

Translaboration: Exploring Collaboration in Translation and Translation in Collaboration

In recent years, ‘translation’ has become an increasingly widely used metaphor within and across disciplines to describe, broadly, the processes by which knowledge is generated, shared and applied. At the same time, ‘collaboration’ has emerged as a buzzword in translation circles. Discussions of the latter frequently centre on recent technological advances and the expanded potential for collaborative translation they afford. Indeed, collaborative translation is key, both conceptually and as a practice, in, for example, localization or audiovisual translation. Similarly, crowdsourced translation projects of popular fiction titles and online fansubbing projects are translation phenomena that directly depend on modern technology for their collaborative translation efforts (cf. Howe 2006; O’Hagen 2009; O’Brian and Schäler 2010; Massidda 2015; Jiménez-Crespo 2017). These relatively new phenomena, which are closely linked to the advent of Web 2.0 and frequently involve amateur translators working together while renouncing part of their individual interests and claims to ownership of the resulting translation, not only shed new light on questions of authorship and agency in translation (cf. Jansen and Wegener 2013) but also raise fresh issues of translation quality and translational ethics in particular.

However, translation as a collaborative effort involving a myriad of both human and textual stakeholders is not a recent, let alone new phenomenon and can be traced far back into the history of translation (cf., for example, Bistué 2017). What is more, it can and indeed has been argued that all translation is, by definition, an intrinsically collaborative endeavour (Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017). Are there, however, also arguments to be advanced in favour of a conception of collaboration as intrinsically translational? And why do they matter? Scholars from disciplines with a stake in collaborative processes, such as Carlile (2004) or Schwimmer (2017), are increasingly utilising translational thinking to interrogate received notions of collaboration, and they are turning to translational models to advance theorisations of co-creative knowledge generation and decision-making processes that, in turn, may also prove capable of enriching and indeed enlarging Translation Studies’ own master concept.

In spite of recent attempts, such as Gambier and van Doorslaer (2016), to chart the intersections of translation with the concerns of academic fields as diverse as biosemiotics, cognitive neuroscience, sociology, gender studies, and military history, or Blumczynski’s (2016) perceptive exploration of the increasing ubiquity of the translation concept in other disciplines, a systematic transdisciplinary dialogue and, crucially, proper transdisciplinary collaborations between Translation Studies and other disciplines continue to prove an elusive goal. Further efforts on the part of Translation Studies are certainly needed to bring concrete insights from the study of interlingual translation to bear on uses of the translation category in other disciplines (cf. Zwischenberger, in press) so as to develop, as Bachmann-Medick (2009, 4) puts it, “new research approaches [that] begin to elaborate a more sophisticated and detailed translation perspective in methodological and analytical terms” rather than “stubbornly stick to the path of purely metaphorical uses of the translation concept.” Even more importantly, however, we argue that such new research approaches also crucially

depend on Translation Studies paying closer critical attention to, and developing a more acute transdisciplinary awareness of, the translational dimension inherent in the concept of collaboration itself.

This proposed special issue posits the blended concept of ‘translaboration’ as an experimental category and “generic space” (Fauconnier and Turner 1998) in which translation and collaboration can be brought into open conceptual play with one another. ‘Translaboration,’ originally coined by a group of transdisciplinary researchers at the University of Westminster, London, in 2015 (cf. Alfer 2015, Alfer, in press), allows scholars both within and outside of Translation Studies to explore, articulate, and put to the test connections, comparisons, and contact zones between translation and collaboration, and to reveal the potential inherent in aligning these two notions in both theory and practice. As a new investigative space, the ‘translab’ thus functions as a transdisciplinary site where a number of core components of (col)laboration, of which process, structure, purpose, interpersonal communication and trust are among the most salient (Gray 1989; Wood and Gray 1991), can not only be shown to have a bearing on our conceptualisations of translation but also reveal themselves as inherently translational.

This special issue is based on the successful one-day workshop organised by the Translab group from the University of Westminster in September 2016 and will explore the concept of translaboration both from within the discipline of Translation Studies and from outside of it.

We welcome proposals for conceptual papers as well as case studies and empirical research contributions that address some of the following questions or aspects of translaboration (though please note that this is not intended as an exhaustive list of possible topics):

- ***Translation as collaboration***

- How can translation be considered, conceptualised, and described as a collaborative activity?
- What role do new technologies play in both facilitating and potentially hampering collaborative translation processes and what is their impact on power differentials and questions of ownership of translational processes?
- What impact do intermediaries, contractual constraints, and/or highly regulated work processes have on translation as a collaborative practice?
- What questions do collaborative translation practices raise in relation to translation quality and/or translational ethics?

- ***Collaboration as translation***

- How can collaboration be considered, conceptualised, and described as a translational activity?
- What is the role of language(s) in the creation and structuration of collaborative communities of practice?
- How can core components of collaboration, such as process, structure, purpose, interpersonal communication and trust, be shown to have a bearing on both the concept and the practices of interlingual translation?

- How can concepts and practices of interlingual translation enrich (our understanding of) collaborative knowledge-generation, knowledge-transfer, and/or decision-making processes?
- ***Translaboration as a mode(l) of inter-/transdisciplinary research***
 - What kinds of collaborations are or should be taking place between Translation Studies and other disciplines or fields of research, and what conceptual coordinates are necessary to bring such collaborations to fruition?
 - How can the investigative category of ‘translaboration’ contribute to lifting applications of the ‘translation’ concept in other disciplines beyond a merely metaphorical plane?
 - How can a translaborative framework articulate a more systematic and active acknowledgement of the history of Translation Studies’ own many intersections with other disciplines?

To propose a paper, please send your abstract (700-800 words excluding references) to **both** editors of the Special Issue:

- Alexa Alfer (A.Alfer01@westminster.ac.uk)
- Cornelia Zwischenberger (cornelia.zwischenberger@univie.ac.at)

Deadline for proposals: 30 November 2017

All contributors will be notified of the outcome of their submissions by 31 January 2018. All accepted contributors will receive further instructions and information with their notification of acceptance. All accepted contributions will be double blind peer-reviewed.

Publication schedule:

31 August 2018	Submission of full paper
September 2018 - February 2019	Double-blind peer review process and subsequent revisions
31 May 2019	Submission of final versions of papers to guest editors
31 July 2019	Submission of full manuscript and accompanying documentation to permanent editors
2020	Publication

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