

# DEVELOPING NEW MODELS FOR PS(T)I: FROM HETERONOMY TO AUTONOMY\*

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## ABSTRACT

There are still many signs indicating that translation and interpreting in the public services are low-status activities regulated to a large extent by external authorities and social agents. In this article, I will explore Foucault's theories on power in order to contribute to a better understanding of the factors and dynamics which might exacerbate the low status of the profession, including regulatory professional discourses or the practitioner's self-identity. A productive, and not merely repressive, vision of power as exercised throughout the social body helps us to realize that translators and interpreters might uncritically perpetuate the power regime within which they performatively construct their identity. Additionally, it ultimately serves as the basis for the development of alternative professional practices.

**KEYWORDS:** Public Service Translation and Interpreting, Identity, Discourse, Power, Foucault, Agency.

## RESUMEN

Son numerosos los signos que parecen indicar que la traducción y la interpretación en los servicios públicos siguen siendo actividades con escaso reconocimiento, en buena medida reguladas por autoridades y agentes sociales externos. En este artículo se exploran las teorías de Foucault sobre el poder para profundizar en la comprensión de los factores y dinámicas que pueden agravar el escaso reconocimiento de la profesión, entre ellos los discursos profesionales de carácter normativo o la identidad asumida por los propios profesionales. Una visión productiva y no meramente represiva del poder en la que este atraviesa todo el cuerpo social ayuda a discernir que los traductores e intérpretes pueden perpetuar acríticamente el régimen de poder en el que performativamente construyen sus identidades; asimismo, permite plantear modelos alternativos de praxis profesional.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** traducción e interpretación en los servicios públicos, identidad, discurso, poder, Foucault, agencia.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding the progress achieved to date, much still remains to be done for Public Service (Translation and) Interpreting in order to obtain the social and institutional recognition which this “young occupation [...] still undergoing professionalisation” (Gentile 63) deserves and requires. There is still much room for improvement in order to consistently guarantee levels of quality in interpreting and translation provision which may be attuned both to professional standards and to the complex needs for cross-cultural mediation in our linguistically and culturally diverse societies. There is no doubt that the efforts made in the last three decades, both in the professional field of community translation and interpreting, as well as in training and research institutions, has enabled the establishment of PS(T)I as a distinctive area of interest, a subdomain of the discipline in its own right (Toledano; Taibi & Ozolins 1.1). In this regard, despite the diversity of situations and approaches perceived at a local level, and especially in relation to the somewhat better regulated sector of official and/or court translation and interpreting, some authors distinguish positive indications of an “emerging community of practice” in PS(T)I (Corsellis 103) within which common perceptions in relation to existing needs, desirable standards, and future challenges can be clearly identified.

However, even though the development in PS(T)I from a theoretical point of view is undeniable, reality continues to confront us with multiple examples which demonstrate that, far from being an established profession, PS(T)I is still, in many cases, a fragmented, unregulated and low-profile activity. A 2012 study by the European Commission on the status of the translation profession identified a number of worrying signs of market disorder which inevitably calls into question the real degree of professionalisation achieved in translation in general and in PS(T)I in particular. These signs include persistent paraprofessionalism, especially in relation to languages of limited diffusion, where the shortage of trained professionals is more noticeable; lack of sufficient levels of training among practitioners; lack of uniformity in relation to qualification and certification procedures; difficulties in the cross-border recognition of accreditation mechanisms, for instance those existing for official or sworn translation; low professional recognition, and low fees, recently affected by a further decline partly attributable to the prevalent outsourcing trend in increasingly privatised “public” translation and interpreting services (European Commission 2012: 4). From 2012 to date, the overall picture has not much improved. On the contrary, some recent trends leave few grounds for optimism. It would seem that the fruitful development of academic research has not

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been matched by an increased social and institutional recognition of the importance and complexity of the role played by PS(T)I practitioners. In their introduction to a recent volume entitled *Ideology, Ethics, and Policy Development in Public Service Interpreting and Translation*, Valero and Tipton regret the “limited impact to date that profession- and disciplinary-led discourses on professionalisation have had on policymakers” (xv). In their opinion, this makes it necessary for the profession to “seek new ways to engage with relevant stakeholders” (xvi).

The need to negotiate with policy makers is of high importance and should by no means be diminished. In any event, in order to make the most of any potential efforts undertaken in this direction, any negotiation must depart from a clear picture of the broader context. With an emphasis on the current reality in Britain, Tipton (38) observes a growing dependence on “the non-profit, voluntary and charities sector (commonly described as the third sector)” for interpreting and translation provision. This fact leads Tipton to argue that, although increased levels of professionalisation are noticeable in the services offered by these non-professional agents, the blurring of the boundaries between paid and informal service providers raises new questions about legitimisation and accountability. In a similar vein, Gentile observes that the recent economic depression has brought about adjustment policies inspired by austerity, as well as negative perceptions about non-native, displaced communities, in turn resulting in a severe and generalised backlash against measures guaranteeing language rights in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Indeed, Gentile perceives regression signs in PS translation and interpreting provision, both in countries which at the beginning of the recession were still struggling towards the professionalisation of PS(T)I services —such as those in Southern Europe including Spain—, as well as in countries where significant milestones such as the creation of professional registers had already been achieved —for instance in the Netherlands and the UK, where, in her opinion, outsourcing policies and reduced fees are currently resulting in a devastating process of de-professionalisation.

In this bleak context —characterised not only by financial cuts, but also by widespread, renewed scepticism about the purported obligations of public authorities towards the specificities of diverse populations, as well as by narratives in which translation and interpreting are not portrayed as promoting social integration as argued for in recent research by Pena, but rather as measures eliminating the need for migrants to learn the local language and thus, paradoxically, as measures presenting an obstacle to integration—, the support which can be found from other stakeholders to achieve recognition for the profession is likely to be negatively impacted upon. The working basis of this article is that these circumstances make it all the more necessary to promote the reinforcement and enhancement of the profession from within. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that the recognition and/or misrecognition of the profession operate on two interrelated levels —internal and external— on which transformations can be effected and sought after. In relation to the external level, and as I have argued in another contribution which departs from the concept of ‘recognition’ as articulated by authors including Charles Taylor, Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (Martín Ruano 2017), PS(T)I can certainly be considered to be affected by institutionalised patterns of misrecognition which



result in an undervaluing of the role, capabilities and potentialities of PS translators and interpreters by other stakeholders. The dominant view and expectation of PS translators and interpreters as occupying a marginal position in intercultural encounters can be understood as a revealing example of existing forms of structural underestimation. PS translators and interpreters are seen as unobtrusively serving other professionals and actors who are portrayed as the meaningful participants in such encounters —i.e., as subordinate figures performing seemingly subsidiary and instrumental tasks for relevant agents and not as central agents themselves playing a determinant role in the co-construction of these encounters. This institutionalised subordination curtails the possibilities for these professionals to act (and to be recognised) as players capable of participating on a par with other co-agents in relations of “participatory parity” (Fraser 24, 29), as fully-fledged agents in their professional contexts. However, for the purposes of this article, it is very relevant to highlight that misrecognition may also be, or may become, deeply ingrained in the group’s self-identity. As Michel Foucault reminds us, subordination can be internalised and uncritically replicated by the misrecognised groups. In our case, it can be perpetuated by translators and interpreters themselves through practice.

In this article, I will argue that understanding the dynamics of social and professional subordination affecting PS translators and interpreters is vital in order to actively intervene in the transformation of the power regimes regulating PS(T)I. The Foucauldian vision of power not merely as a repressive force coercively exerted by those in positions of authority, but rather as a decentralised system of relations manifested, enacted and transmitted at the micro level of society in a whole myriad of social practices is, in my opinion, certainly very enlightening in order to identify the reasons behind professional misrecognition affecting PS(T)I practitioners. Through understanding the system of relationships whereby both hegemonic and subordinate groups may productively assume and reify forms of domination, we are better equipped to combat the causes for these disempowering practices and, ultimately, to advance towards transformed, more empowered and empowering visions and models of professional identity.

## 2. THE MICRO-PHYSICS OF POWER AND PS(T)I

Michel Foucault’s work has been highly influential in promoting new, cross-disciplinary understandings of the workings of power in relation to various social practices. Research inspired by Foucault’s vision goes beyond the traditional, centralised view of power as exerted in vertical, hierarchical relations, and highlights the pervasive nature of power, conceived as a network of relations and regimes of truth shaped by discourses and social practices. In the field of Translation Studies, authors including André Lefevere, Rosemary Arrojo, Theo Hermans, África Vidal Claramonte, Amalia Rodríguez Monroy, Gillian Lane-Mercier, Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler have drawn on Foucault in order to improve our understanding of translation as an activity which is subject to prevailing power structures and power relations, but which is also capable of modifying them and of bringing about



change in the *status quo*. In the specific field of PS(T)I, authors including Robert F. Barsky, Sandra Hale, Ian Mason, Carmen Toledano, Ian Mason and Wen Ren have also been inspired by Foucault in their analysis of PS interpreting as a norm-governed activity, and of interpreted encounters both as situations shaped by power differentials and as instances where power relations have the potential to be (re) negotiated. For the purposes of this article, the Foucauldian view of power seems an appropriate point of departure in order to contribute to a better understanding of the reasons behind the prevalent construction and dominant expectation of PS translators and interpreters as (relatively) powerless social agents. His concept of power as dispersed throughout the social body, legitimated through authoritative discourses invested as “knowledge”, embodied and enacted in a multiplicity of social settings, and thus transmitted and reinforced performatively by individuals and groups in discursive and social practices helps us not only to explain the aforementioned dominant expectations for PS(T)I agents but ultimately to imagine alternative discourses defining more empowered professional identities and more proactive models of professional praxis.

Foucault’s vision has the potential to be awareness-raising not only for practising professionals but, more importantly, for trainee translators and interpreters. The latter tend to be very wary of the penalties which may be imposed on them in cases of non-compliance with both spoken and unspoken rules governing the profession as well as in cases of overstepping expected limits of professional behaviour. However, as a result, they may be less inclined to question the rationale behind those rules and limits. By linking “power” and “knowledge”, Foucault highlights the importance of discursive practices in the definition of roles and identities, in the hierarchisation of social players, as well as in the shaping and maintenance of power differentials among different groups interacting in any given social, institutional or professional setting. In his view, dominant discourses, despite their contradictions and discontinuities, embody and reinforce the power relations among the groups which are defined, constructed and regulated through these discourses. In this sense, discourses (including not only social, theoretical and academic discourses, but also professional discourses) cannot be understood as objective and neutral knowledge which fulfils a merely informative or explanatory role, but instead need to be seen as causes and effects of a given power regime, and as extensions of a certain “political economy of truth” which creates particular positions for objects and subjects of discourse and which imposes a particular social and symbolic order. From a Foucauldian perspective, translation and interpreting can be thus considered to be social (and professional) activities constituted by certain discourses which regulate its limits and possibilities, the scope of action of its practitioners, and the hierarchical position they occupy in relation to those with whom they interact. What is most enlightening about this vision is that it offers an inevitably *politicised* view both of authoritative discourses and of the system of relations supported and reinforced by it.

In the specific case of PS(T)I, this vision invites us to discover the point of view from which the dominant discourses about PS(T)I are constructed, whose voices are represented in these discourses and whose voices are excluded. This reflection is eye-opening: the dominant construction of PS(T)I as mere “conduits” or



“ghosts” (Rycoft; Koskinen 1), as invisible “non-presences” who do not demand a space of their own (Niska 305; Diriker 27; Angelelli), as professionals “remaining a non-participant in the encounter” (Clifford 91) and who unobtrusively perform “an activity perceived as a form of mechanical code-switching” (Koskinen 67) can only be projected as an ideal if the subjectivity enunciating the norm is different from the subjectivity expected to obey it. Such an ideal can only emerge from a perceived position of authority and from a desire to control a group of practitioners moulded as objects of discourse, and not as real subjects. In addition to being eye-opening, this reflection becomes essential if the goal is the ultimate strengthening of the profession. It makes it possible to argue that dominant discourses regulating translation and interpreting, which are themselves particular discursive practices, may still be emanating not from the professional group for which they are supposed to be speaking, but instead from positions outside the group. As a result, these discourses could be envisioning translation and interpreting as they are expected to behave from the points of view of other players —players who could be fearful or uninformed of the needs and potential of translation and interpreting for effective intercultural communication—, and not from the point of view of their practitioners and in light of their experience.

In this regard, at a time in which the importance of regulatory discourses for the profession (including codes of ethics and conduct, theoretical production, research, etc.) is being emphasised as a key element in the process towards professionalisation, it seems crucial that the PS(T)I community does not simply and uncritically adopt and propagate heteronomous discourses —i.e., discourses regulating the profession from outside— which may in fact collide and compete with in-group perceptions and interests. The undisputed acceptance of taken-for-granted but deeply problematical ideas about translation in these regulatory discourses could foster suspicion and lack of trust towards the professionals abiding by such rules in the future. By way of illustration, the following paragraph in relation to *accuracy* from a recent Code of Professional Ethics for legal translators and interpreters can be analysed in this light:

The source-language message shall be faithfully rendered in the target language by conserving all elements of the original message while accommodating the syntactic and semantic patterns of the target language. The register, style and tone of the source language shall be conserved.

Errors, hesitations and repetitions should be conveyed. (EULITA 2)

The wording selected unambiguously reveals the decisive influence of widespread but restrictive ideas about translation in these codes, to the detriment of more nuanced discourses attuned to the views and needs of this particular community of practice. Indeed, the paragraph puts a visible emphasis on concepts such as faithfulness —which, due to its vagueness from a theoretical point of view and its uneasiness from a methodological point of view, has been long problematised in Translation Studies, where it has also been replaced by more elaborate and practice-oriented notions— and reinforces a vision of translation as exact reproduction and



preservation —which dismisses ample corpus-based evidence that translation and interpreting often entail and require the standardisation of original messages but also, in the specific case of PS(T)I, the need to redress asymmetries between the agents involved in the mediated encounter (Taibi and Ozolins 1.2.1), and which remains oblivious to recurrent situations in which, as research has demonstrated, the adoption of powerless style by translators and interpreters could seriously damage their professional credibility (Rycroft 219; Berk-Seligson 131). A question posed by Angelelli (20) seems to be relevant at this point: “Why are interpreters so infrequently asked their views on their role? And when they are asked, why don’t their views count? Why do professional associations ignore the reality of the practitioners and the empirical research on interpreting and set idealized standards of practice?” Foucault’s explanation of exclusionary procedures operating at the service of “the order of discourse” (Foucault 1970) offers a potential answer: in the regulation of the *will to truth* in the field of translation and interpreting, examples such as this could be considered to be indicative of a prevalence of *commentary* about translation (recurrent narratives operating at the foundation of our cultural system) over *doctrinal discourses* about PS(T)I emerging from a distinct *society of discourse* constituted by a pool of experts establishing their own views and standards as regulatory principles. Toledano’s remark (19) that “[i]mporting expectations, desires and evaluative criteria from other areas only serves to highlight the hierarchy of one of the parties, precisely the one that is in a privileged position of power” is also significant in this context.

In addition to revealing existing hierarchies, the above example very tellingly illustrates another key feature of power as understood and explained by Michel Foucault: that power is not only coercive, but extremely productive. It is often accepted and promoted by all groups interacting in power relations, both by those invested with authority and by those in subordinate positions; both by those inspiring the norms and by those complying with them. As Foucault once argued in an oft-quoted statement: “[w]hat makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” (Foucault in Colin 11). Far from being merely limiting and restrictive, power generates respect and fascination. The compensations and rewards obtained by those meeting existing expectations (be it financial retributions, or influence, credibility, authority, recognition or status) are perhaps more effective than any foreseen form of punishment. Rather than being servient vassals of discourse, by internalising dominant discourses and adopting a behaviour and demeanour in line with such discourses, individuals can thus become accomplices of power, active partners collaborating in its endurance and reinforcement. As Foucault underlined in another lecture also included in the book edited by Colin, power is not that “which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it”. Rather than being “localised here or there”, power is “employed and exercised through a net-like organisation”. Individuals in this net “are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power.



They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are also always the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application” (Foucault in Colin 98).

The lesson to be drawn from this view is that subordination is a complex machinery of subtle devices, the effects of which traverse the whole fabric of society, reverberating in a myriad of social practices in which power is not only imposed but also assimilated, embraced, absorbed, learnt, and enacted. In what Foucault called the “disciplinary society”, power and its differentials are upheld by imitation and replication. Individuals internalise the workings of the social order, even when it is to their exclusion or undervaluing, and automate their behaviour accordingly: by observation and repetition, women learn what it means to be “feminine”, migrants discover what it means to behave in an “exemplary” way, translators understand what it means to be “faithful”. Foucault coined the term “governmentality” to refer to the trend by which the logics and norms of power become established in the collective mentality as logical and normal, by which both privileged and disadvantaged groups endorse, acquiesce and collaborate in furthering the dynamics of subordination. Inasmuch as the structures of domination tend to become invisible, and inasmuch as the results of training and socialisation processes instilling asymmetrical roles for different groups often come to be perceived to be normal or instinctive responses, so marginalisation may be more difficult to fight.

For the particular purposes of PS(T)I, understanding this capacity of power to inspire conformity even from among oppressed and undervalued groups is certainly an enlightening point of departure from which to initiate a relativisation of norms and behaviours that have come to be seen as natural. Foucault’s vision certainly contributes to a critical reading: under the lens of power, prevailing expectations about the ordinary positions and roles to be adopted by translators and interpreters in social practices turn out to be extraordinarily ideologised. In turn, this awareness may serve as a springboard for transformation, for building alternative perceptions of the self beyond inherited beliefs and for exploring new models of professional behaviour attuned to the specificities and needs of ever-changing social contexts. For PS(T)I, the lesson that power tends to be perceived as neutral is as enlightening as the lesson that power relations can, and perhaps need to, be brought into question and ultimately subverted.

### 3. RESISTANCE, EMPOWERMENT AND PS(T)I

Foucault’s work has been an inspiration across a variety of disciplines, not only in encouraging the unveiling of the dynamics of inequality, but also in the promotion of critical and transformative approaches aimed at bringing about greater levels of emancipation and empowerment for marginalised groups. Indeed, another major idea in Foucault’s work is summarised in a quote included in *The History of Sexuality*: “Where there is power, there is resistance” (95). Certainly, in Foucault’s theories, which depart from a view of (social) reality as a construction inevitably mediated by discourse(s), in a way similar to that of power, resistance is considered





to be inextricably linked with discursive practices, which he considered to be “not purely and simply ways of producing discourse. They are embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behaviour, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them” (200). If, for Foucault, discourse defines the limits of what can be said and done at any given historical moment and constitutes subjectivities within those limits, discourse also emerges as the site *par excellence* where limits can be transgressed and where subjectivities can explore new self-representations and identities: “Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (100-101).

Many scholars, and, most prominently, Judith Butler in her approaches to gender in various works, have drawn on Foucault to argue that identities are not only subjugated to power and discourse, but are also re-enacted, performed and re-signified through discourse and discursive practices which can also be associated with power —i.e., with power understood as *agency*. Butler’s theory of performativity has in turn opened up new perspectives for the understanding of identities and social practices in different disciplines, including Translation Studies. In *Translation in Systems*, Theo Hermans draws on Butler to stress the sociocultural and historical contingency of translation, which “takes place within an existing practice, reiterating and extending it. Whether we call this the social system of translation, or a translation tradition, or the sociocultural embedding of translation, we can only make provisional, time-bound statements about it” (Hermans 158). If the meaning of translation as a social practice has changed through history, and more precisely through the practice of translators and through discourses about translation which have performatively transformed the significance of this category over time, the identity of these professionals also needs to be understood accordingly: as contingent and changing; as malleable; as subject to modification through discourse and discursive practices, including actual translations.

These considerations are, in my opinion, very relevant for PS(T)I. First of all, they underline the uniqueness of every translation and interpreting situation, which thus emerges as a similarly unique opportunity for professionals not merely to adhere to existing expectations, but also to critically address them, and therefore to allow the profession to adapt to ever-changing contexts and unprecedented challenges. Foucault’s views are helpful in raising awareness among practitioners and among trainee PS translators and interpreters not only in regards to the restraints they might be faced with, derived from existing power relations or exerted upon them by other players occupying positions of authority, but also in regards to their possibilities to actively make use of their own power within the power relations governing the interaction, both for the benefit of effective cross-cultural communication and for the benefit of a profession which needs to look ahead. In this regard, to the extent that, according to Foucauldian perspectives, the professional identities of transla-



tors and interpreters are, like all identities, flexible and contingent, constructed and negotiated performatively, they can be either perpetuated or transformed, rebranded and updated through interaction. Certainly, this requires an openness on the part of PS(T)I to experience professionalism not merely as following its prescribed rules, but also as contributing to the (re)making of those rules.

In more concrete terms, it may require a willingness to redefine and enact one's professional identity beyond the inherited model of the neutral mouthpiece or the non-obtrusive language converter criticised, for instance, by Rycroft. Recent research on PS(T)I —itself a potentially empowering discursive practice— has contributed to the discovery of more diversified vocabularies articulating more assertive and more positive self-definitions for these professionals. In this regard, Angelelli perceives a shift in the perception of PS interpreters moving away from the idealistic (but simultaneously restrictive) discourse of non-intervention and emphasising their active and “powerful role” as “participatory agents between languages and cultures” (98). Indeed, it would be more appropriate to talk of “powerful roles” in the plural, to the extent that, as recent studies on PS(T)I have also demonstrated, PS practitioners adopt different professional behaviours located in a continuum of (non)intervention (as conduits, clarifiers, cultural brokers, advocates, etc.) depending not only on the specific features of the interpreted encounter and on the power relations in which it is embedded, but also on its actual development. Indeed, in relation to the first aspect, Clifford notes that the scope of action allowed for and taken by healthcare interpreters becomes greater in situations when prior collaboration with health professionals has resulted in the development of a trusting relationship; in other words, Clifford suggests that power, far from being unilaterally imposed, may be peacefully acquired and voluntarily transferred in relations deconstructing pre-existing hierarchies and opting for collaboration. In regards to the second point, Mason suggests that, within particular situations, professionals do not stick to a specific professional identity, but continuously revise their position vis-à-vis other co-participants along the triadic exchange. By this strategic and tactical positioning, they continuously renegotiate their identity and, ultimately, their share of power in the encounter. Indeed, for Mason (48), “the playing out of power relations *within* the exchange seems to be closely involved with the negotiation of identity”. These evidence-based perspectives allow for the viewing of power, not as a static force exerted upon PS translators and interpreters, but instead as a potentiality: as a capacity with which to influence the construction of meanings and of reality, which are constantly in flux and which are negotiated through dialectical processes.

#### 4. CONCLUSION: EMPOWERING PS(T)I

Foucault's theories facilitate a critical reading of the authoritative discourses currently regulating translation and interpreting activities for the public services. Seen through the lens of power, dominant expectations and normative behaviour appear to a large extent to still be *heteronomous*, i.e., ultimately subject to the rule of other authorities and agents, and established according to points of view external to



the profession. The challenge ahead is to transform the discourses which define the limits and potentialities for translation and interpreting in the public services sector in order to incorporate the insights of practising professionals and their perceptions regarding the increasingly demanding requirements of cross-cultural communication in our multicultural societies. As has been explained in this article, for Foucault, the transformation of discourse is enacted performatively through discursive practices, which in this case include actual translation and interpreting-mediated encounters in public services. Translators and interpreters willing to take up a proactive behaviour favouring cross-cultural intelligibility can actively contribute to challenge and resist the subservient and marginal role which they are expected to play according both to widespread ideas in society and to normative texts such as codes of ethics.

Precisely in relation to codes of ethics, a number of recent studies worthy of mention have adopted a critical stance in order to highlight their limitations and shortcomings (Ko; McDonough; Martín Ruano), in some cases in parallel to their merits (Baixauli-Olmos). These studies echo the opinion that, although the notions they frequently invoke —faithfulness, accuracy, neutrality— seem at first glance to be indisputable, they offer unsatisfying guidance for translators and interpreters dealing with ethical dilemmas in conflict-ridden situations. Furthermore, these studies highlight that the decontextualised maxims often appearing in these codes seem to be at odds with the specificities of certain translation and interpreting situations featuring particular power relations and dynamics. Foucault's theories help to relativise the maxims in these regulatory instruments; furthermore, they may also contribute to inspiring alternative, more explanatory discourses. In this regard, it is important to highlight that embracing Foucault's views does not imply renouncing the regulation of professional behaviour and validating a dangerous "anything goes" attitude in PS(T)I. It does, in my opinion, entail recognising that "professional behaviour" is a contingent, ever-changing construct that is defined and constantly redefined in every situation, and thus that the regulation of professionalism, if it is intended to be realistic and useful to professionals, should necessarily involve recognising the complexity and multiplicity of the situations in which PS translators and interpreters take part and, in turn, the complexity and multiplicity of the strategies which could be adopted by those professionals in different contexts. Certainly, in the current scenario, given the ubiquitous underprofessionalisation of PS(T)I, the adoption of behaviour associated with professionalism may significantly contribute both to the enhancement of the individual credibility of the practitioner and to the overall improvement of the perceived status of translation and interpreting as a profession. However, if the contingency of normative expectations is admitted, the same logic advises against sticking to "professional" behaviour as currently understood as a panacea for all situations. Tipton provides a pertinent example when noting that the "hyperformal" approach of professional interpreters with high qualifications may not be well received in organisations pertaining to the third sector, which place greater importance on rapport-building attitudes. Inasmuch as the definition of translation and interpreting is socio-historically and contextually defined, understanding professional standards in an over-restrictive way could foster the fossilisation of the profession. In the long term, emphasis on short-sighted concepts of "professionalism"



could sabotage the ability of translation and interpreting to respond to new needs arising in our present, and perhaps even to the challenges of the future.

Undoubtedly, and to conclude, this contingent understanding of PS(T)I inspired by Foucault ultimately poses a challenge to educational institutions, which are perhaps one of the most important apparatuses moulding the professional conduct of translators and interpreters. Adopting critical approaches to translator and interpreter training, many scholars, including Baker and Maier (2), have stressed the need to go beyond codes of conduct or codes of ethics in order to properly embrace ethics —i.e., in order to engage in debate and critical reflection on moral dilemmas. Authors like Toledano emphasise that “[t]eaching, including in this phase of community interpreting consolidation, must not and cannot only teach norms but also develop and train the critical skills of students and practising professionals regarding current ‘normal’ practice. [...] Universities [...] relate as much to reflective practice and self-criticism as to raising the profile of trained professionals” (20). In a similar vein, D’Hayer argues for a shift from PSI training to PSI education, i.e., for pedagogical models which might overcome the prevailing skill-based approach in order to engage in the education of critical thinkers and of conscious practitioners who will work as social agents. These conclusions seem particularly important at a time when regular, long-term translator training programmes at BA and MA level are being complemented with intensive training formats for *ad hoc* or non-professional interpreters. Although it seems unquestionable that translator and interpreter training institutions need to familiarise future members of the profession with prevailing professional norms, Foucault’s theories also make it advisable to go beyond a procedural approach in order to teach trainees the relativity of those norms, their socio-historical contingency, and their dependency both on certain discourses and points of view and on the specific conditions of possibility where those norms emerged and where they might have been perpetuated. Foucault invites us to see the shaping of norms as effects of particular power relations which can, and perhaps should, be transformed. In this regard, the professional identities inherited from the past, inasmuch as they reflect prevailing expectations, are necessary starting points in educational contexts, but translator and interpreter training may also contribute to their transformation and to the rejection of taken-for-granted ideas about established rules of behaviour seen as natural. With Alonso and Baigorri (8-9), it may be argued that the only universal solution or possible dogma to be taught is flexibility. These authors stress the need to instil students with the idea that they will bear the responsibility for decision-making. In this regard, they will need clear referents, but also a considerable deal of autonomy. These reflections confirm that, together with actual professional practice, translator and interpreter education can contribute to resisting and challenging negative, restrictive or disempowered images of PS translators and interpreters and, thus, to developing more positive, proactive models of professional identity.

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