

**BOWKER, LYNNE. DE-MYSTIFYING TRANSLATION: INTRODUCING TRANSLATION TO NON-TRANSLATORS. NEW YORK, ROUTLEDGE, 2023. 216 PP., ISBN 9781003217718**

The presence of translation in society is becoming more ubiquitous, mainly due to globalisation, increased migration and the fact that many translation technologies are ever more pervasive nowadays (see Bielsa & Kapsaskis, 2020 and Cronin, 2006). However, there is still a distorted perspective on what translation actually entails. The primary objective of *De-mystifying Translation*, as pointed out by Bowker, is to educate non-translators who have an interest in translation (pp. 3-4) – ranging from language students to professionals who work in a multinational environment or engage in international diplomacy – on what the translation industry truly encompasses and to demystify some misconceptions. In this textbook, Bowker aims to bridge the gap between the academic and the professional sides of translation and society, delivering information in an accessible and straightforward way to non-specialist audiences.

*De-mystifying Translation* is divided into thirteen chapters, including an introduction and conclusion chapter. In the first chapter, Bowker lays out basic concepts and themes used in translation research, such as the notion of *equivalence* (p. 10), *free translation* and *literal translation* (pp. 14-15), the key differences between translation and interpreting, the different areas of specialism in which linguists perform, the roles of the source and target languages in the translation process, and the linguistic complexity of the translational process, among others. Bowker debunks misconceptions often associated with the translation industry and translation professionals. Although many of these might be all too familiar to scholars and professionals in translation studies, the target readers may not be familiar with them, so this initial approach makes the material more accessible, even for those with little prior knowledge.

The second chapter delves into the history of translation, providing seventeen different examples of translation in different societies all over the world as well as its impact and evolution. These examples introduce the reader to historical events that show the importance of translation throughout the centuries in areas such as international communication and relations, politics, and the preservation of cultures and traditions. Most importantly, these examples show how crucial translation and interpreting have been for the dissemination of information and knowledge into other languages and cultures in an array of fields, ranging from religion, philosophy and literature to science, medicine and mathematics, among others.

In Chapter 3, Bowker accurately explains what it means to be a professional translator. She explains that translation is much more diverse than what the uninitiated might think. She challenges the commonly held notion that translators merely convert words or phrases and instead emphasises that translators focus on transferring the essential message from one language into another (p. 21). She also highlights that translation is an umbrella term used to refer to activities such as interpreting, subtitling, localisation, transcreation, post-editing, and many more. I was pleasantly surprised to read about the impact of professional associations and professional training. Bowker's discussion, in this regard, touches on wages, work satisfaction, specialisation, working in-house vs. working as a freelancer, and the impacts of new automation technologies such as machine translation and translation memories, including how misconceptions surrounding them carry over to the industry.

Both Chapter 4 and 5 talk in detail about resources and tools translators use. Chapter 4 covers the main linguistic resources and tools translators often use. The chapter starts by describing the differences between language for general and special purposes in terms of lexicography and terminology. Regarding the former, Bowker rigorously explains the complex process of creating dictionaries and the many different kinds one might encounter, ranging from ordinary monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to specialised dictionaries, and mentions their differences and similarities. Regarding terminology, she explains that term banks are highly specialised and more specific than dictionaries, being multilingual and organised by concepts rather than alphabetically. Chapter 5 builds on the previous discussions on tools and resources and offers a set of criteria to analyse the usefulness of tools for particular tasks and settings. She recommends, for example, checking if the resource is relevant, credible, up-to-date, accurate and objective. Bowker also demonstrates the usefulness of using multilingual metasearch engines, bilingual concordancers, translation communities and discussion forums, and even *prooflistening* for revision. I was particularly pleased by the fact that the two chapters are extremely detailed and mention exceptional and trustworthy resources and tools, such as IATE, TERMIUM or even ProZ, which makes these chapters more valuable for those interested in starting a career in translation. Another positive point is that Bowker provides visual examples, such as figures, to exemplify how these resources work (pp. 83-85).

Chapter 6 focuses on machine translation (MT). Bowker introduces MT's history, where she explains how it has evolved throughout the years and its many different types. She then focuses on educating the general public on MT literacy. Machine translation literacy is becoming more necessary over the years (see Bowker & Ciro 2019, Bowker 2019) given the rise of free and

accessible MT technologies. It is therefore crucial to equip non-specialist end users with the knowledge and skills necessary for the critical use of these technologies, so that they can make informed decisions about whether and when to use MT engines, such as Google Translate, DeepL Translator or Baidu Translate, while being mindful of the associated benefits and risks. In this chapter, Bowker lays important groundwork for future efforts toward this aim. Nonetheless, this chapter might feel a little bit too dense, especially for non-translators, due to the mention of some technical terms and processes. One example is the reference to parallel and training corpora, that arise in this chapter without prior introduction. Although Bowker mentions the words corpus and corpora in previous chapters, even pointing out that corpus-based resources would be introduced in more detail in Chapter 5, the author never fully explains this concept and does not include these terms in the glossary at the end of the book. I believe that, in future editions, this book would benefit from further clarification on what these terms encompass so non-specialists can get a better understanding of these concepts. Still, this chapter contains excellent information on MT worth disseminating to non-translators.

In Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, Bowker discusses specific areas of specialism, namely localisation, adaptation and transcreation, summarisation and cross-modal communication, audiovisual translation, and interpreting.

As Bowker argues, localisation is a complex process that involves not just linguistic matters but also cultural and regional, since “a target audience usually has both linguistic and regional preferences that they would like to see in their target text, and this combination of language and region is referred to as a locale” (p. 114). Today, 65% of online shoppers prefer content in their own language and 40% refuse to consume products in other languages (CSA Research, 2020 and DePalma et al., 2006), which highlights the importance of localisation for the success of businesses at an international level. Bowker stresses that, apart from having a strong command of the language and culture of their locale, localisers also need to adapt non-linguistic aspects such as measuring systems, date format, colours, images, fonts and layouts. Adaptation and transcreation, which are two concepts closely related to advertising and marketing, involve knowing how to persuade your audience and how to make an emotional connection with them (see Benetello 2018). In transcreation jobs, literal translations are hardly ever used, and professionals often have to create content from scratch while conveying the “same impact, effectiveness, and emotional connection in another language, which may require the text to be changed quite a bit” (p. 129). The examples in this chapter perfectly demonstrate the importance of transcreation in society, and particularly in the business world, considering that transcreation can make or break a business, like the banking and financial services firm HSBC that

“ended up having to pay millions as part of a rebranding effort after their campaign slogan ‘Assume Nothing’ was erroneously rendered as ‘Do Nothing’ in several countries” (p. 139 *apud* Robinson 2009).

Summarisation and cross-modal communication are not always associated with translation by non-specialist audiences, but they are crucial. As Bowker effectively demonstrates, translators must excel in summarising information when reformulating texts across languages. Cross-modal communication refers to the conversion of messages from one medium to another (e.g. sight translating a menu at a restaurant). I find this chapter excellent at demonstrating the complexity of the profession and, most importantly, at showcasing other soft skills translators must acquire.

Strictly connected to both summarisation and cross-modal communication is the field of audiovisual translation – an umbrella term used in translation scholarship that includes practices such as subtitling, dubbing and voiceover, among others. While the chapter has many merits to it, one of its sections fails to focus on the skills and responsibilities of professional audiovisual translators and the challenges they face. Instead, the author discusses *fansubbing*, which, in my opinion, constitutes a missed opportunity. It would have been advisable to provide readers with some insights into the key stakeholders and common workflows of what is today one of the most dynamic sectors of the translation industry (see Díaz-Cintas & Massidda, 2019). Although learning about other forms of non-professional translation, such as *fandubbing* and *romhacking*, is interesting, a deeper exploration of professional audiovisual translation would have been more valuable.

Lastly, Bowker explains how interpreting differs from (text) translation in many aspects such as timeline, research, tools and resources, or workflows, though, more importantly, she highlights that interpreting often happens in real time (see Pöchhacker, 2010). She outlines the characteristics of and differences between consecutive and simultaneous interpreting – e.g. simultaneous interpreters can be more efficient in large conference settings, whereas consecutive interpreting is typical in community or public-service settings (Pöchhacker, 2012). Another interesting point in this chapter is the topic of non-professional interpreting, which, albeit viewed negatively by some, is a feasible solution when a professional interpreter may not be instantly available (e.g. medical emergencies, crises, or low-stakes conflicts) as discussed by O’Mathúna et al. (2020).

Overall, this textbook provides a comprehensive introduction to the complex world of translation practice. The writing style is easy to follow and accessible, and there are many useful exercises at the end of each chapter to help readers digest the most relevant content. There are also academic

references at the end of each chapter, related to the relevant topics. Bowker undoubtedly excels at explaining the many facets of the translation industry and what they encompass. Her latest textbook thus represents a valuable resource for scholars of all levels, but I believe it might be more beneficial when used in an introductory course or for students in academia, considering how in depth it talks about translation. For researchers in the field, however, this textbook might not offer much novel information. I find this textbook is particularly more interesting for self-learners who want to learn about translation in depth or for those looking to start working in translation, as pointed out by Bowker. Another use of this book might be in machine translation literacy courses for non-specialised learners – which might include journalists, medical practitioners or business leaders. All things considered, this book is an excellent contribution for translation studies and an indispensable resource to be used in education since it provides a general and state-of-the-art overview of translation.

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