

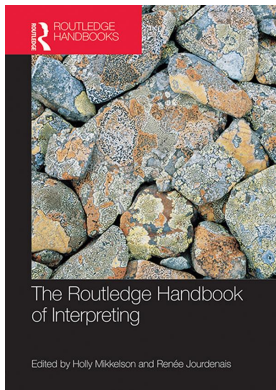
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10

TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION

Carmen Valero-Garcés

Introduction

Within the field of translation and interpreting studies, the literature produced on the subject of transcription has been less than extensive for research purposes, despite its importance in the professional arena (trials, police wiretaps, language learning, research). There are also a great number of disciplines (applied linguistics, second language teaching, ethnography, ethnomethodology, anthropology) which use transcripts of conversations or documents for their studies.

The aim of this chapter is twofold: on the one hand, to examine the theoretical and practical issues involved in transcribing and translating for different purposes (forensic, medical, research, business) and, on the other hand, to explore some applications in different fields (information, journalism, second language teaching and learning, interpreting and translation, training).

First, as a brief introduction, I will provide some basic definitions of the main concepts, and outline the skills needed to create transcripts. I will also discuss different types of transcripts and their uses; secondly, some notes on early developments in the field of transcription and translation (TR&tl) will follow; thirdly a more detailed description of some of the most representative uses of TR&tl will be explored; finally, some advances and new directions in TR&tl, a result of the increasing number of recorded conversations that require transcription/translation for different purposes, will be mentioned.

Main concepts, skills, uses and types

The term ‘transcription’ can have different meanings. The *Oxford English Dictionary* includes two entries:

Transcribe. Verb [with object]

- 1 put (thoughts, speech, or data) into written or printed form: each interview was taped and transcribed
- 2 transliterate (foreign characters) or write or type out (shorthand, notes, or other abbreviated forms) into ordinary characters or full sentences: the court was adjourned so that they could transcribe their notes.

Hatim and Munday (2004: 351) define transcription as a “Translation that retains the form of the ST [source text] item in the TT [target text], frequently used for names”. For our purposes, TR&tl refers to the process of converting oral discourse to written form and translating the results.

Considering the skills needed for TR&tl, as with sight translation (see Chapter 9 for sight translation), transcription and translation is a hybrid and complex activity involving both interpreting and translating skills. It requires some level of innate ability, but also requires a high level of proficiency in both the source and target languages, superior listening and comprehension skills, the ability to understand the speaker’s perspective and to accurately render such perspective into the target language, the ability to concentrate, familiarity with the cultures involved, experience in listening to undercover recordings and oral wire intercepts, and several non-linguistic skills, including, but not limited to, analytical skills, knowledge of protocols and familiarity with the use of transcription equipment, transcription protocols, models and conventions, and the purposes of the transcription/translation.

As for the uses for transcripts, they are also diverse and interconnected. In this chapter the focus will be on the following:

- Research and the development of different forms of corpora for different purposes.
- Teaching and learning of foreign languages, providing assistance and reinforcement in native language study or the creation of educational materials, or curriculum design.
- Media and entertainment, especially as relates to audiovisual translation (AVT), within which we could include subtitling in the general sense, but also other varieties such as: complete or partial film subtitling, live translation during performances (opera, theatre), subtitling for the deaf or for the visually impaired (see also Chapter 18 for media interpreting).
- Forensic applications, which involve the transcription and translation of any recording used as evidence in the courts or even during the investigative process.

All in all, TR&tl serves different purposes and is important not only for interpreters or translators as part of their work or specialization, but also for historians, anthropologists, journalists, judges, and many others.

In terms of the methodology, there is no agreement on which process to follow. Two methods are most typical:

- transcribe the text in the source language (SL) and then translate to the target language text (TT).
- transcribe the TT directly.

Choosing one or the other depends on several factors, such as the expertise of the transcriber/translator, the purpose of the assignment, or issues involving time or profit, among others.

There are also two modes of transcription, whether we are referring to a transcript produced in the SL or a translation:

- Phonetic/phonological transcription
- Orthographic transcription or transliteration, which in turn can be broken down into orthographic transcription in itself, and discursive transcription (which is considered, in some circles, to be a mode which exists apart and independently).

Phonetic/phonological transcription provides a faithful rendering of pronunciation and tends to be important in certain cases, for example when there are sociolinguistic aspects present in the

speaker's speech, when the speaker is foreign, or when the speaker exhibits characteristics of pathological speech.

In the case of orthographic transcription or transliteration, transcription which is merely orthographic, or transliteration, can exhibit different degrees of precision and provides an account of the language used by the speaker. Discursive transcription focuses on aspects which are pragmatic in nature and reveals details of the interaction which would go unnoticed by the ordinary listener. Some elements to bear in mind are, for example, pauses, silences, overlaps, extensions, restarts, prosodic ups and downs, whispered speech, etc. It involves the literal transcription of recordings. This means that all elements, both linguistic and extralinguistic, must be transcribed and attention must be paid to different levels of language (spelling, lexicon, syntax, pragmatic aspects), along with sounds which normally go unnoticed, or words and sounds such as stuttering, false starts, small talk, the ring of a telephone, car alarms, etc. This type of transcription is often carried out for legal purposes and, in such cases, is considered forensic. In contrast, when it is carried out for business purposes or for certain investigations, summary transcription or meaning-focused transcription is preferred, which focuses uniquely on the meaning of the utterance.

All of the above-mentioned elements of speech are represented using symbols. However, there is no internationally accepted system, but rather many different systems, each with its own conventions of transcription, which reflect diverse aspects of the interaction. The majority of these systems are based on the so-called Jefferson Method (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Jefferson, 1987), a method developed within the framework of ethnomethodology and American conversational analysis. This method reflects diverse elements of the interaction (e.g., turns of speech, overlaps, consecutive interjections from the participants).

There have been several attempts at developing systems of transcription. The generally accepted requirements that a transcript must meet are:

- Neutrality or a faithful rendering so that the transcript will not be subjective
- Thoroughness or completeness, including all elements which appear as part of the oral speech in their totality
- Omnifunctionality, allowing for different uses and applications
- Clarity, both from the standpoint of learning the system and in terms of the legibility of the rendering
- Universality of compatibility with different software or computer systems
- Sparing use of symbols that are clear, simple, unambiguous, and compatible with standardized international systems

These systems are often based on or implement digital transcription software programs such as CHILDES, SALT, CLAN, EXMARaLDA, TRANSANA, or PerLA. These programs include rules for the use of capital and lowercase letters, the transcription of numerical sequences and letters, and the use of punctuation marks. Procedures are also established for transcribing pronunciation errors, unintelligible words, word fragments, elisions, and non-verbal acoustic events such as “full pauses”, noise from the speakers, steady background noise in the recording, or intermittent sounds.

The creation of transcription software is without a doubt a great step in the field of digital TR&tl. This software contains systems of concepts, data formats, and tools for the computer-assisted transcription and annotation of spoken language. They can be used with different operating systems, and some allow for data exchange with other systems and for segmentation of transcription data according to several transcription conventions.

Choosing between phonetic/phonological transcription and orthographic transcription depends on the purpose that the transcription will serve. Some experts in speech analysis (Duranti 1997; Jefferson 1987; Atkinson and Heritage 1984) point out the dilemma that exists between expressing the “what” and the “how”. In other words, they point out the conflict between orthographic representation alone, which ignores variants in language, or more extensive representation that takes possible deviations in meaning into account. In addition, the quality of the audio and intelligibility of speech are other factors which can influence the method chosen.

Historical perspectives on transcription and translation

Without going into too much depth, 20th century history reveals that as early as World War I, in what were then called war ministries, there were those who worked intercepting enemy communications, which were then transcribed into their own language. Often, these same individuals created propaganda; sending oral and written messages in the enemy language with the intention of swaying the opinion of the civilian population. Many of the translators and interpreters that worked in the League of Nations carried out assignments of this kind (see Chapter 1 for more on the history of interpreting).

Interceptions of messages by “eavesdroppers”, who understood the language and transferred it to the language of their “homeland” were also extremely common during the Second World War. Some famous interpreters, like Hans Jacob (a German Jew) or André Kaminker (French), hosted radio programs from Boston and London, respectively, to broadcast propaganda against the Nazis and their supporters. It is also known that during the Nazi regime, there was even an organized translation service which grew to include 30 languages and which was created in order to produce news propaganda, both in print and on film (personal conversation with former UN interpreter, May 2010).

After the war, another important development in the use of transcripts was the news coverage of the Nuremberg Trials, which was transmitted in several languages. As we all know, these proceedings are to a great extent responsible for putting the interpreting profession on the map, thanks in part to the transcription of the events into other languages as they occurred during the trial (see Chapters 1 and 5).

We can also find references made to transcripts by Soviet interpreters during the so-called “Cold War”. These interpreters would write reports to send to their supervisors, based upon notes they had taken during certain conversations in which they had taken part. In these references, they sometimes mentioned how they feared they were being recorded by microphones in the rooms and, in fact, according to the personal comments made by one United Nations interpreter, they used to speak in low voices to avoid being overheard. Another example of the value and power of transcripts can be found in the comments made by Cuban interpreters during a mission to certain Asian countries regarding the presence of microphones in rooms for the purpose of translating the conversations into other languages (personal conversation with former UN interpreter, May 2010).

The standard form of recording speech throughout the 20th century was stenographic transcription (using different types of machines, depending on the country and language), where the stenographers (who were typically later replaced by tachygraphers) would listen to what was said and then write it down on paper. The use of taped recordings to make transcripts is far more recent and did not come into consistent use until the 1970s. Nowadays, recordings of live sessions of numerous organizations (e.g. the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council) are still used for transcription, although the tendency is to record digitally using an

optical disc, or to use voice recognition and data processing computer programs to render transcriptions.

At the present time, both national and international security agencies make transcripts from “tapped” telephone conversations, which are generally ordered or authorized by a judge to be used in the pursuit of crimes such as drug trafficking and international terrorism.

In fact, there is an increasing number of private companies devoted to transferring spoken content (from audio or audiovisual recordings) to written transcripts using voice recognition computer programs. However, where “sensitive”, security-related content is involved, this task is usually carried out by the translators and interpreters employed by security agencies.

Current trends and uses of transcription and translation

This section will examine some of the most representative uses of TR&tl in different fields: research in corpora, language teaching and learning, media and entertainment, and legal settings.

Research

One of the most direct applications of transcription in research is found in the creation of oral corpora (spoken language corpora), which can serve numerous purposes and which use different systems of transcription. The purpose of the oral corpora is to gather a large quantity of electronic data which, in general, are adapted according to the objectives of the different transcription systems described above.

Computer-assisted transcription and translation is one of the most direct applications in the construction and analysis of electronic spoken language corpora. Llisterrí (1996) mentions three kinds of oral corpora: (1) Phonetic and phonological inventory, (2) oral corpora for the development of technological applications and (3) the so-called “spoken language corpus”. Each one of these three research perspectives influences the kind of speech sample collected, the setting, the recording (natural or controlled setting), and the kind of transcription and translation. In general, oral corpora that are represented in writing can be summarized in three ways:

- 1 Orthographic adaptation
- 2 Differential coding and labelling
- 3 A combination of orthography and typography meant to represent the reality of conversation.

What follows is an example taken from the CREA (*Corpus de referencia del español actual*) which uses one of the most extensive systems of coding and labelling, the TEI (*Text Encoding Initiative*). This enables the labelling of a broad range of samples through the use of established criteria used in the transcription of many modern corpora. The CREA enables the spoken language corpus to be accessed in two ways: through orthographic rendering alone or through rendering with additional marks. The following example serves as an illustration:

Droga? Es un tema tabú, tío. ¿Sí? Eso es complicadísimo. fuimos, y estuvimos desde que llegamos hasta el cuarto día o así no maría. Y luego la la siguiente vez también fue complicadísimo. Fue ¿Pero no se vende por la calle y tal? Pues no no no.

[*Drugs? That's a taboo thing, man. Right? That's really complicated. We went and we were there from the time we got there until the fourth day or so no maria. And then the next time too was super complicated. He was all But isn't that sold in the street and all that? Well no no no it isn't.*] (the author's translation).

<< U WHO = "UAM022.PER001" ><< F > ¿Droga? <> /F <> < F > Es un tema tabú, tío. <</F < > << /UT >
 < U WHO = "UAM022.PER002" >< F > ¿Sí? < /F >< /UT >
 < U WHO = "UAM022.PER001" >< F > Eso es complicadísimo. < /F >< F >
 < UNCLEAR
 CERT = "UNINTELLIGIBLE" >< /UNCLEAR > fuimos, y estuvimos desde que llegamos hasta el cuarto día o así no < UNCLEAR CERT = "UNINTELLIGIBLE" >< /UNCLEAR > maria.
 < /F >< F > Y luego < DISTINCT TYPE = "REPE" > la la < /DISTINCT > siguiente vez también fue complicadísimo. < /F >< F > Fue < PAUSE >< /F >< /UT >
 < U WHO = "UAM022.PER002" >< F > ¿Pero no se vende por la calle y tal? < /F >< /UT >
 < U WHO = "UAM022.PER001" >< F > Pues < DISTINCT TYPE = "REPE" > no no no < /DISTINCT >

Using these codes offers certain advantages such as a precise search engine, rapid location of phenomena and quantification of data, as well as interchangeability and "reusability", given the compatibility sought between computing systems and the increasingly widespread agreement among the research community regarding their use.

This said, electronic corpora also present some disadvantages:

- 1 This type of transliteration does not take into account other prosodic elements linked to spoken language, such as the length of pauses, overlaps in speech, etc. These elements may be necessary depending on the purpose of the transcription.
- 2 The marks which are used can impede or hinder the reading of the text and obligate the reader to read the text according to a two-tiered process: the orthographic text on one hand and on the other, the additional coded metatext.
- 3 The transcribers are not always specialists, and transcriptions are often assigned to interns, postgraduate students, or research project staff, which is why there is a broad margin for subjective interpretation and few clear guidelines.

As for the use of transcripts in research, the process of obtaining and analysing data is usually as follows: the setting and participants are described, then recordings of naturally-occurring encounters are made, and finally, the transcript is provided and then translated. If there are any problems regarding the more mechanical aspects involved in producing the transcript, especially in the case of distant languages or cultures such as the Chinese, Russian, or Arabic languages, comments to that effect might be included.

The scientific process of transcription involves the use of software and professional audio equipment and is usually performed in a laboratory setting where the transcriber can listen without distractions. Digital recording devices are far more common than analogue devices and facilitate the tasks of saving, copying, and loading the audio files during the transcription process. These devices allow a wide variety of methods to be employed and can even be used to decipher speech which is only marginally intelligible. These methods include the modification of reproduction speed, amplification, and the use of audio filters to minimize unwanted frequencies and enable the transcriber to focus on a speaker's syntactic, lexical, phonological, or discursive elements. The use of this electronic equipment saves time and money, and of course adds fidelity to the source text. Advances in computer-assisted transcription technology and

software (e.g., FOLKER, ELAN, TRANSANA) have been extremely helpful in simplifying a tedious, repetitive, and mentally exhausting process.

Transcription is also used for other research-related activities such as the recording and transcription of different types of conversations in diverse fields of study ranging from applied linguistics to ethnography and interpreting and translation studies.

Evidence of the broadened use of transcription in Translation and Interpreting Studies can be found in the high percentage of empirical research based on data obtained from authentic recorded speech, which is collected and later analysed and transcribed using the fundamentals of discourse analysis and conversation analysis methodology as a frame of reference. Typically, a statement is included which declares that any personal details mentioned in the transcribed speech have been altered to maintain participants' anonymity. One need only look at the collection of published articles from the most recent Critical Link conferences (2005 and 2007) to verify this assertion and to find examples of how transcripts are used to analyse the role of the interpreter, or examples from studies on dialogue interpreting taken from different areas, such as television interviews and talk shows (Straniero-Sergio 1999; Wadensjö 2006), or from business interactions (see Garzone 2002; Fogazzaro and Gavioli 2004; Gavioli and Maxwell 2007).

The use of TR&tl in language teaching and learning

The use of TR&tl in language teaching and learning is also a long-recognized area which is quite productive and fruitful. TR&tl is used to transcribe dialogues or summarize oral texts from one language into another, or to create subtitles designed specifically as a didactic tool for the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Thus, in the case of subtitles for example, Dollerup (1974) highlights the didactic value of interlingual subtitles as a language learning tool used in Denmark; Duff (1989) writes about the use of mother language and translation in foreign language learning; and Schäffner (2002) emphasizes the influence of discourse analysis in translator training. These are examples of the many theoreticians that have stressed that having access to the original and being able to compare it with its translation is a very useful tool.

One of the first examples of TR&tl was the collection of English language film videos with English subtitles entitled *Speak Up*, produced by Columbia Tristar Video in the 1990s. In Spain, in 2002, the newspaper *El País* produced, in collaboration with Disney, the collection *Diviértete con el inglés* [Have fun with English], a collection of classics from Disney in their original English format with English subtitles, designed so that young people could become familiar with the English language in an enjoyable way. In France, *Channel 5* has for many years been broadcasting some of its programs in French with subtitles in French in order to promote the learning of the language.

In all of these cases, it is quite common to find three or more lines full of lexical repetition and incomplete sentences, exclamation marks and spellings that are closer to a literal transcription, as well as word for word translation of dialogues requiring a certain reading speed.

A consolidation of this practice as a didactic tool came with the arrival of the DVD, as it allows different tracks with transcription and translation in subtitles in different languages, thus promoting transcription and interlingual translation. Nowadays the Internet offers many other possibilities (e.g., subtitling live events, audio description).

Another new direction taken in this field is the use of subtitles for students with disabilities, mainly for the deaf and hearing-impaired. A good example is the book by Romero-Fresco (2011), *Subtitling through Speech Recognition: Respeaking*. Respeaking is considered to be a special form of oral transcription. It refers to the production of subtitles through speech recognition.

Although the book does not focus directly on transcription and translation, some of the topics covered can be useful or relevant for TR&tl. They include topics such as the different methods used to produce live subtitles and the training and professional practice of respeaking around the world, the development of skills required before, during and after the respeaking process, and an analysis of the reception of respeaking.

TR&tl offers great educational potential to people with limited knowledge of a country's languages or for those with certain disabilities, but in the multilingual and multicultural societies in which we live, it can also be of help to immigrants or children in maintaining their mother tongues in foreign countries or even in their own countries, or in learning new languages in the case of students who are not fluent in a given language. An example can be found in the studies by Jan-Louis Kruger (2012) regarding the use of transcripts in native languages in South Africa or in English to teach students who are not proficient in English.

These areas are still underdeveloped and have only been addressed by a small group of authors, but we must recognize that this is, in fact, a direction that could be taken in the future in the fields of language teaching and learning and TR&tl.

TR&tl in the mass media and entertainment/business setting

Another use for transcription and translation is found in social media – especially in audiovisual communication. This can serve a wide range of objectives: informative, commercial or for entertainment – in films, reports, news, interviews, advertisements, etc. – in which we see increasingly more translation and transcription of oral messages. AVT might be considered a transcription technique which is subject to a series of specific norms and in which the type of transcription used ranges from orthographic transcription (interviews), which permits no variation, to summary transcription (parliamentary speeches), to phonological adaptation (film subtitling).

The entertainment market also uses transcription extensively in the form of AVT. Karaoke, movies and all sort of programs use subtitling, whether intra or interlingual, involving transcription which adheres to different conventions depending on the purpose. This is almost always restricted to the more spoken or influential languages such as English, French, German, and Spanish. One example of a film which combines different transcription conventions and languages is the Spanish film *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, which is sold on DVD with two interlingual tracks in English and a further two in German. Of these two, one is for the hearing population and the other for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

It is also a fact that TR&tl is needed in bilingual geographical areas such as Belgium, with its Walloon and Flemish communities, or in Finland, in Swedish and Finnish, or in Israel or Jordan, where Hebrew and Arabic are spoken or in Spain, where Catalanian and Spanish co-exist. In these areas, AVT is extensively used and many technological advances have occurred within this field.

According to Diaz-Cintas (2003), subtitling as one of the main forms of AVT may be defined as a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off camera).

In some circles, subtitling is not considered translation proper because of all the spatial and temporal limitations imposed by the medium itself, which impact the end result considerably, and some practitioners prefer instead to talk about “adaption”. Nor can it be considered transcription, for similar reasons. However, if a more dynamic and open perspective

is taken in defining translation studies, one which allows the inclusion of new realities (sign language interpretation, multimedia translation, post-editing), transcription in subtitling might be considered another special field within translation studies which deserves more attention. From this perspective, subtitling as a hybrid, where sound and images interact and oral speech is transferred into a written text or transcript, could be considered a kind of transcription and translation.

Another well-known form of AVT which involves TR&tl is dubbing, which consists of the substitution of the voices of the actors shown on the screen with those of different performers speaking another language. There are also other forms, such as voice-over, partial-dubbing, narration and interpreting, the translation of live performance, subtitling for the opera and the theatre, subtitling for the deaf and hearing-impaired (SDH), and audio description for the blind or visually impaired (AD). All of these practices use transcription and translation at some stage and therefore involve the conversion of an oral text into a written one. The only difference may lie in the intended audience. Díaz-Cintas (2003: 13), referring to these new and innovative professional activities, considers that whether the hurdle is language or a sensorial barrier, the aim of the translation process is exactly the same: to facilitate access to an otherwise hermetic source of information and entertainment. In this way accessibility becomes a common denominator that underpins these practices, as is the case with TR&tl.

These practices are also being affected by the use of computer games and interactive software programs, and subtitling and TR&tl, albeit indirectly, are shifting closer to localization, since these games are not only subtitled, but also adapted to the cultural sensibilities of the target gamers. These new trends are representative of a broader move: different forms of audiovisual translation and other translation modes are converging, creating hybrid forms and sometimes catering to very diverse, but well-defined target audiences. The translator also has to face different methods of TR&tl:

- Pre-prepared subtitles (or offline subtitling) where complete sentences are first produced and later reduced, translated and adapted;
- Live or real-time subtitles (or online subtitling) where the transcription is first human-made and then the translation (and subtitling) is machine-translated.

In the first type the translator has plenty of time to perform their work, whereas the online type is live. The tendency in the latter situation is to use voice recognition: A person dictates the speech into a microphone connected to a computer using a speech recognition program that converts speech into written text. However, the relatively high number of spelling mistakes that make it to the screen means that input from human beings – say, trained transcribers and translators – is still necessary. In any case it is a complex activity involving complicated mental processes, time constraints, and takes much effort to coordinate.

Continuing with this open-minded approach, “fansubs” also involve transcription and translation in the sense that an oral message is rendered into written text. The philosophy underlying this type of AVT is the free distribution over the Internet of audiovisual programmes with subtitles done by fans. The translation is done for free by fans of these programs and then posted on the Internet so that anyone who is interested may read them. From an academic point of view, not much research has been done on this activity done by fans for fans (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006), but it is, together with those mentioned before, a new form of converting oral texts into written ones and moving from one language to another. This contrasts with the more traditional types of transcribing and translating, such as forensic transcription and translation, which are explained below.

Forensic transcription and translation

Forensic translation and transcription (FTT) is a long-used but also somewhat unknown application, and one that, despite its importance, has not received much attention.

FTT is the process of transcribing and translating audio/video recordings of speech from foreign language speaking individuals for use as evidentiary material in the legal process. It is a two-part process consisting of: (1) a verbatim orthographic transcript of an evidentiary recording, and (2) the transcript's conceptually verbatim translation into other language.

In other words, FTT entails an accurate, unaltered, and complete translation reproducing all the linguistic, paralinguistic, and pragmatic meaning of the speakers in any (source) language exactly, or as close to exactly as possible, producing a legally equivalent translation.

Transcription conventions, as already pointed out, are not universal and the purpose may also be different. Nevertheless, it is commonly accepted that the manner in which the transcript – and subsequently the translation – is prepared must involve as little interference from the transcriber as possible. These means that the transcriber and translator must be familiar with and able to use some conventions that are part of generally accepted practice and which help to solve the transcription and translation issues as they arise.

The variety of texts that can be considered forensic and the characteristics of these texts is remarkable and can range from formal texts to non-grammatical texts, full of idiomatic expressions, fixed expressions, idiolects or jargon used by small social groups, or slang. Any conversation used as evidence falls within the forensic classification. Some examples are suspect interrogations, witness statements, secret recordings, general conversations, phone calls, calls to the police, etc.

As Palma (2004, n.p.) states: “We [The translators] have to balance the rigidity of legal translation with the leniency of literary translation, to arrive at a solution that is accurate in every sense. Otherwise we run the risk of providing nonsensical literal translations that totally distort the original message.” She gives the example of the translation “*no tengo ni un kilo en el bolsillo*” to “*I don't even have a kilo in my pocket*” instead of “*I don't have a single penny in my pocket*”.

Literature on FTT is less than extensive. But most practitioners recognize that FTT is a very complex task, and as Palma (2004, n.p.) adds: “I find that translating a tape transcript is both frightening and exhilarating. This is the only instance in which we have ‘permission’ to move away from the severity a courtroom imposes, and explore the depths of language use and human communication. When a Colombian says ‘*¿qué más?*’, is it ‘what else?’ or ‘how you doin?’ When a Dominican says ‘*dímelo, tigraso*’, is he actually talking to someone called ‘*tigraso*’ [big tiger], or is he saying something more akin to ‘talk to me, big guy.’”

On the other hand, there are different levels of forensic linguistic analysis that require different kinds of transcription. These levels are:

- Graphemic, useful in transcribing characters from different alphabets.
- Phonetic and phonological, useful for example in the case of commercial brands where the name/sounds could be deceptive or false.
- Morphological, useful in identifying different dialects or the word composition of commercial brands.
- Syntactical, useful for the analysis of syntactic structures and sentences used in contracts or in the case of identifying authorship or plagiarism, for example.
- Semantic, necessary in many lawsuits over brands or copyrights, for example in McDonald's use of the calque Mc-inexpensive.

- Pragmatic, useful for identifying messages in context, inferences, or an author's intention, which would be lost if translated out of context. Examples include the meaning of "vale" in Spanish or "right" in English at certain times and within different contexts.
- Functions of speech such as offering, asking, apologizing, saying goodbye, and accepting, for example, in cases involving bribery and prostitution or discrimination.
- Sociolinguistics and dialectology, when identifying people with regional accents, for example.
- Speech analysis, which involves analysis of conversation and the use of discursive markers, the way phrases are initiated or the use of stylistic resources, for example, to identify people. In this sense, pragmatic and discursive values, the speaker's intention and the effect this can have on the target text become quite important. Some authors who have explored this field are, for example, Berk-Seligson (1990), Krouglov (1999), and Hale (2004).

Everything mentioned above requires specific skills, and therefore also requires training and practice which is complementary to and goes beyond typical translator or interpreter training (see Chapter 25 on training interpreters). That said, in terms of the skills or abilities one must possess in TR&tl, González *et al.* (2012) assert that the skills required to perform FTT work are congruent with the core competencies and formal knowledge and experience essential for court interpreters. These are: (1) superior, native-like proficiency in both the source language and target language, including formal knowledge; (2) depth and breadth of general vocabulary and specialized terminology; (3) sociocultural competence; (4) metalinguistic awareness; (5) demonstrated skills in translation and interpretation; (6) higher order cognitive skills; (7) knowledge of the justice system and legal procedures; and (8) knowledge of and adherence to professional ethical standards. However, FTT also demands additional unique skills and areas of knowledge which are related to the FTT specialist's primary task of transcribing and translating spoken language.

There are no specific, universally recognized regulations with respect to the transcripts used in judicial proceedings. It is the case law of each country that determines the guidelines in terms of the validity or invalidity of the transcripts used as evidence. The use of transcripts is usually defined in the legislation governing the use of telephone communication as evidence, which stipulates that a basic requirement is that it be obtained through lawful means. The permissible means of obtaining evidence in different countries are different, as are the reasons cited when trying to have an undercover recording and its transcription declared unlawful or illicit. Among the different reasons alleged by González *et al.* (2012) are a lack of or insufficient motive; a lack of judicial oversight when collecting evidence, enforcement, and subsequent deferral of phone taps; legal inaccuracy of authorization; or lack of supporting materials needed to authorize the recording, something which frequently occurs in many judicial bodies lacking adequate equipment; and assigning the task to translators or interpreters or even merely bilingual individuals without assessing the difficulty and risk involved if a defective transcript is produced. In addition to the overall challenges in gathering the evidence, there are some irregularities that may be found regarding the transcripts themselves which may eliminate a transcript from consideration as evidence. These may include:

- Errors involving telephone numbers;
- Transcripts are not checked against audio recordings;
- Recordings are not listened to as part of a preliminary investigation;
- No record of the translator who produced the translation;
- No record of who produced the transcript or their level of competence.

Most frequently, the irregularities are not found in the transcript itself nor in its structure or organization, but rather in the process of collecting the recordings used for the transcript.

Currently, as we have mentioned in previous sections of this chapter, many recordings are made in controlled settings using professional audio equipment that enables transcription, with a few limitations. This said, in the field of forensic translation and transcription, these recordings are sometimes done in secret, from a distance and in a noisy setting, using poor quality equipment and inadequate recording methods. These recordings can be very difficult to decipher, and sometimes require the skills and knowledge of translators/interpreters with specific linguistic training, or the help of expert phoneticians or other professionals who are not always available and who do not always possess the software that facilitates the task of TR&tl.

There are not many references or studies focused on the role the interpreter plays – or could play – and the difficulties faced when he or she must transcribe oral conversations with legal implications. One of the few examples found is an article on asylum hearings by Pöchlhacker and Kolb (2009). The authors comment on the difficulties of transcribing but also analyse the interpreter's role as co-producer of the written record, this record being prime evidence in many cases:

This evidentiary function tends to increase the weight given to the written record. ... not least in documenting vagueness or contractions in an applicants' account in the event of a negative decision. The written record, thus, is closer in nature to a verbatim standard, with far-reaching implications for the work of the interpreter in such hearings.
(Pöchlhacker and Kolb 2009: 121)

Later they add:

There is no doubt that the interpreters who assume responsibility for the correctness and completeness of the record – e.g. by spelling out names, indicating punctuation, pausing for the typist or repeating parts of their delivery – enhance the efficiency of the interviewing process. Nevertheless, their additional role as co-producers of the record may also come with added liability in case of inconsistencies or outright errors in the written outcome of the hearing.

(Pöchlhacker and Kolb 2009: 129)

Other examples that reveal the importance of transcription and translation in legal processes can be found in the research on terrorist attacks and distant languages and cultures, as is the case of Spanish and Arabic in the articles by Valero-Garcés and Abkari (2010) and Taibi and Martin (2012). Their work reveals some of the main difficulties found in FTT by experts and researchers:

- Lack of specific training and adequate resources.
- Absence of directives and precise criteria for transcripts.
- Lack of knowledge regarding the central objective of the transcript or investigations.
- Lack of clear limits defining work of the transcriber and translator/interpreter or change of roles.
- Lack of information regarding the origin and length of the recording and the target audience.
- Urgent need for transcripts, without ways and means of expediting them, and based on a hasty reading.
- Lack of well-defined training areas such as linguistic and cultural geography or sociolinguistics, necessary to place the speakers within their context and contextualize their outward expressions, with the knowledge of how to respect and represent the implicit and explicit connotative registers in order to avoid producing a bad transcript or an unintentional falsification.

- Lack of knowledge about or access to electronic resources designed to support digital transcription or to process digital speech.
- Lack of concrete instructions and oversight and quality control mechanisms.

More research of this type is clearly needed, in addition to professionalization and certification within the subfield of FTT. Cordero-Esquivel and Cordero (2009) offer some recommendations to guide the professionalization of this specialized field and to ensure the production of forensic transcripts/translations that meet evidentiary standards of reliability, competence, relevance, and admissibility. These include:

- Establish minimum qualifications, testing, and certification for FTT specialists.
- Follow linguistically sound protocol and procedure, including the use of standardized legends in the performance of FTT.
- Oppose the use of untrained, untested, noncertified lay persons, police personnel or other alleged bilinguals who lack proper FTT skills, qualifications, and training to undertake such tasks.
- Educate judges and attorneys regarding the standards and qualifications necessary to perform FTT, in addition to informing them of the required methodology to produce a valid and reliable FTT document.

The first step could be the recognition of a transcription system or legend, such as the one suggested by González *et al.* (2nd ed. 2012) in *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation. Theory, Policy, and Practice*, or the efforts by the group ILFE (*Lingüística Forense*, Forensic Linguistics in English) and FITISPos (*Formación e Investigación en Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos*, Training and Research in Public Service Interpreting and Translation in English) in Spain to develop a standardized transcription system to be used in the Spanish judicial system.

Recommendations for practice and future directions

Transcription and Translation is a complex process which implies both converting oral speech into written text and changing text from one language to another. It is a hybrid process, incorporating both interpreting and translating skills. A review of the information presented in this chapter shows different modes/types of transcribing as well as some of the applications for TR&tl in four specific areas or settings: Research (in oral spoken language); language teaching and learning; media and entertainment; and FTT.

The literature reveals that TR&tl is used for many different purposes but it is not necessarily considered a defined profession or specialization. In addition to no specific preparation being required of transcribers/translators, there is also no agreement over what protocols to follow or what transcription system to use, and the veracity of the TR&tl is not always verified. But reading a transcript is like looking through binoculars, and in any case when it has been prepared with the involvement of a translator/transcriber, the linguistic transformation is even greater. A transcribed text includes perceptions based on the words heard that might not coincide with those read in another language. Thus, a transcriber/translator is more than just an assembler of sound and words in another language.

New and innovative practices, which move beyond the classical view of literal transcription and translation, may widen the scope of translation studies and allow TR&tl to be defined as part of other activities in the world of entertainment, business, and industry, as well as language learning for specific groups, such as the deaf and blind, or immigrants or children in multilingual societies.

The growing need for FTT services in the legal arena demand professionalization and certification in this subfield so as to ensure a faithful record of what is heard in a taped conversation and to meet evidentiary standards of reliability, competence, relevance, and admissibility.

Technology is increasingly being used for transcribing interlingually, and this goes hand in hand with machine translation. Increased interest in post-editing in translators training might also influence the quality of transcribed material.

The expanding use of TR&TL warrants its inclusion in the academic interpreting and translation curriculum, and the different skills required of the varied tasks associated with it should be considered in combination with the use of new software applications to help train researchers and professional practitioners.

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