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Challenges in the Professional Training of Language and Intercultural Mediators: Translating Tourism Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract

The low quality characterising tourism translation into English in a country like Italy, boasting the largest cultural heritage in the world, is paradoxical and highlights the need for high-level professional translator training. The translation of tourism communication is a complex cross-cultural mediation practice as it is found at the crossroads not only of many disciplines such as history, arts, sociology, economics, but also of different semiotic resources, i.e. speech, writing, sounds, images. As a consequence, new multidisciplinary training options in the field of tourism communication should be created, answering the diversified needs of a tourist market constantly evolving. Furthermore, training should also cover new combinations of different semiotic and technological resources in order to make tourism communication accessible not only in terms of language and intercultural mediation, but also in a perspective of social inclusion.
In 2018, a workshop within the TranslatingEurope project[1] addressed the topics of tourism translation and cultural heritage accessibility. The aim of the workshop was to enhance appreciation for Italian tourism and cultural heritage by involving the widest audience possible. In this context, a community comprised of international tourists – including social groups such as the visually, hearing and language impaired – were taken as the recipients of a type of translation which would mediate not only language contents, but also values and cultural identities.

1. Introduction

The tourist sector is increasingly expanding at a global level: it is one of the few economic areas in constant growth and with potential for further improvement. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2017 the sector accounted for 10.4% of the global GDP - the total value of goods and services produced globally – and currently provides 313 million

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2018_translatingeurope_workshops_en_0.pdf
Last accessed 31st March 2019.

jobs, corresponding to 9.9% of total employment.[2] As these data demonstrate, travel and tourism are worldwide phenomena, and in spite of the controversies about the tourist industry's potential (and realistic) exploitation of developing countries, the tourist sector is gaining currency also in areas of the world with high levels of poverty, as the blossoming of specialised tourist sectors and sub-sectors, such as sustainable tourism, or pro-poor tourism, indicate. The latter brings in fact the problem of poverty to the centre of the sustainability debate (Goodwin 2009).

Yet, the evident success of tourism, even in areas that are not traditionally lucrative but rather enhance social and community values, calls for considerable improvements in the area of communication. In fact the general low quality of tourism translation and language mediation activities in general particularly (but not only) in English as an international language, may come as a surprise when we realise that language necessarily lies at the basis of any form of tourism promotion and tourist experiences. Many scholars, both in Tourism and Translation Studies, have long lamented this state of affairs (Dann 2006; Durán Muñoz 2012). And the question becomes even more complex if the language problem is considered from the ample perspective of a cultural, social and all-inclusive access to tourism communication. Hence, the barriers to be removed to make tourism products and services truly accessible are not only concrete and physical, but also intangible and cultural - hence more ingrained in the social fabric of our contemporary world.

2. Why texts from the tourist sector constitute suitable material for developing translator competence

Translating tourism communication is a widely practiced activity, not only in real-life situations, given the global diffusion of tourism phenomena, but also as a classroom exercise in most translator training institutions. In one of her earliest works on tourism translation, Kelly set down a list of criteria for text selection in translator training institutions and highlighted the special role of texts belonging to the tourist sector (2000; see also 1997). A number of the points that she made are relevant for the present discussion:

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[2]   cfr.   https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2018/world2018.pdf   Last accessed 31st March 2019.

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1   Texts belonging to the tourist sector, tourist texts in short, offer a wide variety in terms of genres and topics, which enables students to operate in different contexts and yet maintain a certain continuity in terms of communicative intention.

2   Professional realism is another characteristic of these texts, and this makes them particularly suitable for training since, as Kelly makes clear, "they constitute authentic professionally translatable and translated material, and not artificial exercises" (*ibid.*: 161).

3   Students usually appreciate activities with tourism texts because they are likely to have a certain familiarity with them and with the linguistic and cultural conventions used in tourism discourse in general.

4   The positive expectations in the classroom can be used by teachers to introduce the issue of documentary and terminological research in the early stages of training (*ibid.*: 163). Tourism texts are not generally addressed to a specialized audience, and yet cover a variety of specialized or semi-specialized domains such as history, art history, architecture, sport and leisure, cuisine etc. Such diversification, both in terms of content and text type, provide the potential for teachers to develop a range of documentary and terminological research skills.

5   The complex semiotic structure of tourist texts is another important factor. As a matter of fact, tourist texts very often consist in a combination of written material and images (photographs, illustrative material, maps, etc.; cfr. Culler 1981, Jaworski and Thurlow 2011). Yet, this combination still tends to go unnoticed in most translator training programmes. Tourist texts can have a salutary effect in this respect, because they bring to the fore the interdependence of a wide range of semiotic elements.

6   According to Kelly, the most important point to be made about the pedagogical function of tourist texts has to do with the general low quality of the original. These texts are very often hastily produced by non-professional writers, who rarely take into consideration specific target readers' needs. As a consequence, these originals (or source texts) are very often less than adequate both from a stylistic and functional point of view, and do not produce effective communication. In a word, they fail to provide access to tourism offers and experiences because they are not successful from a communicative point of view.

7   On top of everything else, tourist texts provide excellent material to demonstrate the degree of intervention - both in terms of language and intercultural mediation - translators can legitimately take upon themselves when adopting a functionalist approach. In fact, they require

students to give up mechanical strategies of linguistic substitution and search through the entire set of linguistic and cultural resources they have at their disposal to produce effective communication (cfr. also Agorni 2018a).

The issue of the translator's degree of intervention is a core issue that has been long disputed in Translation Studies, and has been variously defined as translator's license, space of manoeuvre, manipulation, agency, etc. It has come to the fore once again thanks to the recent debate about the difference between translation and transcreation, originating innovative analyses of creative and resourceful translation methods (Cfr. Spinzi *et al.* 2018). For example, Katan has suggested a conceptualization of translation as a dynamic and intervening process, particularly sensitive to the distance between source text and target text worldviews. Following this thinking, target text readers should be able to access a text as if they had the same lingua-cultural competence as any other source text readers (Katan, 2018: 28, see also Katan 2016). I will return to this crucial topic in the last section of this article. Here, I would like to stick to the pedagogical function of tourist texts and explore some of the options in terms of training currently available in the field of tourism.

3. Training and Research in Tourism Studies

Kelly's work mentioned in the previous section goes back to some twenty years ago, yet it is still relevant today. Indeed, in spite of her pointing to the best practices for translator training in the field of tourism, professionalization in this area is still inadequate in many parts of the world (cfr. Napu 2018). Hence, there is a strong need for highly qualified professionals in this sector. Given the economic importance of the field, the growing needs of the market and the professionalizing trends in all courses at university level all over the world, it would be expected to find tourism translation widely covered, particularly in tertiary education.

However, if the situation of the European Union is taken as a telling example, we are bound to be rather disappointed. In spite of the fact that most, if not all, translator training institutions offer activities and practice in this area, only very few universities offer degree courses at graduate or postgraduate level explicitly specifying a focus on tourism translation

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and/or language and intercultural mediation[3]. In fact, training in the field of tourism is very rarely focused on the linguistic and communicative aspects of the profession, tending instead to be more committed to developing competence in the areas of management, economics, administration and marketing, as we shall see later in this section.

As I have argued elsewhere, it seems that the aspects related to language transfer processes represent a grey area in Tourism Studies in general, either from a theoretical, applied or pedagogical point of view (Agorni, 2018b: 257). In spite of the fact that applied research in tourism is very often concerned with international tourism – and has necessarily to account for the needs and wants of both local and foreign visitors – translation and language issues in general are seldom mentioned by scholars working in this area, even when they are involved in field work. And I have already claimed that this is not just a methodological oversight, but, rather, a theoretical gap (*ibid.*, 257).

A couple of hypotheses can possibly explain this state of affairs. The field of Tourism and Hospitality is a full-fledged area of study at a global level; and applied research, or case studies, often consist in empirical analyses of tourism experiences which may take place in several countries in the world and concern visitors varying in terms of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, gender, religion and, last in order but not of importance, language and culture. Yet, I am not alone in arguing that the theoretical bases of tourism research are still anchored to a specific Anglo-American tradition, whose universalist assumptions very often appear to be taken for granted (Atelejevic, Pritchard and Morgan 2007; Atelejevic, Morgan and Pritchard 2011).

Additionally, the language of scientific research and publications in the field of tourism is always English, with few exceptions. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that cross-cultural encounters with other languages and traditions are steered clear of. In fact what happens is that they are usually "translated" – in a literal as well as figurative sense – into English and referred to a cultural perception which is unmistakably Anglo-American.

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[3] The universities of Granada and Las Palmas in Spain offer double degrees in Translation and Tourism, cfr.:
 http://grados.ugr.es/traduccion/pages/doble_grado/doble_grado_traduccion_turismo
and http://www.feet.ulpgc.es/content/Doble-Grado-Traduccion-Turismo (Last accessed 13 July 2019); a pathway entitled "Cultural Tourism, Hospitality and Cultural Heritage" is offered by the Goldsmith University of London within their MA programme in Translation Studies.

Far from opening a debate on the geopolitical aspects of publishing within Tourism and Hospitality Studies, here I would only like to point out that most, if not all, the linguistic aspects that characterize cross-cultural interactions, translation and intercultural mediation practices do not find a place on the research agenda within Tourism Studies.

And yet the tourist encounter is by definition an exchange with the Other and with other individuals, and their different languages and cultural contexts. A seminal paradigm such as Urry's tourist gaze, first introduced as a neutral, visual and incorporeal kind of perception, seems to be just a case in point (1990). Even after the introduction of Goffman's (1959) "performance" perspective – a sociological approach to interpersonal communication based on theatre performance – language and intercultural mediation issues do not seem to have found a space on Urry's agenda. His revised, multimodal gaze, is indeed aware of a variety of sensory perceptions, defined in detail by Urry and Larsen:

> gazing is embodied, multimodal, and involves other sensescapes. It is a set of performative practices. Gazing is not merely seeing, but involves physical movement though landscapes, cities and sights, aesthetic sensibility, connecting signs and their referents, daydreaming and mind travelling and embodied practices capturing places and social relations […] Tourists touch, stroke, walk or climb upon, and even collect the buildings and objects that they lay their eyes upon (2011b: 1115).

However, Urry's multimodal tourists – those who touch, stroke, walk or climb upon, collect objects or places – do not speak, or, if they do so, 'language' as a distinctive tool of communication goes unnoticed.

Obviously the argument cannot be pushed too far, as the basis of Urry's work is firmly grounded in a sociological approach to tourism, rather than in linguistics or intercultural studies. What is remarkable, though, is that even sociolinguistic perspectives on Tourism Studies can be blind to concrete language mediation and translation concerns. For example, Dann's seminal work on the language of tourism in a sociolinguistic perspective appears to draw attention to the linguistic component of the tourist experience, as he claims that:

> so pervasive and essential is the language of tourism, that, without it, tourism itself would surely cease to exist. In the absence of a sociolinguistic basis, the world's largest industry would simply grind to a halt, and we would all remain at home – deaf, dumb, and blind to the beauties of creation and the voice of the Other (1996: 249).

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Yet, although extracts from translated texts from a variety of languages are plentiful in this text, Dann does not ever refer to translation practices, nor to any other language mediation process. Significantly, 'languaging' is the only interlinguistic process mentioned in this work, and this strategy basically consists in the deliberate introduction of loan words, particularly in tourism promotion. However, this strategy is considered to be similar to the use of rhetorical figures such as alliteration or onomatopoeia in tourist texts, and therefore it appears that only the symbolic or figurative function of languaging is focused on in this work, at the expense of its fundamental interlinguistic nature (cfr. Agorni, 2018b: 257-8). It must be pointed out, nevertheless, that Dann's work was published in 1996, at a time when the specificity of the language of tourism had not yet emerged and the intercultural aspects of specialized tourism communication had not been developed as they are today.

Still, the specificity of tourism communication and particularly the material aspects of language interactions in the field of tourism continue to be ignored by scholars working in Tourism Studies today. For example, a number of recent publications have started taking into consideration the agents of a "tourism mediation" process (Zátori 2016; Ooi 2006), and professionals working in this sector have been defined as "destination experience mediators" (Zátori, 2016: 117). This is a rather large category, including people, organisations or even texts which provide guidance and interpretation on a variety of tourism-related topics. Zátori defines destination experience mediators as:

> service providers, individuals or goods, which give advice to tourists on what to notice, how to consume various tourism products. Tour operators, tour and programme providers, tourism promotional authorities, tour guides, travel reviews, guidebooks and friendly locals (*ibid.*).

It goes without saying that all these providers will have to become involved with language and culture mediation or translation processes in one way or the other - particularly because Zátori concentrates on international tourism practices. Yet, no mention of the concrete aspects of language interaction is made throughout this work. Therefore, it is evident that language and cultural mediation or translation processes are not considered relevant enough ingredients of the tourist encounter, and this is arguably a limit for the research conducted in Tourism Studies.

Similar conclusions can be drawn if we leave theoretical and methodological considerations aside, and examine the role played by

academic institutions providing teaching in the field of tourism. Durán Muñoz (2011) has pointed out that the large variety of courses in Tourism Studies, International Tourism, Tourism and Hospitality, Destination Management etc. offered in Spain both at undergraduate and graduate level rarely include translation, language and cultural mediation practices or intercultural skills in general. As a matter of course, traditional Tourism Studies programmes are hosted by Departments of Economics or Management in Spain[4], and in spite of the fact that cross-disciplinary programmes are becoming more and more popular, the specificity of translation and language and cultural mediation for the tourist sector does not appear to have been fully taken into account in these programmes curricula yet.

4. Specialized Training in Translation, Language and Intercultural Mediation Applied to the Field of Tourism: Need for a State of the Art?

Joint degree courses offering a combination of subjects abound in Foreign Languages Departments, where the situation is quite different. Foreign language competence is in fact very often applied to a number of more or less vocational disciplines. This is the case of the various degree courses offering programmes in foreign languages and cultures combined with socio-economic subjects, such as tourism management, destination planning, tourism policy, business administration, etc. Such programmes are extremely popular in Italy, for example, but although they do address the need for specialized training in the tourist sector with a clear awareness of the importance of strong foreign language skills, they do not delve into the specificity of language and intercultural mediation processes nor do they generally provide specialized courses in translation for the tourist sector.

   Things are not very different if the few degree courses distinctively focusing on tourism translation and intercultural mediation are taken into account. As pointed out earlier, almost all translator training institutions provide some training and practice in the field of tourism translation, but only a few universities offer courses under a "tourism

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[4] The situation of Tourism degrees offered by Italian universities appears to be very similar to that of their Spanish counterparts, as degree courses in "Scienze del Turismo" (tourism sciences), Tourismo Internazionale (international tourism), Management del Turismo (tourism management) are always offered by Departments of Management and Economics.

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translation/mediation" label. No translator training institute at university level seems to be currently offering this type of degree course in Italy, for example.

Courses of this type are easier to find in Spain, however. Far from an intention to advertise them, I would like to cite just an example for the sake of argument. The University of Granada hosts a double degree programme in Translation and Interpretation for the Tourist Sector[5]. This is a five-year course jointly organized by the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies and the Department of Economics. Accordingly, there is a clear dividing line in terms of subjects taught in this programme. On the one hand, we find language and translation-oriented courses, such as foreign languages and cultures, translator and interpreter professional concerns, documentary research applied to translation, translation technologies etc. On the other, socio-economic topics, such as information technology for tourism management, statistics applied to the tourist sector, principles of economics, tourism administrative management, accountancy of tourism businesses, etc. In spite of the fact that specialized training in translation and languages for specific purposes are central subjects, the programme appears to be still very much split into the two different areas of study of foreign languages (and translation) and socio-economic studies. Besides, and more to the point of my argument, the two areas keep to their own academic models and traditions, as the "split" curriculum makes clear, rather than moving towards a more innovative interdisciplinary approach.

Obviously this article should be considered only as a starting point for an in-depth consideration of the state of the art of specialized training in translation and intercultural mediation practices applied to the tourist sector. Further investigation into the topic and possibly a broad overview of the education opportunities at tertiary level in the field of tourism translation, mediation and cross-cultural communication practices would be necessary to be able to formulate realistic assumptions. My aim here is simply to stimulate a debate on the evident need for innovative programmes of study, reflecting the multi-disciplinary nature of contemporary tourism and paying special attention to the language(s) and the communicative practices used in this field.

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[5] Cfr. http://grados.ugr.es/titur/pages/infoacademica/estudios. Last accessed 13 July 2019.

5. Future Prospects of the Training of Tourism Translators and Intercultural Mediators

The argument I have attempted to advance in the previous sections is that the training programmes devoted to the study of tourism appear to be generally oriented towards economic and management applications, even in those cases where translation and other language mediation practices have a key role to play. Now I would like to suggest that we could change this perspective and foreground translation, or, rather, the whole set of communicative mediation activities applied to the field of tourism. Hence, translation and intercultural mediation could be at the core of curricula designed to train high-level professionals capable of dealing with the multi-disciplinary nature of tourism communication. These new educational opportunities in the domain of tourism communication could be set up alongside the more traditional range of available training in tourism management.

Tourism translation, meant as a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communicative practice, appears to be fully qualified to play a primary role in terms of training as it is found at the crossroad not only of a number of subjects referring to the specific domains related to tourism (such as history, art history and architecture, geography, economics etc.) but also of different semiotic resources employed in tourism communication (speech, writing, sounds, pictures and even tactile experiences in museums for example). Thus, translation meant as a process of mediation can and in fact does deal with the multidisciplinary nature of tourism communication by using a combination of semiotic and technological resources.

Undoubtedly, digital developments have had a strong influence on translation and language mediation practices. As a consequence, training in the areas of audio description, subtitling and audio-visual translation in general are flourishing: indeed, audio-visual translation (AVT) is probably the most developed field of research and application in Translation Studies nowadays. But new technology and digital service developments are having an extraordinary impact on tourism practices too. Audio tours and other forms of audio-video guiding are becoming more and more popular, as they can be conceived of as a sort of re-mediation (Fina 2018) of the traditional guide book or travel guide.

Furthermore, a number of studies have been recently carried out to investigate the ways in which technological developments may be used to customize the tourist experience to visitors' needs and expectations and

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create new ways to engage them in personalized experiences. For example, the user-friendly interfaces available on smartphones and tablets are fashioning specific and personalized tourist offers (Anacleto *et al.* 2014). Also, digital media and new technologies are increasingly employed in order to enrich and personalize on-site tourist experiences, and this development has already attracted the attention of several scholars (Gretzel *et al.* 2011; Wang *et al.* 2012).

As a matter of fact, the contemporary drive towards creating new ways to engage visitors in personalized experiences is producing a positive effect also from a socially inclusive point of view: today, as never before, the tourist industry appears to be able to satisfy the needs and desires of a very large and diversified tourist population. In the near future, much more attention will be paid to tourists, and services will be more customized according to basic identity frames, such as the tourist's culture (and language), age, gender, and (dis)ability (Richards 2011; Weiler and Black 2015).

Disability is a socially and culturally constructed notion: it includes people with a variety of disabilities and/or impairments, different levels of body and mind functioning, as well as 'temporarily abled' people, that is people who will experience some loss of function in old age. In other words, disability is, or will probably be, a fact of life for all of us. The social and cultural import of tourism accessibility is increasingly coming to the fore as a consequence of population ageing in contemporary society, and it is going to be one of the main challenges of the future as far as the fields of tourism, leisure and travel are concerned (Kastenholz *et. al.* 2015, 1261; Agovino *et al.* 2017, 58). The European Network for Accessible Tourism has been active since 2006, and today accessibility has been established as one of the eight areas for joint actions in the EU supporting the core objectives pursued by the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (*ibid.*, 58). As a consequence, as I have pointed out elsewhere, tourism participation is increasingly being recognized as a right for all citizens, as it has a strong impact for the promotion of a sense of citizenship and well-being (Agorni, 2019).

The term "accessibility" itself is becoming a buzzword, and not exclusively in relation to disability, but also in the sense of facilitating access, particularly to technology products or services, by removing all potential barriers that may hinder a certain process. However, in tourism communication, and especially in cross-cultural communication, the first barrier to be confronted with is the lingua-cultural barrier, and for this reason linguistic and intercultural mediation practices have to be

employed. Katan has recently spoken of a sort of linguistic "disablement" to be compared with in translation, "in terms of being linguistically and culturally challenged" (Katan, 2018: 28). Hence, accessibility in tourism cross-cultural communication means granting ALL tourists a functional access to the tourist experience. And it becomes evident that high-level training and a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of tourism multilingual and multimodal communication is an urgent and real necessity.

6. Rising to the Challenges of Accessibility and Engagement in Tourism Intercultural Communication

A group of scholars involved in foreign language and translation teaching in several Italian universities sent out a proposal for a TranslatingEurope Workshop on professional training in tourism communication and translation in December 2017. The Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission in Italy appeared to be rather skeptical about the project at first, as it did not seem in line with the topics normally addressed by these events, topics defined as issues related to the translation profession – i.e. terminology management, quality, technology, skills and employability in the translation and language sector. Yet, the proposal was eventually selected by the European Commission and received full funding for a two-day conference[6].

The workshop aimed at highlighting the need for specialized training focusing on the multi-faceted dimension of tourism communication. Moreover, the concept of accessibility was given special prominence, as it was defined not only in terms of making tourism communication, services and products accessible by means of a scrupulous process of linguistic and intercultural mediation, but also in the framework of social inclusion.

In fact, today in order to rise to the challenge of offering effective professional training in tourism translation, a balance has to be found between the tenets of accessibility (as explained above) and the need to make tourism services, products and activities appealing to an extremely

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[6] The event, organized at the Brescia Campus of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in April 2018, was well attended by an audience made up of university students, professionals working in the tourist sector and tourism promotion representatives as well as professional translators.
Cfr. https://www.unicatt.it/meetings/tew-translating-europe-workshop-programma.
Last accessed 13 July 2019.

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variegated audience. This means that the particular flavours and values attached to specific destinations have to be made accessible as well as captivating to an audience that is not familiar with them, and but is eager to grasp them. Thus, a translators' or mediators' capacity for intervention cannot be restricted to the level of language and/or cultural adaptation, but should focus more thoroughly on audience reception, taking into account criteria such as entertainment and, especially, engagement. Drawing on Csíkszentmihályi's theory of "flow" (Csikszentmihályi and LeFevre, 1989), Gilli and Rozzi have defined "engagement" with reference to the visitors' experience of art in museums as the state where the challenge-skill balance creates an optimal and satisfying experience (2013). Thus, an engaging translation will be gratifying and stimulate visitors to the limits of their abilities.

Significantly, Tourism Studies scholars are increasingly aware of the need of making tourism offers accessible, appealing and engaging at the same time. Some of them have come up with attention-grabbing methods and creative strategies of transposition in intercultural communication that go well beyond schematic lingua-cultural transfer processes still applied in traditional translator training. For example, Ooi has claimed that tourism service providers should be involved into "crafting tourism experiences", hence highlighting both their degree of responsibility and creativity (2006: 52). As a consequence, tourism (service) professionals are arguably granted more space of manoeuvre than their colleagues working as translators of tourism communication, as, according to Ooi, they are asked to find "a balance of the need for tourists to notice and interpret tourism products in desirable ways, while at the same time allowing them to feel engaged in making choices, bridging the foreign/local gap and overcoming difficulties" (2006: 58).

On that account, the creative approaches to tourism communication developed in the field of Tourism Studies seem to be unfettered by the constraining effects deriving from traditional contrastive linguistic models of translation still at work in Translation Studies, which relegate translators to the apparently neutral, low-risk role of 'faithful' language mediators (cfr. Katan, 2016a). Therefore, this asks for some kind of compromise: if translators and professionals in language and intercultural mediation could complement their linguistic and intercultural competence with some of the creativity of their colleagues active in Tourism Studies, their professional expertise would probably be more in line with the current demands of the tourism market.

This argument can be taken a step further if we claim that new, creative and intervening practices to be applied in tourism translation could affect Translation Studies at a theoretical and methodological level. Kelly was well ahead of her time when she put tourist texts at the core of translator training: the notion of accessibility meant in the wide social sense of inclusiveness, availability and user-friendliness, together with the concept of engagement, with its attention to attention-grabbing strategies and visitor motivation, are increasingly exerting their influence on translation theory and methodology (cfr. Neves, 2018 and Agorni and Spinzi, 2019).

The two criteria taken together are triggering the functional paradigms of translation to their farthest conclusion, as their strong plea for pragmatic effectiveness is definitely challenging fidelity, or traditional adherence to linguistic form (Katan, 2016b; Agorni, 2019: 27).

7. Conclusion

The role of language and cultural mediators and the crucial importance of their specialized training will continue to be relevant to the professional world only if the new global challenges that have resonance in the fields of education, innovation and technology, accessibility and social inclusion are accepted. One of the areas which could benefit the most from redefining traditional translators' and mediators' tasks and responsibility is intercultural tourism communication.

Nowadays, tourism translation and intercultural communication appear to be very complex fields of studies, somehow in between Translation and Tourism Studies. If, on the one hand, Tourism Studies should recognize the fundamental importance of language in any tourist exchange, Translation Studies could benefit from some innovative trends in Tourism Studies, and use them to free itself from rather old-fashioned preoccupations, such as the narrow concepts of linguistic transpositions of meaning.

To paraphrase Ooi, we could say that the new intercultural mediators could educate tourists about different cultural values, and thus "sculpt tourism experiences" (Ooi 2006: 66). In other words, tourism translators and intercultural mediators could help to frame tourist experiences at a deep, cross-cultural level.

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