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Translating culture in global times: Dialogues

Zhu Hua and Claire Kramsch, with David Gramling, Juliane House, Jennifer Johnson, Li Wei, and Joseph Park

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As a way of concluding this thematic issue, we have created a space for our contributors to read each other's articles and to reflect on the main theme, i.e. translating culture in global times. We invited their response to four questions that we believe are not only central to the aims of the special issue, but also encourage further dialogues on the role of translation in applied linguistics and translation as mission and practice.

- How does the distinction between cultural difference and cultural diversity help us understand the way culture and translation are conceptualized and operationalized?

- How does the translanguaging perspective help to understand cultural translation and what are the limitations or issues for future exploration?

- What are the ethical challenges in cultural translation and how do we as applied linguists address ethical issues in cultural translation?

- What implications do the new ways of understanding cultural translation debated in the special issue have for the field of applied linguistics?

The contributors were free to address any or all of the questions. To be faithful to the contributors' voices, we present their responses as they are under each question. Readers can see that their responses not only highlight the connections and divergences between the articles, but also raise new questions for us all to think about in future research.

1. **How does the distinction between cultural difference and cultural diversity help us understand the way culture and translation are conceptualized and operationalized?**

LI WEI

Intentionally or not, the discourse of diversity seems to have quietly replaced the discourse of difference in recent years when it comes to discussions of culture, race and language, possibly due to a fear that too much emphasis on difference would look essentialist and is not politically correct. Differences are often seen as causes of conflicts; they are therefore problems for society to solve and barriers for individuals to overcome. Diversity, on the other hand, whilst remaining largely undefined and controversial, is something to be celebrated. I have indeed personally joined the bandwagon in calling for linguistic and cultural diversity to be regarded as a resource for learning and for socio-economic progress. Yet cultural and linguistic differences exist due to different histories and developmental paths and cannot be erased by a simple change of terminology. Recognising differences, as it does in diversity, is a first step towards mutual understanding. But we also need to ask more critical questions as to how the differences came about; whether they are apparent or real; how people try, or not try, to overcome them and why; and how society manages the differences in terms of policies and institutional systems. We also need to address, as part of ethical consideration (see further discussions below), the question: from whose point view can we or should we be speaking of difference, i.e. different from what/whom/whose norm?

This special issue revisits the discourses of diversity and difference by bringing *culture* back to the fore and by focusing on the translation of the differences in culture and in language. All the contributors take culture, as well as language, as something one does rather than what one has, as House points out in her article. Two papers, by Johnson and Gramling, also highlight the impact of technology on cultural formation and cultural politics. They are timely reminders to us all of the importance of contextualising the notion of culture. Kramsch's and Park's papers show that language and culture form an integral and crucial part of the discursive construction of symbolic power that can be deployed strategically, institutionally and globally. Connecting culture and power from the perspective of translation, or in Gramling's term which I prefer, translatability, is a unique contribution of this collection. Johnson's vivid depiction and critical analysis of how hearing mothers perceive and position their deaf children with or without Cochlear implant in the global hearing culture illustrates the power of sensory politics and the limits to what individuals can translate within the imposed power structure. Despite their tremendous personal commitment and ingenious creativity, their struggles with the 'in-betweenness' is real and they remain outside the big D Deaf culture. Translatability therefore is about power.

JOSEPH PARK

To me, a focus on cultural difference becomes particularly important in our times in which multiplicity of cultures and languages is increasingly celebrated, either as economic resource or as means of cultivating our selves, under the name of cultural diversity. As the notion of cultural diversity becomes appropriated under the logic of neoliberalism, untranslatable differences of cultures are obscured, leading to certain voices being unheard, suppressed, and erased. Foregrounding cultural difference, imagined not in essentialist terms, but in terms of such voices, can become a useful way of countering this neoliberal valorization of diversity.

The perspective of cultural difference, then, offers us an alternative lens through which we can read scenes of cultural diversity for the underlying struggles and tensions that may be hidden from a more celebratory viewpoint. The transmodal narratives that hearing mothers with deaf children produce in Johnson's study, for instance, is more than just an amazing mixing and blending of modes, but also a testament to the families' struggle against ableism, audism, and oralism, as well as against the English-centered monolingual ideology of the US. For instance, Gloria's account of the 'silent space' she achieved with her daughter (along with the researcher as a participant in the narrative event) is powerful and moving precisely because it implicitly references the hidden struggles they face amidst the supposedly 'equal' worlds of hearing vs. Deafness, signing vs. cochlear implants, ASL vs. SEE, and so on.

Likewise, in Zhu Hua, Li Wei, and Jankowicz-Pytel's paper, though our first impulse may be to marvel at Sensei SK's and his students' linguistic, cultural, and bodily practices at the Roma dojo as a fascinating example of hybridity arising from contemporary London's cultural diversity, we are ultimately invited to read the activities at the dojo in terms of SK's and the children's cultural difference — as immigrants, as English-as-second-language speakers, as outsiders lacking cultural capital to succeed at school, and so on. Even as we observe them as they practise karate at the dojo, their story really begins as they figure out how to make sense of the cultural knowledge acquired at the dojo through their struggle in a world which takes their cultural difference for granted, as merely another figure in London's superdiverse landscape.

JULIANE HOUSE

In my view, cultural difference is what I described in my chapter as differences along certain dimensions of preferences and expectation norms – differences that can be bridged via what I call a cultural filter in covert translation. Cultural diversity is implicit in my chapter, it refers to the side-by-side existence of different cultures.

David Gramling seems to suggest that the translation industry is intent on wiping out costly cultural differences in the interest of seamless flows of translated texts through time and space maximising profit and immediate usability. Against this I would hold that even in a world of effective supralingualism, there is a strong localization industry which promotes cultural filtering to overcome real cultural differences, i.e., clearly contradicting any easy transposability of meaning for better selling products across the world. Further, apart from the world of business and marketing there still exists the world of literature and literary translation where cutural differences continue to play a role with or without cultural filtering. As my work on the translation of children's books has shown, cultural filtering seems to be well and alive to the benefit of children who are introduced into another linguacultural world. So cultural difference and linguacultural diversity is currently not at stake in all and every genre. But it is not only in literary translation that cultural differences abide. In 2018, the US President's racist slur about 'shithole countries' presented major translation difficulties. In other words, this collocation did not travel easily into different linguacultures, leading for instance 'The Washington Post' to interview me about how this can be translated into different linguacultures.

The chapter by Park on the multicultural workplace and the managment of diversity where cultural differences are 'appropriated' as resources for economic profit seems to me to pursue a rather one-sided view. Surely it is not only the Multinational Companies who derive profit from diversity and cultural difference. The individual employees will often also profit from this environment of diversity. I realize that the author's view is in line with the dominant, politically correct one in the academy, with its critique of neoliberal capitalism.

I also do not agree with the view that power is inherent in translation. Translation is not only and everywhere a political action. Celebrating cultural diversity does not inevitably lead to 'translational monolingualism' and a neat transposability of the Korean cultural selves. To test the findings described in Park's chapter one might interview Korean employees in Korean-owned companies to see how they behave and feel in this environment, and whether it is here also the case that employees are scrutinized and exploited.

Kramsch's paper seems to me to be particularly relevant and enlightening for defining cultural difference and cultural diversity and their relation to each other. The only critical comment I would like to make concerns her use of examples of individual words to exemplify types of translation. Translating isolated words is often impossible, and it is generally maintained in translation studies that translation is text based.

2. How does the translanguaging perspective help to understand cultural translation and what are the limitations or issues for future exploration?

LI WEI

Contrary to what may be commonly understood, translanguaging as a theoretical perspective recognises the differences that exist between named languages and named cultures and aims to highlight the evolutionary histories of the differences between them. In the meantime, it does not believe that diversity in the form of co-existence or parallel monolingualism works, however harmonious it may look for the time being. It urges us to dig deep into the roots of the differences, to investigate how people individually or collectively negotiate and transcend the differences, either successfully or unsuccessfully, and to ask why some individuals and groups may be more successful than others in transcending the differences; in other words, what is translatable. It is clear from the Park's, Johnson's and our own discussions that not everybody has equal access to the linguistic and cultural capital to engage in the process of cultural translation as equal partners. Gramling's discussion of the translatability industry shows that individuals' agency can be systematically constrained by powerful supra-structures. Individuals with different backgrounds, experiences and trajectories may also have different strategies to tackle the issue of translatability. Kramsch's teachers seem to prefer to emphasize commonalities rather than differences on certain occasions as a safer version of cultural translation. Translanguaging, which promotes head-on challenges of boundaries between named language and named cultures and divisions of access and power, may not therefore be a suitable strategy for everyone in all situations. The critical question then is what translanguaging means to different individuals and social groups, and why some individuals and groups do not engage in translanguaging in certain contexts.

As a proponent of translanguaging, I want to take the opportunity to raise the possibility of 'strategic monolingualism'. Like 'strategic essentialism', strategic monolingualism can be

used as a tactic whereby minoritised language users and stereotyped bilinguals and multilinguals temporarily monolingualise themselves to bring forward a specific dimension of their identity to achieve certain goals. On a number of occasions I have been asked by US immigration officers at airports whether I spoke English. I thought that the fact I am holding a British passport and have a fully completed immigration form in English would be sufficient for them to tell that I do know the language. My strategy when I am asked that question has been to respond with 'Mhm', which, as it happens, is associated more with English to me than any of the other languages I know. But this ambiguous response naturally prompts a follow-up question: 'What do you do?', to which I would say, 'I teach English' (which is only partially accurate, as I teach on TESOL programmes but not exactly the English language as such). That normally shuts up any further conversation. In my work over the years with the Chinese immigrants and other minoritised communities in the UK and elsewhere, I have seen many examples where bilingual and multilingual individuals choose to act monolingually in order to demonstrate that they can speak the language that the system and the context demand and to participate in the activity with others on a more equal footing. For me, this is a special kind of translanguaging as it pushes and breaks the boundaries and restrictions set by the system. Of course not all individuals have the privilege to be able to do this, and I have seldom seen minoritised language users strategically present themselves as monolingual in the non-dominant languages. Nevertheless it is one way of dealing with cultural and linguistic differences that should be looked at from the new translating cultures perspective in future research.

JENNIFER JOHNSON

The papers in this special issue invite us to view cultural translation from multiple perspectives in the process itself (the language user, the translator, the practitioner and the researcher). Through these multiple viewpoints, authors force us to wrestle with different socio-historical underpinnings, language ideologies and individual experiences that shape the process of cultural translation.

Park, Johnson, Gramling and House examine the interests that preserve privileged communication or discourse regimes that rationalize power relations, often under the guise of diversity in a more 'interconnected' world. More specifically, the authors explore how industries, technologies and so-called inclusive education settings and corporations perpetuate monolingual, unidirectional and unimodal culture forces— fueled by what Gramling calls the

'eco-chambers of translatability' or what House states is the need for 'cultural universality or neutrality'—at the expense of generating new meanings. The authors point out how cultural difference, when situated in larger discourse regimes and technologies, erase, avoid or appropriate difference. Park shows us how corporations 'incorporate and appropriate' difference for profit, Kramsch shows us how hybrid language learning spaces may avoid deeper engagement with difference for 'a-cultural' outcomes, and my own study shows us how cochlear implants erase difference under the illusion of inclusivity and a global cultural 'norm'—the speaking hearing subject.

A translanguaging perspective, however, unveils the negotiations of meanings that take place in cultural translation with the potential to offer critical engagement with cultural difference and the generation of new meanings. As an 'orchestration' translanguaging shapes a non-linear space for breaking down artificial language boundaries, moves across time-space borders and transforms 'practices, belief and values, social relationships and subjectivities' (Zhu et al. this issue). In these hybrid spaces of cultural translation, language learning goes beyond just learning the linguistic code to engage with the symbolic dimensions of language–the historicity (Butler 1997) and imagination that exceeds language and the transcontextualization (Kramsch 2011) performed by the language user.

In an examination of the embodied practices in a karate dojo, Zhu et al.'s study illustrates how the karate participants gain a sharper understanding of the 'socio-political sensitivities' of different languages and the values associated with the practice, such as discipline and respect. In Kramsch's study, the Chinese instructors' covert re-translation of their more overt classroom translation practices becomes a kind of translanguaging on its own in which they re-negotiate the cultural differences between Chinese and American values. In Kramsch's third case study, instructor Chika's cultivation of the students' imagined identities, in the Japanese film scenes designed by students, offers a third space of negotiation allowing students to move past cultural differences. And, in my own study, hearing mothers re-translate their experiences with their deaf children conveying an ambiguity in their discourse through modeblends and modeswitches, as they negotiate the differences between the deaf and hearing worlds to find something that they intimately share with their child. In these cases, the negotiation that takes place gives us insight into the covert translation and re-translations of cultural meaning. The translanguaging examples involve a negotiation that often forces attention to cultural difference (vs. cultural diversity) and, I'd like to think, subtly resist monolingualism. As a pedagogical practice for the instructor and as a methodological lens for

the researcher, translanguaging as an 'orchestration' is a political commitment and one applied linguists should indeed take up, as Zhu, et al. suggest.

A thread that fascinated me through some cultural translation moments was a point Zhu, et al. made: values such as respect and discipline are not unique to Japanese culture, but become tangible and relevant through the embodied practices. Similarly, when I see the hearing mothers tap into the visual and sensorial differences of their deaf children's worlds, I am reminded that this is not just the 'Deaf' way, but that it expands the very way we think of human communication. Further research on translanguaging practices does, indeed, call for more attention to the embodied dimensions of language.

DAVID GRAMLING

I was particularly grateful, while reading Zhu et al's study, to be able to revisit a long-forgotten but archetypical space in my own personal development, the karate dojo. It is, I think, one of many spaces often positioned (particularly by academic researchers) on the symbolic boundary between:

- default monolingualism and 'real' multilingualism
- translative work and the rejection of translation
- cultural appropriation / linguistic tourism and true intercultural transformation / Third Space
- 'language learning' and other, presumptively non-linguistic learning.

There has been, as Zhu et al. intimate, a knee-jerk impulse to consider the karate studio as not quite a place for/of 'real language learning'. This impulse is interesting on its own discursive terms, even before studying the actual details of a specific karate studio as an empirical, interactional, translative space. Zhu et al.'s piece helped me to think more critically about why such spaces are so often framed as symbolic proxies for distinguishing between real multilingualism and mock multilingualism, and between real learning and appropriative play-acting.

I eagerly endorse Zhu et al.'s expansive view of the centrality of multilingual language learning 'through everyday social interaction' in ways that are 'intermedial, intersystemic, and intercultural' (4). I also admire their bold rejection of strong distinctions between formal and informal language learning, and between so-called formulaic / tokenistic usages of foreign languages and true language learning on the other (5). I agree wholeheartedly, upon reading

their argument, that these rule-of-thumb distinctions are primarily ideological and defensive, rather than empirical and exploratory.

And yet, there is a caveat I want to make, based on my own experience, having grown up attending martial arts lessons myself. Such spaces as the Roma Karate Club, and the dojo where I learned as a young person—different though these inevitably are from one another—might shed light on a paradigmatic discordance between what applied linguists (hope to) notice and what pupils actually feel or experience. Without reflection and guidance, potential spaces of translanguaging and cultural translation can easily fall back (in memory and in their outcomes, as mine did) into hum-drum monolingualism—a mode which, I maintain, will continue to be a profoundly powerful force in otherwise de facto multilingual settings, despite insurgent paradigms like metrolingualism (Pennycook and Otsuji 2015). The entropic monolingualization of multilingual space can occur among pupils even if teachers like SK feel committed to the idea that 'If you train something from a given country then you should be using the terminology. So it would not get forgotten.'

The good news is that there is much exciting, practical work yet to be done in such spaces to embolden the role of translanguaging-as-meaning, in curricula otherwise non-committal about language and translation. Applied linguists can range far beyond the 'language classroom', helping to develop and disseminate a broad range of accessible, useful tools for different kinds of teachers / mentors / elders / trainers that accentuate insight into translanguaging experience, so that the purposefulness and richness of translation will not be lost on some or all of the participants who are invited into its various formal / occasional spaces.

What was missing for me in my early-adolescence experience of karate learning was, I believe, what House—and Kramsch in a somewhat different sense specific to FL instruction—call overt translation, a kind of translation expressing a concept or principle that has an 'established worth in the source language community' and 'has no direct linguistic equivalent in the students' L1 and can only be explained in reference to the L2 source linguaculture.' (House, this issue). Teaching pupils of various ages in a monolingualist (though not monolingual) cultural setting like where I learned martial arts in West Boylston, Massachusetts, in the 1980s, my teachers tended to present 'covert' translations (from Japanese, Chinese, Okinawan, etc.) that:

a) Would 'enjoy[…] the status of an original text in the receiving culture' (House, this issue),

b) would not unduly distract from or deter other learning goals (for which parents had paid hourly),

c) would not threaten the legitimacy and epistemic status of the teacher in a way that might interfere practically with accomplishing his teaching goals.

As such, the way my karate teachers translated was essentially 'don't ask, don't tell'. They implied: Don't ask me more than I tell you about what this Chinese word means, or even about what language(s) it comes from. Fast and frugal 'covert translations', designed to quickly domesticate the concepts into the operative repertoires of the pupils, were the idiom of the studio—when it came to language and concepts.

And yet, all the while, we pupils were vigorously subjected to incessant 'overt translations', as it were, in *other* semiotic domains of our practice: namely, in the ways the teachers presented the day's combinations of physical movements, called 'techniques' or 'forms'. The senseis knew that these physical forms and techniques—which we pupils were supposed to notice, learn, and appropriate—were not indigenous to our bodies' semiotic habits as these had been inculcated in our home cultures up to that point. We did not know how to stand, operate, and move in the forms and techniques being taught to us, and any approach which presented these new learning outcomes via fast-and-frugal 'covert translation' methods would have drowned in a haze of (in)difference.

And so, if we are truly heeding Zhu et al's call for an intersemiotic conception of language learning that includes the body as a site of symbolic form, we can extend their conception to observe that, in the realm of the physical enactment / assimilation of martial artistic forms, 'overt translation' was the only and compulsory method for ensuring learner success at my childhood karate dojo. While physical inculcation in the studio took place through such arduous overt translations, anything involving *linguistic repertoires* as such receded into laconic and covert translation—due, I think, to forces of expediency, linguaphobia, monolingualism, and devaluation. Language and concepts were translated covertly; physical forms and their combinatory enactment were translated overtly.

3. What are the ethical challenges in cultural translation and how do we as applied linguists address ethical issues in cultural translation?

JENNIFER JOHNSON

House points out that there are 'subtle and crucial differences in cultural preferences, mentalities and values' necessary to understand covert cultural translation. We might consider an ethical challenge in cultural translation and in intercultural communication studies to be the role of and subject position of the researcher, which, undoubtedly, adds more layers to the practice of cultural translation. Kramsch asks, 'How does one deal with discourse incommernsurabilites in the cultural translation of experience?' Kramsch goes on to note the disconnect in the discourse of the practitioner and researcher (which was very similar to the disconnect I experienced between researcher and hearing mother interviewees) particularly when researchers encouraged interviewees to deeply and repeatedly reflect on cultural difference. The language user, practitioner and researcher see the cultural difference with different goals and interest in mind creating a tension in the interview process, which Kramsch pointedly reflected on. From a researcher standpoint, we might agree upon, at the very least, an honest engagement with the messiness of the re-translation of experience (by the researcher) and the visibility of researcher positionality (Bourdieu 2004).

We might also consider how transcription adds an additional layer of translation (and in some cases modal translation) by the researcher. I appreciate Zhu et al.'s decision to avoid separate fonts for different languages in order to avoid drawing artificial boundaries and questioned my own choice to deliberately delineate the modal (speech/sign) and language choices as a means to highlight a 'phonocentric orientation' (Shaw 2015) in established transcription practices in the field. However, along with glosses, both choices by the transcribers aim to eliminate a monolingual bias and embrace the multiplicity of semiotic resources.

JOSEPH PARK

Kramsch's study of how foreign language teachers and learners engage with issues of cultural translation reveals what I think is one prevalent tendency that we, as applied linguists and as human beings living in times of neoliberalism, share, and that is our general reluctance to confront and acknoweledge cultural difference. The teachers Kramsch conversed with seemed more comfortable to skirt the issue of cultural difference, either because they feared that it might reflect negatively on their institutional evaluations as teachers or because they believed orienting to a 'universal human empathy' offered a safer strategy both interactionally and pedagogically. It is not difficult to sympathize with the teachers; addressing cultural difference head on in our research, in the classroom, or in interaction with others is not an easy task, as it requires excavating inequalities and tensions that we take great care to soften

and camouflage in the name of civility, and relations of power that we ourselves may be deeply involved in reproducing.

But Gramling's account of the rise of supralingualism points out that there is much more at stake here. As the translatability industry, driven by powerful interests of global capitalism, actively promotes a vision of a world full of commensurable linguacultures mediated through technology, language becomes another realm through which the logic of neoliberalism finds its justification; in Gramling's formulation, applied linguists' call to understand 'language as culture' is subverted into commodifying 'culture as language', whose logic depends on an understanding of language as bounded, isolable, commensurable codes. I think this places great ethical responsibility upon applied linguists, who are faced with the task to demonstrate to the world, once again, the deeply political dimension of cultural difference that undergirds human communication and language use. This means that we need to shed our reluctance to confront cultural difference in research and practice, with a keen awareness of how our avoidance of such issues can easily be incorporated into the agenda of supralingualism.

DAVID GRAMLING

The editors of this special issue have asked us to consider what ethical issues become apparent in cultural translation, and how applied linguists might best address these issues. Joseph Sung-Yul Park lays bare, with his contribution, how in neoliberal economies the burden of translational creativity and cross-cultural participation often falls onto workers marginalized by corporate managers and their diversity initiatives. This is an ethical problem that, of course, is unlikely to be resolved by the free-market forces that created it, and Park's study begins to call attention to the redoubling of marginalization that occurs when presumptively universal values like 'speaking up' and 'bringing one's self' creatively to work are made mandatory for advancement. This is a global labor justice issue to which applied linguists can lend detailed analytical attention.

4. What implications do the new ways of understanding cultural translation debated in this special issue have for the field of Applied Linguistics?

JOSEPH PARK

The notion of overt vs. covert translation, presented in House's earlier work and her contribution to this special issue, provides a useful tool for applied linguistics to engage with the problem of power in cultural translation. As a scholar working at the intersection of applied linguistics and linguistic anthropology, I find much affinity between House's ideas and earlier studies in linguistic anthropology that explored how discursive construction of textual distance can serve as a resource for articulations of power, authority, and legitimacy (Briggs and Bauman 1992, Silverstein and Urban 1996), and of course Bakhtin's seminal work on voice and authoritative discourse (Bakhtin 1981). What House's discussion adds, and what makes this notion useful to applied linguistics, is the way it situates the work of textual translation within the idea of culture. That is, it highlights how intercultural communication is a site mediated by the discursive construction of cultural distance (for instance, competing notions of cultural diversity vs cultural difference), a process in which the field of applied linguistics is deeply involved. In my view, this provides a significant challenge as well as an opportunity, calling upon us to make overt our hidden assumptions about language, discourse, and culture, and to evaluate them in light of our role as scholars of cultural and linguistic mediation.

DAVID GRAMLING

Claire Kramsch and Juliane House demonstrate how covert versus overt translations, when analyzed through this conceptual distinction, can be seen to have extraordinary impact on learners over time: both on the formal language learners in Kramsch's study, and on the martial arts learners in Zhu et al's study. The tools proposed in this special issue, including what Zhu et al. describe as the 'orchestration' feature of translanguaging, will have noticeable outcomes for various kinds of language learners, in and out of formal foreign language learning environments. From the perspective of these language learners, the implication of using one tool over the other—covert versus overt translation in conveying a complex L2 concept, for instance—will often be felt decades hence. It will shape what they believe 'a language' to be, what the relationship between culture and language to be, and how they reason multilingually.

JULIANE HOUSE

The chapter by Zhu et al. points the way towards a new view of combining verbal and physical expressions thus expanding traditional linguacultural learning and teaching. The use of formulaic routines is one thing, however, the mastery of complex multi-layered linguacultural systems together with physical movements is quite another. The authors might have emphasized more the limitations of their focus.

In her reports on two research projects, Kramsch points out new ways of integrating translation in its various forms into language learning and teaching. I found her discussion of Pym's notion of 'cultural translation' an interesting and useful addition to my own notions of covert and overt translation. This added a new and important reflexive dimension to translation. The finding that language teachers increasingly do not favour covert translation but rather resort to cultural translation to overcome cultural differences is, I think, quite alarming. We should not fool ourselves as to the continued existence of cultural differences. I fully agree with Claire Kramsch when she writes 'The reluctance to focus on difference is shared today by many practitioners and researchers in Applied Linguistics who favour resolving differences rather than understand their complexities'. Just as earlier research on intercultural misunderstanding was more recently replaced by focussing on how interactants from different linguacultural contexts manage understanding thus glossing over the sometimes unbridgeable differences, so many Applied Linguists today tend to belittle cultural differences in a general celebration of cultural diversity. A way forward for cultural translation seems to me to lie in re-instating covert translation with its use of a cultural filter.

Editors' closing comments

We wish to thank the contributors to this special issue for their willingness to read and respond to all the papers with collegial enthusiasm and intellectual generosity. Their commentaries can help us identify three salient themes or strands of research that will be worth pursuing further in Applied Linguistics.

1) While the field of Applied Linguistics has always included translation as one of the 'real world problems' worthy of its study, there seems to be little dialogue or cross-fertilisation between translation theories and applied linguistic research. What this special issue brings to the fore is the centrality of the process of translation as both translingual practice and transcultural hermeneutics. To what extent can we afford to dwell on difference without trivializing it, but also without exoticizing it or stigmatizing it? Going beyond multilingual diversity and earnestly engaging with difference becomes central to the field. Indeed,

translation as translanguaging becomes the natural correlate of Applied Linguistics as a theory of the practice. Understood as a metaphoric process not just of recoding, but of re-embodiment and transformation of Self in Other and Other in Self, translation becomes the very core of our mission.

2) The concept of cultural translation enables us to make the link between culture and symbolic power as mentioned again and again in these Commentaries. Who has the right to speak for the other and to translate the words of the practitioner into the words of the researcher? What legitimates the researcher to speak the language of the practice? What are the limits of the translatable? The authors worry that the translatability industry is changing the very nature of what we call 'language' and their data point to the need to reclaim the right to use cultural filters in order to understand each other in all our complexity.

3) Finally, all authors agree that translating culture presents ethical and political challenges. How do applied linguists maintain the discursive construction of textual and cultural distance on which the process of translation rests without betraying the yearning of practitioners for closeness and harmony? Translation as translanguaging is an orchestration of multimodal, multisemiotic, and multilingual resources that has as its ultimate raison d'etre the transformation of political power relations, in the broadest sense of the term.

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