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INTRODUCTION

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Despite the fact that Africa houses at least 1300 languages, that most if not all African countries have populations that are fluent in more than one language and that translation is thus an everyday phenomenon in both the formal and informal economy, the field of translation studies in Africa is small, relative to other continents. The limited number of monographs, journal articles, conferences and summer schools as well as the non-existence in many countries of translator organisations attest to this assessment. At tertiary level, most of the energy is put into training translators/interpreters, and relatively little is done at the level of research into translation studies phenomena. When one pages through dictionaries, bibliographies and readers, this trend is reinforced.

The Summer School for Translation Studies in Africa, in collaboration with IATIS, hosted a two-day regional workshop at the University of Zambia in August 2014 to focus on translation in the postcolony—and beyond the postcolony. At this workshop, where Paul Bandia read a keynote paper, a growing realisation in thinking about the postcolonial condition emerged, namely, that one cannot think about the postcolony as a result of the empire only. In this realisation, the idea is growing that, these days, the postcolony should also be thought of as a space and a time that has to deal with its own historical and material conditions (including but not limited to the influences of the empire) such as AIDS, child soldiers and corruption.

The questions that drive this book initiated on African soil where African translation studies scholars were debating translation studies in Africa (obviously not in isolation from the rest of the world). With this focus, the collection set out to ask the following questions: Is (postcolonial) translation studies key/critical in (addressing) issues of the postcolony? Should one retain the notion of postcolonial translation studies, and if so, why? Should one reconsider or adapt the assumptions and methodologies of postcolonial translation studies to the new understanding of the postcolony as explained above to question the effectiveness of postcolonial translation studies in Africa to address issues of the postcolony? Deliberations also included putting the postcolony in historical perspective and taking a critical look at the failures of postcolonial approaches to translation studies and the question: Should we move beyond or away from postcolonial studies, and if so, why and how?

Another question one could ask of postcolonial studies is whether it is not embroiled in power analyses and the building of utopias such as "If we could only..." arguments without due consideration to the material reality of life. In translation studies, this relates to the question why, for example, in a continent where up to 60% of economic activity takes place in the informal economy, most of the work in translation studies still focuses on the formal economy, eschewing the particular material conditions under which translation happens. It further raises questions concerning theorising translation studies from a (bio)semiotic perspective and investigating the implications of such a conceptualisation for a "postcolonial" translation studies.

Africa, however, is not alone in contending with these issues. What is commonly known as the "Global South" shares many of the questions/ issues of/in Africa. What is more, work on globalisation and immigration tells us that the "Global North" may also have to deal with the postcolony. A book which dialogically problematises and synthesises these issues should contribute to the global debate in translation studies.

Against this conceptualisation, we invited scholars from all over the world to submit chapters for the book. Not all of the questions were addressed, but some were addressed in more detail than we expected.

Furthermore, the publication of this collection of articles coincides with the 10-year anniversary of Maria Tymoczko's (2006) influential article "Reconceptualising Western translation theory: Integrating non-Western thought about translation". The project that she put on the agenda 10 years ago still needs work, much work, on the African continent. The international relevance of this collection lies in the fact that it engages the agenda set out in Tymoczko's work and, perhaps, move beyond it.

Tymoczko (2006) lists six biases in Western translation theory, namely:

- Translators are seen a necessary factor in interlingual communication.
- Translation involves written texts.
- The primary text types with which translators work are seen to have been defined and categorised.
- Translation is seen as an individual activity.
- Professional translation is seen as the only model worth striving for.
- Culture in the current global world is, all of a sudden, seen as being hybrid.
- The object of translation studies is seen to have been adequately identified.

Firstly, translation studies suffers from a bias¹ towards the formal economy. Not only is the tendency to study phenomena from the formal economy, such as economic translation, legal translation, medical translation or literary translation, but one would also find arguments that translation by non-professionals is not regarded as translation, thus excluding non-professional subtitling from the field of translation studies. This bias means that, in the Global North, about 30% of the world's economic activities are excluded from the gaze of translation studies scholars, and in the Global South, anything between 60% and 80% of the economic activities are excluded.

Secondly, translation studies suffers from a bias towards high culture. Translating Shakespeare, literary translation and the translation of philosophy or academic texts still occupy a large part of translation studies. This means that forms of popular culture and informal culture are excluded from the purview of translation studies scholars.

Thirdly, translation studies suffers from a bias towards language. By taking the popular use of the word translation (interlingual translation) as its definition, translation studies limits itself to studying linguistic phenomena and symbolic meaning. This means that the whole range of indexical and iconic semiosis is excluded from the perspective of translation studies.

Translation studies scholars from the Global South could counter these biases by what could be called “additive alternatives”, meaning that the alternatives are not meant at replacing existing biases but at correcting them. Firstly, by doing comparative translation studies work, translation studies scholars from the Global South could give effect to the full implications of spatial and temporal relativity. In addition, comparative work could enhance a dialogic undercurrent in translation studies, bringing different traditions to talking and listening to one another.

Secondly, translation studies scholars in the Global South should take seriously the particularity of the space-time constraints under which they live. Whether one calls this a developmental perspective or a Global South perspective or something else, if Global South scholars operate on the assumption that time and space matter and look for the constraints caused by their particular time and space, they might find the unique features of translational activity in their environment which they could contribute to the global debate.

Lastly, translation studies scholars in the Global South could expand their notion of translation to semiotics rather than language (see also Tymoczko 2016). Semiotics will allow them to study pre- and post-modern phenomena, will allow them to include body and nature in the study of translation and will allow them to deal with multimodality/ mediality as it is caused by modern technological advances. By studying the translation of all kinds of meaning, not only interlinguistic meaning, translation studies scholars from the Global South could be able to suggest alternatives to approaches and patterns of thinking in the Global North that have met with a dead end.

Translation studies scholars from the Global South will not be able to change the world, or even the Global South. The activist impact of academics, we think, is overrated. The human condition is too serious to be solved by new methods of and approaches to research. Rather, we, as translation studies scholars of the world, do what is at hand. We contribute what we can on the basis of what we understand now. It may be beneficial or it may not be. Whichever, we need to engage ethically because the way in which one wages a war contains in it the germ of the kind of peace one will reap.

The chapters in this volume contribute to the agenda set out above in various ways, some of them more in line with our own views and some different from our views.

Marais asserts that this link between the translation of signs—not only language—and development is so strong that development is a process rooted in the translation of systems of meaning into further systems of meaning.

Introducing the term “deconsecration” to refer to a process the reverse of that proposed by Casanova, Talento illustrates how translation can act as deconsecrative force, tearing down a language from a position it has formerly occupied and destroying symbolic and literary capital.

Probing the migration of two translations from Tanzania to neighbouring Kenya, where the local population employed them as protest against local exploiters, Mazrui looks at the local recontextualization of the texts leading to a shift in their meaning and message.

¹ By bias, we mean a tendency towards the particular facet identified. We do not quantify this bias in any way but rather postulate it to further a particular argument.

Thurman addresses issues like the controversial blackfacing in German productions as well as idiomatic and figurative racial slurs in Shakespeare. In this article, he demonstrates the complexities of inter-semiotic translation by focusing on cultural-political translation in translating for performance on stage.

Fuentes-Luque's chapter not only focuses on cultural phenomena in the informal economy, but he also focuses on non-linguistic phenomena, namely, movies.

With reference to the greater interactive character of performance translations and features such as division of the text among different groups, Naudé, Miller-Naudé and Makutoane illustrate that participation plays a major role in religious communication, thus enhancing the acceptance of vernacular translations of the Bible.

In her article on silences in translation, Caroline Mangerel points out how much political power is exercised by non-translation. Like Holger Siever later, she also points to the need for translation across disciplinary boundaries because of increasing specialisation.

Anchieta and Alencan Pereira's article reflects something of the material particularity of the use of language, namely the fact that African novels are situated in a particular time and space by means of the multilinguality of the texts.

Like Fuentes-Luque, Hernandez chooses not to focus on literary work, but she rather exposes patterns of translation in the newspaper industry. Her article points to the importance of translation in the flow of information which shapes societies.

In her article, Tymoczko uses translation to show how difficult it is to construct a new society. Using translation data from three "Western" contexts, she shows how translation influences the ethos of an emerging society, a process that is painful, slow and messy.

Chloe Signès points out that postcolonial translation studies needs to rethink its epistemological basis. In particular, it should consider moving beyond considering the impact of the colony to considering the impact of various current social forces.

Lastly, Holger Siever deals with globalisation and hypermodernization, in which translations are needed between spheres of society in order for people from these different spheres to understand one another.

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