«I don't translate what I think is social injustice». Translators' ideology and emotion[1]

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RESUMEN

El presente estudio analiza cómo revelan de manera retrospectiva los traductores y traductoras en un entorno de *traducción en el servicio público*, sus *ideologías* y las *emociones* personales desencadenadas durante el proceso de traducción, y cómo se reflejan dichos factores en su trabajo de traducción. Aplica un enfoque narrativo etnográfico a los casos de dos traductoras Inglés-Japonés, y demuestra que la individualidad y subjetividad manifiestas en el trabajo de interpretación textual, producción y traducción se ven influidas por experiencias, opiniones y emociones anteriores, y que dichos factores están estrechamente vinculados entre sí. Se tratan la individualidad y subjetividad ilustradas, que parecieran entrar en conflicto con el principio *ético* profesional de neutralidad, en relación con los puntos de vista de las traductoras sobre la «*ética* de ser humano». Para las traductoras en este estudio, esta ética humana trasciende una ética profesional regida por normas. El estudio pretende llenar una laguna en el estudio de la ideología y la emoción en la traducción. Propone un entendimiento de la individualidad ideológica y emocional de los traductores que sirva de base para un marco ético que sea lo bastante flexible como para reflejar los factores individuales y subjetivos y las *prácticas* de los traductores y traductoras.

Palabras clave: Traductores del servicio público, ideología, emoción, ética, práctica social, japonés.

ABSTRACT

This study explores how translators in a *public service translation* setting retrospectively reveal their personal *ideologies* and *emotions* that were triggered during the translation pro-

cess and how these factors are reflected in their translation output. It applies an ethnographic narrative approach to the cases of two English-to-Japanese translators and shows that the individuality and subjectivity manifest in their textual interpretation, production and translation outputs are influenced by their earlier experiences, opinions and emotions and that these factors are inextricably linked with one another. The illustrated individuality and subjectivity, which seem to conflict with the professional *ethical* principle of neutrality, are discussed in relation to the translators' views on the «*ethics* of being human». For the translators in this study, this human ethics transcends a rule-governed professional ethics. The study aims to fill a lacuna in the study of ideology and emotion in translation. It proposes an understanding of the translators' ideological and emotional individuality as the basis for an ethical framework that is flexible enough to reflect the individual and subjective human factors and *practices* of translators.

Key words: Public service translators, ideology, emotion, ethics, social practice, Japanese.

1. INTRODUCTION

Challenging the idea that the human aspects of translation are, or should be, invisible, numerous studies, including those focusing on public service translation and interpreting, have illustrated and advocated for the inclusion of empathy and advocacy in the work of the translator or interpreter (e.g. Fraser 1993; Lesch 1999; Angelelli 2004; Valero Garcés 2014; Taibi and Ozolins 2016; Lesch 2017; Taibi 2017). The image of the translator or interpreter as neutral, impartial and invisible (referred to as a «professional ideology» by Angelelli 2004: 15) is widely shared in the profession and is reflected in numerous professional codes of ethics for translators and interpreters (e.g. Australian Insitute of Interpreters and Translators 2012). Yet the studies mentioned above highlight the individuality, decision-making agency and power held by translators.

At the same time, studies on translators' ideologies (which have emerged since the ideological turn identified by Leung 2006) have shown that translators' ideological positions, that is, their opinions on specific topics based on their sets of beliefs and values (Van Dijk 1998), are linguistically manifest in their translation products (e.g. Calzada-Pérez 2002; Cunico and Munday 2007; Munday 2007; 2008; 2012a; 2012b; 2014; 2018). These studies demonstrate that translators are not free of ideologies and that their ideologies are visible in their translation outputs to varying degrees.

Another aspect of translation that makes translators visible, namely emotions (for a definition, see Davou 2007), has attracted interest in process-oriented translation studies (see Rojo 2017). Translation process research has moved away from a view of translators' minds as computers to a more situated and embodied view of cognition

and emotion (Rojo 2017: 371). Hansen (2005) argued that translators' own emotions and past experiences impact their translation decisions. Davou (2007) suggested how translators' affective reactions to the source text (ST) may influence the processing style and effort required during the translation process and the resulting translation product. These studies, which present evidence from the fields of psychology and neuroscience, were followed by empirical studies that examine the effects of translators' emotional states or emotional constructs, such as empathy, on aspects of their translation processes, such as behaviour (Apfelthaler 2014), reaction time (Rojo and Ramos 2014) and processing style (Rojo and Ramos 2016). Rojo and Ramos's (2014) research is of particular interest for this study as it presents evidence that a translator's ideological stance and resultant emotional responses affect the time required for them to find translation solutions when they translate an ST embedded in ideological contexts. Hence, it illustrates the possible interactions between a translator's ideology, emotion, cognitive processing and the resultant translation product.

1.1. *Research questions and rationale*

These conceptions of an individual and subjective translator in academia challenge the feasibility, practicality and ethics of the above-mentioned professional ethical code of neutrality and impartiality (see also Lambert 2018). This raises the question of what it means to act well as an ethical translator. To respond to this question, we first need to understand the practice and experiences of translators in specific contexts (on constructing context-specific ethics based on virtues, see Vallor 2016: 186). Exploring how translators' human responses affect their translation can provide a window into practice. What do human translators think and feel during their translation process? And how do these thoughts, emotions and feelings affect their translation process and translated text (TT)? These enquiries are yet to be investigated qualitatively as most previous studies only observe either the translation products or the translation process (Apfelthaler 2014 as an exception) or apply quantitative experimental methods that do not consider the voices of translators themselves.

To begin filling this lacuna, my doctoral project explores in depth the personal ideologies and emotions of translators, particularly in certain public service translation contexts, and examines how these factors are reflected in their translation process and output. It aims to identify the ethical practices of individual translators and the moral virtues required for an ethical practice of translation. As part of this project, drawing on two cases of English-to-Japanese translators translating an NGO text on the sex industry, the current paper addresses the following question: how do individual translators in a public service translation setting reveal their ideologies and emotions in relation to the translation context when retrospectively talking about their translation process? The two translators' accounts are then discussed in relation to their views on being an ethical person and translator.

2. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The methodology employed is that of ethnographic narrative case studies, and data was collected in two stages. An ethnographic narrative approach was considered appropriate because ethnography allows «the unique dynamics of individuals activities in their authentic contexts» (Risku 2017: 293) to be captured, including (inter) personal factors than formal contextual factors and those that do not appear in the translation products (Buzelin 2007: 51). A combined ethnographic and narrative approach to analysis suits this study as it aims to observe individual translators' experiences, emotions, voices, perspectives and views. Such an approach has hitherto been lacking in translation studies (Hubscher-Davidson, 2011).

The data collection process was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, a preliminary online questionnaire was distributed to English-to-Japanese translators and interpreters through the mailing list of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters in Australia and multiple mailing lists and notice boards of multicultural and translation-related organisations in Japan. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to explore the wider context within which translators and interpreters in Australia and Japan work.

The second stage was conducted over two days. On each day, a participant was asked to translate a persuasive text. The text for the first day was about ovarian cancer and was based on texts issued by Cancer Council Australia (2018) and Cancer Australia (2017). The text for day two explains to women who are considering entering the sex industry what they should know about future clients. The latter was written by a Melbourne-based feminist NGO that supports sex workers and women trafficked for sexual exploitation (Project Respect 2018). The topic of the sex industry was selected as it was expected to induce diverse and polarising opinions reflecting different ideologies in relation to multifaceted social inequality issues (e.g. Hatty 1993; Tomita 1993; Sullivan 1997; Benoit et al. 2018). The choice of two translation tasks was to enable both intra– and inter-subject comparisons. I asked the participants to record their computer screen, facial expression and voice while they were completing the translation tasks.

I conducted an interview session after each translation task. First, I asked the participant to give a retrospective account of their translation process, reporting on anything they could remember, including thoughts, emotions and feelings (Fraser 1993; Ivanova 2000; Englund Dimitrova and Tiselius 2009). Then, I carried out a semi-structured interview with the participant on their opinions regarding sex work, translators' roles and ethics, and their own backgrounds and experiences.

Participants' TTs were analysed using both shift analysis (Van Leuven-Zwart 1989) and appraisal analysis (Martin and White 2005). Retrospective accounts and interview responses were analysed by thematic analysis and narrative portraiture analysis (Rodríguez-Dorans and Jacobs 2020). The epistemology of the narrative approach is based on the premises that social activities cannot be researched and understood without interpretation and, therefore, without narratives and that self-narratives also narrate social

practice (Maines 1993). Rooted in this epistemological stance, the method of narrative portraiture aims to capture the stories told by people about their lives, experience and practice. These stories can emerge in observations and interpretations that arise from ethnographic dialogues between the researcher and the informants (Buzelin 2007; Risku 2017). The method involves coding characters, times, spaces, circumstances, key events and interactions between phenomena of interest (Rodríguez-Dorans and Jacobs 2020: 4). Applying this coding method to qualitative data such as interviews, observations or documents enables the researcher to «create portraits that offer a glimpse into the subjects' lives» (Rodríguez-Dorans and Jacobs 2020: 3). It is through these portraits that we gain an understanding of social practices, such as translation practice.

3. CASE STUDIES

The online questionnaire received responses from 71 translators, 15 of which agreed to participate in the second stage. These 15 translators continued with the processes. This paper introduces two cases.[2] For each case, it presents narrative excerpts from their retrospective accounts, which represent their emotional and ideological experiences during the translation process, along with the ST and TT sections relevant to the experiences.

3.1. *Case 1: Fumi Yamashita*

The first translator is Fumi, who lives in Japan (Table 1). She has extensive experience teaching Japanese at public high schools, including a night high school where she taught for 8 years. Night high schools（定時制高校 [teijiseikoukou]） in Japan target students who work during the day. Her case illustrates how a translator's prior experience and ideological opinions can affect the translation process and the TT.

Gender	Female
Age	58 years old
Country of residence	Japan (Japanese citizen)
Translation certification	Japanese certification for literary translation
Translation training	Master's degree from a Japanese university
Translation experience	5 to 10 years
Translation work	Academic, business and marketing
Other work	Teaching general English, translation studies and language techniques at a university
Former occupation	Teaching Japanese at high schools until 3 years previously, including a night high school in a metropolitan city for 8 years
Membership	Japan Association for Interpreting and Translation Studies

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF FUMI'S BACKGROUND.

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[2] The translators represented in the case studies are given pseudonyms to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

3.1.1. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AND TEXTUAL CHOICE

(1)
Researcher: …このセクションを翻訳していらっしゃった時に考えていた事、あと、思考プロセスなどを描写して頂けますか? 確かに記憶に残っている事だけで結構です。

(Could you please describe what you were thinking and your thought process while translating each section? Only describe what you remember clearly, please.)

Fumi: まず、これ、これから性産業に従事しようとする女性に対して、このNGOはそれに対してそれは絶対勧めたくないけども、最後の手段としてそういう職業に携わる女性に向けてという事であったので、私自身は、7年位大坂の定時制高校にお勤めしていた事がございまして、貧困の問題が大きな地区でした。こういうものを目にしてきたとかこれから目にするであろうというような生徒さんを沢山見てきたので、その何人かの元の生徒がこれ読むとしたら、理解して欲しいという、そういう言葉遣いとかで訳すように心がけました。…日本語としても、そういう難しい言葉はあまり読めないであろうという前提で訳語を選びました。

(This NGO has produced this text for women who are considering becoming involved in the sex industry as a last resort, although it definitely doesn't recommend this. I myself used to work for a night high school in Osaka for about seven years. It was in a district with serious poverty issues. I've had many students who might have seen, or are probably going to see, this type of document, so I chose language and expressions that I hoped would help those former students understand it. … [I] chose target expressions under the assumption that they wouldn't be able to read difficult words very well, even in Japanese.)

Fumi's response shows how her experience teaching at the night school and engaging with her former students there informed her choice of language in her TT. This was her first remark in her retrospection immediately after completing the translation task. She said that she recalled her former students at the high school, who she thinks may have been involved in the sex industry, and chose language for the translation that she hoped would enable those students to understand the text in Japanese.

(2)
ST: … you have the absolute right to say no.
TT: あなたにはそれをはっきりと断る権利があります。いやだと断ることは正しいことです。

(You have a right to clearly refuse it. It is the right thing to refuse it by saying «no».)

Fumi's retrospection: «absolute right» というところで、はっきり断る権利があって、その «absolute» というのが、「絶対的な権利」とか言ってもあまり分かってもらえないと思ったので、「嫌だと断ることは正しい事です」という説明を付け加えたりしました。

(The phrase «absolute right» means having a right to clearly refuse, but when translating «absolute», I thought they wouldn't understand if I said «絶対的な権利 [the absolute right]», so I added an explanation: «it is the right thing to refuse it by saying no».)

There are several examples in her retrospection that can be linked to this choice of language. For the ST above, she translated «you have the absolute right to say no» as «you have a right to clearly refuse it. It is the right thing to refuse it by saying 'no'». In the retrospection, she said she thought the literal translation of «absolute right» would not be understood, so she added an explanation. The evaluative effect of this translation decision is that the inscribed positive judgement (Martin and White, 2005) of «saying no» in the ST is intensified by the added explanation.

3.1.2. IDEOLOGY AND TEXTUAL CHOICE

(3)
ST: Prostitution
TT: 売買春 [baibaishun]
Fumi's retrospection: «prostitution» というのを、はっきりと、「売買春」という言葉で、売る方だけではなくて、「買う」という文字も入れました。
(When translating «prostitution» using the word «売買春 [baibaishun]», I explicitly included not only the «selling» side but also the *kanji* character meaning «buying».)

Within the same remark as (2), Fumi mentioned a word choice for «prostitution». She translated it as 売買春 [baibaishun], the semantic components of which include selling, buying and love or affection. Another option would have been 売春 [baishun], which does not include the component of buying. As illustrated by the number of hits on Google search[3], 売春 [baishun] is more commonly used in the media and other publications; however, Fumi deliberately included the *kanji* character of «buying». This reflects her ideological opinion «it is wrong that only women are associated with disgrace and a sense of guilt and shame in relation to sex work».

To identify Fumi's opinions about sex work, I analysed her interview responses. In her responses, I observed themes aligned with a «prostitution as gender inequality» discourse (Benoit et al. 2018). Her repetition of the above-mentioned statement «it is wrong that only women are associated with disgrace and a sense of shame in relation to sex work» is noteworthy. Fumi advocates for sex workers to speak out to improve their working conditions and status. In this sequence responses about sex work, she also referred to the cases of her former female students at the night school in terms of a vicious cycle involving generations of poverty and lack of literacy and technical skills. These statements reveal how her opinions about sex work interact with her previous experience and how these two elements are reflected in her retrospection on how she translated «prostitution».

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[3] 売春 [baishun] returns about 13,600,000 results on Google search, whereas 売買春 [baibaishun] about 195,000 results. (Last accessed 4 May 2020)

3.2. CASE 2: AYA TOMITA

The other case I present is that of Aya, who lives in Australia (Table 2). Aya has worked almost full time as a translator after migrating from Japan to Australia as an adult. Her case is particularly illustrative of how emotion is activated during the translation process.

Gender	Female
Age	39 years old
Country of residence	Australia (Japanese citizen)
Translation certification	NAATI-certified English-to-Japanese translator
Translation training	Master's degree in Translation and Interpreting (Australia) Diploma in Interpreting (Australia)
Translation experience	5 to 10 years
Translation work	Finance, economics, business and marketing as main source of income

TABLE 2. OVERVIEW OF AYA'S BACKGROUND.

3.2.1. EMOTION IN THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

(4)
ST: Some clients make a point of booking a woman who is new to the industry with the intention of pushing her boundaries to the limit…
Aya's retrospection: それで、二個目の段落が…この辺から、ああ、なんか「嫌だなあ」と思って。…その、読んでいた、なんだろう、不快だなって。…「こんなことするの」と思って、そういう、「嫌だなあ」と思って…。なんか、こう、翻訳が嫌だなあと思うと、こう、手があんまり進まないので、なのでこれは時間かかるかなあ思いました。
(Then, in the second paragraph...around this point, I thought something like «ah, I don't like [it]». … I was reading [the text] and I felt, umm, uncomfortable. … I thought like «do you (the client) do that?» I thought «I don't like that». And, once I thought I don't like the translation, it slows me down, so I thought this translation would take a long time.)

Aya reported that she began to feel a negative emotion when translating the second paragraph. She mentioned this at an early stage in her retrospection, just after talking about the first paragraph. In this remark, she uses affective expressions (Martin and White 2005), such as «I don't like it» or «uncomfortable», five times. In one instance, she specifies that «I don't like» is directed at the translation task. In another instance, it is directed at what a client in the sex industry might do. In other cases, it is not clear exactly what activated her emotion. But the repetition of the emotive expressions indicates the intensity of her reaction.

3.2.2. EMOTION AND COGNITIVE PROCESSING

(5)
Researcher: 普段の翻訳の、まあ翻訳のお仕事とまた比べていただいて、今日費やされた、…労力、肉体的労力および精神的な労力、いかがでしたか。
(How taxing was today's translation physically and mentally compared with your normal translation work?)
Aya's retrospection: 精神的労力は大きかったなあと思いますね。…自分でもびっくりするぐらい、なんかこう、嫌だなあ、嫌だなあ、その、こういうやついるのかよ、嫌だなっていう、その、ここで表現されている客とか、そういう構造を許す社会とか、そういうことに対する、なんか、嫌悪感みたいなのが、こう湧き出てきて、あっ、すごい最初、うわー、筆、筆じゃないけど、筆進まないみたいな。…精神的には、こういうふうに、なんか、こう、やっている時に精神状態というか、なんかその、文章に対する気持ちが結構影響するんだなっていうのが面白かったです。
(I think it was mentally demanding. … Surprisingly, I felt like «ah, I don't like it, I don't like it. Are there these kinds of dudes…?» I started feeling disgust about the client represented here and the kind of society that allows this kind of structure come gushing out. At the start, [I felt] like «wow, … I can't write». … It was interesting to see [my] mental state, or feeling towards the passage, influence [my translation process] more than expected.)

To a question on how physically and mentally taxing the translation was compared to her normal translation work, she again recalled the emotion she experienced during the translation task. Aya elaborated on this emotion using the expression «the disgust was gushing out», which clearly shows the intensity of the emotion. She also explicitly specified that her negative emotion was directed at the sex industry client described in the ST and the kind of society that allows this kind of power structure to exist. Moreover, she observed how her emotion influenced her cognitive processing, which had the specific effect of slowing the translation process down.

3.2.3. EMOTION AND IDEOLOGY

(6)
Researcher: これまでそのような経験は何かありましたか。
(Have you had that kind of experience before?)
Aya's retrospection: …ないんじゃないですかね。その、あんまり好きじゃない分野の翻訳やるときに、時間かかるし、嫌だなって思うことはあるんですけど、書いてあることに対して、書いてあることが、その、自分が持っている固定概念とか、…こう持ち出してきて、嫌だなって思う、…その、こういうシステムに対する嫌悪感とか、そういうものが結局浮かび上がってきて、なんか、こうちょっと、もやってするっていう経験はなかったと思います。なんか、その、嫌って、これ嫌だなって思っても、その「嫌だな」が、クリアカットじゃ

ないっていうか、その、なんか、難しい、難しい「嫌だな」で、…こうういう
考え方嫌いだから、嫌いなんだよねとか、そういう「嫌だな」じゃなくて、そ
の、もっとシステマチックで、「嫌だな、避けよう」っていって避けられる「
嫌だな」じゃないというふうに感じていて。…この翻訳やらなかったり、目を
逸らせば済む問題じゃなくて、そう、この人を避ければいいとか、こんなや
つらろくでもないとか。そういう以上、それより深い、社会構造、その、なん
か、男性、女性とか、売ってる人、買ってる人とか、…お金持ちの国と貧乏な
国とか、そういうなんか、すごい構造的な問題がいっぱい詰まっている。

(... I don't think so. I sometimes think it takes time and I don't like it when I am translating
the domains I don't like very much. But I haven't had any experience of thinking I don't
like what is written [in the ST] [because it conflicts] with my own fixed idea … or feel-
ing uncomfortable because of something like my disgust towards this kind of system. …
This «I don't like it» was not clear-cut, a difficult «I don't like». … It wasn't like I don't
like this way of thinking and that's it. … Rather, it's more systematic and I feel I can't
just avoid the «I don't like it». … It is not a problem I can just avoid by not doing this
translation or not looking at [the issue], that person or this jerk. Beyond and deeper than
that, this topic is filled with … many structural issues like male, female, a person selling,
a person buying and, in some cases, rich countries and poor counties.)

Subsequently, when I asked Aya whether she had had that kind of experience
before, she elaborates by stating that her emotional reaction was in response to the
structural issues entangled in the sex industry and to her personal belief against it.
This elaboration indicates that her own ideological opinion was a contributing factor
in activating her emotion as she read the ST and undertook the translation and that
she perceived the activated negative emotion disturbing her cognitive processing.

4. TRANSLATORS' SUBJECTIVITY AND ETHICS

These accounts show that the individuality and subjectivity of text interpretation and
production, which are essential parts of a translation process, are inevitably influ-
enced by the translator's earlier experiences, opinions and emotions, as theorised by
Van Dijk on ideology (1998: 79-80) and the literature on emotion and the translation
process (e.g. Hansen 2005; Davou 2007; Rojo and Ramos 2014). These factors are
intertwined with one another.

The translators' retrospective accounts of the individuality and subjectivity of
their translation processes raise the question of how they perceive the ethical role of
the translator and how this relates to a professional code of ethics that emphasises
neutrality and impartiality. In fact, Fumi and Aya did not talk about professional eth-
ics or ethical codes during their retrospections. However, during her interview, Fumi
insisted she would not translate what she thought of as social injustice and that she
translated only what she thought should be read by more people. She translates for
people to read her translations, so she views translation as a form of social participa-

tion. In this sense, Fumi did not want to produce something that conflicted with her conscience.

Aya expressed a similar stance in terms of whether to or to not translate a text. She also maintained that ethical values generally accepted in society, her own moral values and the general principle of neutrality may not always be aligned, which led her to think that «being neutral may not be always ethical». These two professional translators had a similar approach insofar as they respected the ethics of being human over any rule-based professional ethics. Thus, the subjectivity triggered by their opinions and emotions during the translation process was not perceived to contradict with their ethics as persons and translators.

5. CONCLUSION

The two cases presented above demonstrate the presence of the translators' ideological opinions, previous experiences and emotions in a specific translation process and context. Fumi's accounts show direct connections between a translator's personal ideological opinions and experiences on the one hand and her textual decisions on the other. This has rarely been observed in previous studies. Moreover, in the case of Aya, the translator's negative emotion, activated by the translation context and her ideological opinion about it, was felt to hinder cognitive processing during the translation task. This lends qualitatively empirical support to the psychological theory of translators' emotion in process-oriented studies (for quantitative research, see Rojo and Ramos 2014).

While the illustrated individuality and subjectivity seem to conflict with the professional ethical principle of neutrality and impartiality, it was observed that those factors do not necessarily contradict with the ethics of being human, which was respected by the individual translators over a rule-governed ethics. The future aim of this project is to examine more cases to explore further the individuality of human translators as a basis for an ethical framework that is flexible enough to reflect the individual and subjective human factors and practices of translators.

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