflections on the ideological positioning of the translator. From multidisciplinary theoretical positions, Tymoczko questions the heuristic validity of that intermediate space in the sphere of postcolonial translation, especially when it involves cases of transculturality, given that the translator will always have an unavoidable ideological position from which to take decisions. His or her critical position is, as we see it, applicable to any sphere of cultural mediation.

On the same subject, Bhabha (1994) understands the differences in the cultural terrain as being constituted through the social conditions of enunciation. On a global scale, translation in postcolonial contexts introduces an important new factor. Its importance lies not only in the intercultural transposition of cultural values, but also in its “*performative*” character, whereby this gives rise to a revaluation of the contents of local cultural tradition. Postcolonial translation thus introduces another *locus* of inscription, hybrid, displaced (in time and/or space), imposes a revision of the meaning of postcolonial “mediation”, and opens the door to a “trans-valuation” of the symbolic structure of the cultural sign, in which the view of modernity emerges not in its content but fundamentally in its positional character.

Discovering the Alterity in oneself, experiencing the negativity, are fundamental for overcoming any essentialism in the articulation between the one and the many. From here comes the confirmation of identity as a cultural “*construct*”, not inherent but artificial in character, an identity that takes shape not as a fixed, immobile concept, but as wandering and evolving, under construction. All cultural exchanges are, in the end, reifications – emerging from the anxiety that always underlies any intercultural relation– and they direct themselves towards suppressing the difference. In this context, Iser proposed the need to negotiate with the Other to seek a third dimension of the own and the other, or to put it another way, an “in-between” space, the figuration of which is based on ethical positions.

Translation, in its confrontation between the one and the

many -the other in oneself, presence and absence- in its ceaseless negotiation with Alterity, emerges not only as a metaphor for intercultural relations in the western cities of our complex global age, but as an exceptional way of approaching and analyzing them. Whether it be from what it does itself (translation does in fact document intercultural contacts), or in its proposal for inter and intra-cultural exchange. From this point of view, we will need to abandon the traditional conception of the translator as a mere “transporter of meanings”, a simple innocuous filter of one text to another, one language to another, one culture to another. Not only to overcome his or her condition as subordinate, already fully described by, among others, Lawrence Venuti (1998), and reestablish their authoring responsibility as “interpreter”, but also to critically recognize that the translator is, more than anything, a constructor of meanings about the Other.

When speaking of cultural translatability, it must be taken into account that this goes some way beyond the mere carrying-out of translation. It covers not only any type of translation, but also the conditions that govern cultural exchange and, therefore, a particular translation. Studying it helps us to analyze what a translation favours and what it denies, what it actualizes and what it silences. On an “intracultural” level, for instance, it reveals to us, in the proposal of a translation, the historical conditioning and manipulation of the past from which it originates, the mechanisms adopted in that -never disinterested- reactualization, and the very needs projected onto that past to make it translatable and, ultimately, transformable. On an intercultural level, translatability, by proposing that we make the jump from one culture to another, opens up an interstitial space of multiple meanings.

Translatability emerges as a key element when a crisis situation cannot be resolved simply by cultural assimilation or appropriation, when cultural mediation is required. (Re)thinking the intercultural discourse that lays the foundations for the network of interpretations in cultural exchanges, the channels and spaces in which these take place, their similarities and asymmetries, and, in short, analyzing how cultures are reflected in each other, is the starting point for our work here at this

conference. How does this changing structure evolve? A structure that functions as an “*interface*” between cultures, in which the operations of intercultural discourse are carried out, often via transactional leaps or chiasmatically? How is it articulated? What internal dynamic does it follow? The confrontation, explained from the chiasmus, of each culture with Alterity allows us not only to point to a surmounting of the difference as an indisputable structure in any intercultural relation, but also to suggest a mutual interaction between cultures that ends up suppressing the traditional frames of reference, generating the possibility of change.

III.

The late 1980s saw the appearance of new contributions to translation studies outside Europe. In this respect the interest of some Latin American countries in reflections on the relation original/copy (or translation), and discussions about the relations between colonizer and colonized cultures. The Brazilian school, linked to the country’s modernism of the 1920s, understands translation as a way of subverting the original. The positions of Augusto de Campos and Haroldo de Campos especially are very revealing in this respect, proposing translation that is in itself a critical reading, and an appropriation from the cultural periphery, of an original text from a dominant culture, which involves at the same time, on the one hand, intertextuality, and, on the other, the suppression of all traditional hierarchy between original and translation (therefore between author and translator). The critical reading and interpretation of the original that it proposes is clearly aimed at its transmutation, or, to use its own term, its “transcreation”. From this angle, translating involves absorbing with a desire not to imitate but to transform. The translator is revealed as critic and creator at the same time, revealing him/herself as another voice in the text. The translation, meanwhile, becomes transcultural action, aimed at carrying on a dialogue with the original and all other texts, in a kind of polyphony of voices that Else Viera some time ago defined exactly as “trans-

textuality”. The “anthropophagous” approach to looking at intercultural relations is relevant given that it provides us with a clear metaphor applicable in the postcolonial area and in this global age. It enables us to become aware that notions such as “original” (source text) and “copy” (translation) have ideological connotations, and it constitutes a real challenge to the western and Eurocentric point of view in cultural matters. This implies the need for a new approach to translation, from new points of view that include other models of (inter)cultural relation. These are fundamental aspects for understanding cultural transfer in Europe, especially for texts that are recognized as being part of the “cultural assets” of a culture, or even part of the “cultural assets” of what might be considered a “world culture”.

IV.

Another aspect we would like to discuss with regard to our topic is the transcultural literary production emerging from cultural confrontation nowadays. Located between frontiers, in the problematic cultural and linguistic interstices created by the clash and interaction of various cultures in tension, the narrative work of transcultural authors, who are largely found immersed in the post-colonial sphere, encompasses an emerging area where the forms of these encounters have taken on their own voice. Their literary efforts have a dimension that is also critical in that their aim is to rewrite and move away from the representation that others, within the dominant discourse, have made of them, marginalising, censoring, hiding or stereotyping their cultural identities first in a colonial and now in a post-colonial setting.

We make use of the concept of “transculturation”, borrowed from Latin American cultural criticism. In broad strokes, transculturation refers to the process by which cultures meet, this meeting produces changes in the societies in contact and a creative response, a creativity force, arises in the transitivity between cultures, particularly when the cultures come from dissimilar positions of power. Transculturation is an avenue by which minority discourses make their way in this intercultural

relationship; it is not predicated on the idea that individual cultural traditions disappear, but rather that they undergo continuous development, in dialogic interaction. In this process, some features of both cultures are lost, while others are gained, giving rise to new communicative forms and possibilities (SALES 2001).

We start from the premise that the minority discourse makes room for itself through the narratives of transculturation produced by bilingual and bicultural authors, who fictionalise a communicative issue that is resolved by an operation of translation. Bicultural (not merely bilingual) authors are also, and above all else, translators; they are mediators between the languages and cultures that make up who they are and yet do not exist on the same plane. Their work leads to a dissimilar intercultural dialogue that involves taking a stance with respect to the dominant, hegemonic discourse. Writing in this context is, without doubt, translating. At the same, however, it involves negotiating the difference between the autochthonous culture (relegated to the periphery) and the hegemonic culture, which is typically Western and sets itself up as central and canonical.

As we know, translation and power are inextricably linked. From the post-colonial sphere, retranslation or the use of translation is postulated as a means of resisting hegemonic structures. Indeed, translation studies in recent decades, particularly from the nineties onwards, have assumed that translation goes beyond the strictly linguistic area, functioning as an activity of intercultural, creative and social mediation, a communicative process that always unfolds within a social, cultural and political context. It is not necessary to insist here that one of the main avenues of imperial oppression is precisely the exercise of control over language, which is not only a social phenomenon, but can also become an instrument of institutional power. Seen from this perspective, the post-colonial use of non-dominant and minorityised languages poses a real challenge in the social and political sphere, because many transcultural authors adopt what has come

to be called the Caliban strategy, formulating their response in the language of empire in which they have been educated.²

For better or worse, the global expansion of languages such as Spanish or English cannot be denied in today’s world. Such languages do not belong to a single nation in particular. A multitude of communicative varieties have sprung up in places where they have been introduced as official and they have, over time, taken on a life of their own. In the confrontation between so-called global languages and minoritised languages, transcultural narrators see a possibility of transforming and promoting the hybridisation of hegemonic languages, languages of power, from within and through the lens of minority cultures.

Today, choosing the dominant language, i.e. a global language, for literary creation is an increasingly common path. In some sense, the choice can be viewed as an act of submission to the dominant discourse and the suppression of minoritised languages and cultures. However, it also marks a privileged space “from which” to undertake resistance and promote transcultural interaction: a space where the discourse of power can be made plural from within the system. This involves using the language to communicate what would otherwise remain unvoiced, concealed and marginalised. Preserving a minority language and culture from annihilation is also possible through an artist’s choice of creating in a global language, as a valid communicative intermediary, and inserting into that language the cultural features of an artist’s minority tradition, language and culture, turning the global language into a hybrid vehicle of this other language and culture. With this translinguistic option, the transcultural author steps into the transnational repertoire and market. As Steven Kellman (2000) has pointed out, the “translingual writer” is “a writer who resides between languages” (KELLMAN 2000: 9), “inhabiting” this interstitial space and fighting to establish authority and a voice in a foreign language that may, at the same time, cause major

² In the famous words of Caliban to Prospero: “You taught me language; and my profit on’t is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you for learning me your language!” (SHAKESPEARE 1610: 976).

reluctance in the writer because of earlier social or colonial imposition. For narrators of bilingual capability, writing in a language other than their mother tongue is sometimes a choice and sometimes a necessity, arising from the reality of social imbalance between languages. Whatever the case may be, the choice is never innocent. It has a political dimension. Such authors aspire to convey their culture and their vision to the world. The challenge lies in finding expression in a language that they must learn to make their own. Literary creation that brings out the minority discourse of languages and minoritised cultures originates in an operation of cultural translation, taken as an activity that is not only creative, but also fundamentally critical. Indeed, such authors create narratives in which the language of writing, as a palimpsest, does not succeed in fully covering over the linguistic and cultural diversity that nurtures their works.

Contemporary transcultural literature features a wide panorama of bilingual subjects writing in a global language. Examples abound: Indians writing in English (e.g., Salman Rushdie, Vikram Chandra, and even V.S. Naipaul, born in Trinidad and Tobago), Maghrebi authors writing in French (e.g., Tahar Ben Jelloun, Assia Djebar), Egyptians writing in English (e.g., Ahdaf Soueif), Turks writing in German (e.g., Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Jakob Arjouni), Iranians writing in Dutch (e.g., Kader Abdolah), Africans writing in Spanish (e.g., Donato Ndongo, Mohamed El Gheryb), Tunisians writing in Italian (e.g., Salah Methnani), Quechua-speakers writing in Spanish (e.g., José María Arguedas), and many more. In the same vein, some multicultural literary experiences in the United States are of great interest. For example, Rosario Ferré and Esmeralda Santiago are Puerto Rican authors who are bilingual in Spanish and English and self-translate their novels from Spanish to English (Ferré) or vice versa (Santiago), noting the painful recreation of the narrative subject in the process of cultural translation in which they are consciously inscribed. By contrast, the Dominican-American Julia Álvarez and the Cuban Cristina García have Spanish as their mother tongue, but they write in English, the language that they have learned and mastered and in which they have (re)created themselves.

V.

From the moment the translator’s task becomes subject to complex, often difficult negotiations in which different strata are superimposed (cultural, linguistic, different worldviews, etc.), and since translation involves making decisions, any neutrality is by definition impossible. Furthermore, translation reveals itself to us as an activity that is clearly political in scope. In our multicultural societies, under the rule of mass media, translation becomes an “omnipresent mechanism in the construction, diffusion, circulation and relocation of discourses in general and, in particular, of those that are made official in the ‘public opinion’ category”, to the point where it has been claimed that “to a great extent today, the reality we inhabit is translation or the *work of translation*”, and that “our reality *demands translation*”, because it requires interpretation and constant negotiation of the difference between opposing and often asymmetric realities or discourses, which arise in situations or contexts governed by conflict (whether open or latent) (VIDAL CLARAMONTE – MARTÍN RUANO 2013: 3).

Translation, understood as the difficult or troublesome renegotiation of plurality / diversity, has been studied in recent times by a great many critics including Mona Baker, Myriam Salama-Carr and Esperança Bielsa. Such reflection is absolutely essential today, in order for us to deal with translation ethically and responsibly. It is especially so in situations of out-and-out conflict, but also in apparently less problematic contexts, from the moment when translation starts to act as a letter of introduction for the culture/writing/author it introduces, thereby helping to shape its identity in the recipient, in a way that is never aseptic or neutral, but which often shows up the dissymmetries that exist between the two cultures in question, and even the hierarchies between them.

In multicultural and primarily urban societies, one needs, therefore, to be aware “of the ideological and identitarian forms that are transmitted and represented discursively via the dominant language and, fundamentally, in translation”, with transla-

tion being, as it always has been, an important instrument for “distorting or approaching the Other”. This situation does, in fact, appear everywhere, but perhaps it manifests itself most clearly in social services, i.e. in areas such as public health, education and the justice system, where the task of the translator/mediator is fundamental in our multicultural societies. In these areas, one needs to rethink the idea of the translator’s (in)visibility, and especially its consequences, since the translator’s supposedly neutral position has a direct impact on the effectiveness of communication, while at the same time it compromises the ethics of translation. As stated recently, “the greatest exercise of neutrality is recognizing and pointing out linguistic, cultural, social and power asymmetries” (*ibid.*: 138, my translation): the translator should take part and, at the end of the day, explain their actions, especially when the cultural distance between the languages is very wide.

The demand for an active role for the translator/interpreter also emerges very strongly in the area of multicultural conflicts, in which alternative, militant narratives have appeared in recent times, far from the framework of the academy and the professional world for the translation practice (where, by contrast, the imperative for T/I is mainly, even by oath, to be neutral). It is there that a new range of possibilities for T/I opens up, including, for example, the activism against globalization that have emerged recently. Those activist communities of translators are, for instance, ECOS (Translators and Interpreters for Solidarity),³ Babels (International network of voluntary translators and interpreters)⁴ or Tlaxcala (network of translators and interpreters for linguistic diversity),⁵ among many others.⁶

³ <<<http://ecosteis.wordpress.com>>> [Last access: 25/10/2016].

⁴ <<<http://www.babels.org>>> [Last access: 25/10/2016].

⁵ <<<http://www.tlaxcala-int.org>>> [Last access: 25/10/2016].

⁶ Cfr. the studies by Julie Boérie, and especially her thesis: BOÉRIE, Julie. (2009). *Babels, the Social Forum and the Conference Interpreting Community: Overlapping and Competing Narratives on Activism and Interpreting in the Era of Globalization*. Tesis doctoral, CTIS: University of Manchester.

VI.

To conclude, urban societies are nowadays clearly a space for multilingualism, various translational practices and cultural mediation, promoting new conditions of social encounters and also a new literary production, which might lead to rethinking the notion of translation itself.

Works cited

- BASSNETT, Susan. (1997). “Moving across cultures: Translation as intercultural transfer”, in: SANTAMARÍA, J. M. *et al.* (eds.). (2001). *Transvases culturales: Literatura, cine, traducción*. Vitoria: Universidad del País Vasco.
- . (1998). “The translation turn in Cultural Studies”, in: BASSNETT, S. & TRIVEDI, H. (eds.). (1999). *Post-colonial Translation. Theory and Practice*. London-New York: Routledge, pp.19-40.
- BASSNETT, SUSAN & LEFEVERE, ANDRÉ. (1990). *Translation, History and culture*. London: Printer.
- BOÉRIE, Julie. (2009). *Babels, the Social Forum and the Conference Interpreting Community: Overlapping and Competing Narratives on Activism and Interpreting in the Era of Globalization*. Tesis doctoral, CTIS: University of Manchester.
- BHABHA, Homi. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- BUDICK, S. & ISER, W. (1996). *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press.
- CALZADA PÉREZ, M^a. (ed.) (2003). *Apropos of Ideology. Translation Studies on Ideology-Ideologies in Translation Studies*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- CARBONELL CORTÉS, Oriol. (1997). *Traducir al otro. Traducción, exotismo, poscolonialismo*. Cuenca: Un. Castilla-La Mancha.
- EVEN-ZOHAR, Itamar. (1990). *Polysystem Studies*. “POETICS TODAY”, 11 (1), special issue.

- HALL, Stuart. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publications.
- NIRANJANA, T'mani. (1992). *Sitting Translation. History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford: Univ. California Press.
- SAID, Edward W. (1996). *Cultura e imperialism*. Barcelona: Anagrama.
- SIMON, Sherry. (2012). *Cities in Translation. Intersection of Language and Memory*. London-New York: Routledge.
- . (2013). Interviewed by Siri Nergaard, in: “TRANSLATION. A INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL”, Misano Adriatico (Italy), May 2013 (last access. 23/01/2014).
- SIMON, Sherry & ST. PIERRE, Pierre. (eds.). (2000). *Changing the Terms. Translating in the Postcolonial Era*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.
- TORRES DEL REY, Jesús & RODRÍGUEZ VÁZQUEZ, Silvia. (2013). *Traducción y accesibilización de discurso público en formato web*, in: VIDAL CLARAMONTE, M^a Carmen-África & MARTÍN RUANO, Rosario (eds.). *Traducción, política(s), conflictos: legados y retos para la era del multiculturalismo*. Granada: Comares, pp. 121-142.
- TOURY, Gideon. (1995). *Descriptive Translation Studies & Beyond*, John Benjamins.
- TYMOCZKO, Maria & GENTZLER, Edwin. (eds.). (2002). *Translation and Power*. Amherst-London: Univ. of Massachusetts Press.
- TYMOCZKO, Maria. (2003). *Ideology and the Position of the Translator: In What Sense is a Translator 'In-Between'?*, in: CALZADA PÉREZ, M. (ed.). *Apropos of Ideology. Translation Studies on Ideology-Ideologies in Translation Studies*. Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 181-201.
- VENUTI, Lawrence. (ed.). (2000). *The Translation Studies Reader*. London-New York: Routledge.
- VIDAL CLARAMONTE, M^a Carmen-África & MARTÍN RUANO, Rosario (eds.). (2013). *Traducción, política(s), conflictos: legados y retos para la era del multiculturalismo*. Granada: Comares.

ABSTRACT:

In this paper we will study the translation practice focusing our attention on the troublesome renegotiation of plurality / diversity in nowadays multicultural urban societies, resulting from recent migrations and population flows. Urban societies are clearly a space for multilingualism, various translational practices and cultural mediation (including cultural hybridism and “transculturation”).

From the reflection on these situations, increasingly frequent in multicultural societies, we will deal with the new conditions of social encounters and the new literary production, which might lead to rethinking the notion of translation itself.

KEYWORDS: Translation, Multilingualism, Cultural Mediation, City.

RESUMEN:

En este artículo abordaremos la práctica de la traducción centrando nuestra atención en la incómoda renegociación de la pluralidad / diversidad que se produce en las sociedades multiculturales urbanas de nuestros días, resultado de las recientes migraciones y flujos de población. Las sociedades urbanas constituyen claramente un espacio para el multilingüismo, dando lugar a varias prácticas de traducción y mediación cultural (incluyendo fenómenos de hibridismo cultural y “transculturación”).

Desde la reflexión sobre estas situaciones, progresivamente más frecuentes en las sociedades multiculturales, analizaremos las nuevas condiciones de los encuentros sociales y la nueva producción literaria, que pueden conducir a repensar la noción misma de traducción.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Traducción, Multilingüismo, Mediación Cultural, Ciudad.