

Education, Translation
and Global Market Pressures

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Curriculum Design in China and the UK

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To Maike Oergel
An inspiring supervisor and a lady with my lifelong admiration

PREFACE

SETTING THE SCENE

The process of globalisation and the intensified international exchanges in the political, economic and cultural sectors have facilitated the growth of the translation industry worldwide (Tang and Gentzler 2008). This indicates that far more qualified professional translators are needed to ensure the quality of translations and to help the translation profession to meet the challenges posed by the expanding multilingual environment (EMT 2010). Over the last decades, we have also seen an enormous increase in translation programmes around the globe in response to the expansion of the translation industry, including in the UK and China. ‘Such programmes are largely delivered by universities, and increasingly at postgraduate level’ (Schäffner 2012, p. 37). In this context, questions such as what constitutes reasonable curriculum design, appropriate teaching methods and techniques, and realistic criteria for assessment are taken into consideration by the course designers, with the purpose of designing a well-thought-out system to educate high calibre translators.

Moreover, the neo-liberal political and economic reform, which has taken place in the last two decades of the 20th century, has had a profound influence on today’s political, economic, cultural and social systems. Higher Education (HE), as an essential part of the educational system, cannot be immune to neo-liberal ideals. In short, neo-liberalism and globalisation have brought about a new relationship between the government, the HE sector and the market.

DEFINING THE THEME ‘TENSION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND THEORY’

The global climate of economic neo-liberalism demands that education is economically, professionally and socially useful beyond developing an individual’s personal knowledge and growth. This, however, brings a tension between education and training, as well as between its different facets: theory and practice, and research and product. By education, we mean academic/liberal arts/whole person/criticality education, which is idea-based. Training, on the other hand, refers to professional training, which is mainly achieved through hands-on skills competence, as opposed to abstract knowledge. Secondly, theory is an abstraction of reality, and refers to ‘universal’ systems which formulate particulars or disparate data. Practice is the practical activity of translation, and also helps to more easily describe the ‘object’ of translation. Research investigates data to formulate theory, and theory results from research. Product here refers to the outputs or impacts which are generated by research. This is a thematic thread running through the whole book. Potentially the ‘tension’ is a general question facing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and influences the way they teach, and the purpose of research. In our own field, the delivery of pertinent translation programmes has also faced tensions from both academia and the professional world.

THE AIMS OF THE BOOK

This book is located in the ‘Applied’ branch of Translation Studies, with a particular focus on the analysis of the current curricula for Master’s programmes in Translation (English and Chinese) in China and the UK. The analysis uses case studies to examine how the translation programmes have responded to the tension between academic and profession, and how theoretical units and practical units are balanced in their curriculum content.

My key questions are: how has the impact on the market affected the translation programmes in both countries, and how have the six programmes investigated in this book responded to the tension between education and training, or between theory and practice in the context of neo-liberal economic globalisation? Answering the questions will provide policymakers and course designers with illuminating examples for curriculum development of translation programmes, and this is one of the major contributions the book intends to make.

THE ORIGINALITY OF THE BOOK AND WIDER IMPLICATIONS

This book distinguishes itself as the first and only study to date that seeks to provide both cross-national (UK and China) and cross-disciplinary (neo-liberalism, studies in higher education, translation studies) perspectives in analysing the curricula of translation programmes which contribute to the development of knowledge in an important area of translation studies; it also has some ramifications on educational study. This is the first holistic and comprehensive study to explore the relationship between educational content and professional needs in curricula and translation programme design in two different contexts. The market-driven transformation of the HE sectors and the responses given by the translation programmes are also integrated in this study for the first time.

This book has wider implications for students, policymakers and course designers of translation programmes in the UK, China and other regions in the world. Firstly, the book outlines different competencies required by the market and provides readers with adequate examples of how translation programmes are delivered. In this sense, this book could be ‘used’ to help potential students to differentiate between translation programmes and select according to their own interests. This book has also provided course designers with a reference framework for the design and development of their own programmes. They may consider how they can fit their translation programmes into a global world. If course designers understand the global context, they will understand more of what is needed. In view of the above, the research shown in this book could provide universities that want to establish or optimise translation programmes with illuminating examples.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book is organised as follows. The introduction presents the background, defines the key terms and introduces the aims, originality and wider implications of the book. Chapter 1, as the foundation of the whole argument, prepares for the in-depth discussions in the following chapters. To be more specific, Chapter 1 initially introduces the changing roles of universities in the context of neo-liberal economic globalisation. One direct influence of these neo-liberal ideals on universities is that they have to make their courses more professional in order to meet the demands of the market, employers and students. Therefore, Chapter 1

proposes the question of balancing academic and professional pedagogies in university-based degree courses for all the subjects in general, and for translation programmes in particular. The recognition and development of Translation Studies as an independent academic discipline in both the West and China are also introduced in Chapter 1. Finally, this chapter discusses how the present analysis can be conducted with the help of a case study.

In Chapter 2, the existing literature about curriculum design and translation teaching is critically reviewed. Furthermore, due to the fact that the translation programmes in both the UK and China share the aim of preparing their students to become qualified professional translators, it is of paramount significance to identify what the demands and needs of the translation profession are. This chapter therefore analyses the market standards from Europe, the UK and China, which can represent the regional, national or even international industry needs. These standards, in turn, can become references for the curriculum development of translation programmes at universities.

Chapters 3 and 4, using six postgraduate translation programmes (three each for China and the UK) as case studies, focus on investigating how the translation courses are presented within different national traditions in teaching and learning from the perspective of course aims and module content in the UK and China. The key issue, namely the relation between educational content and market needs is fully embedded in the analysis of the curricula, and the translation market needs outlined in Chapter 2 are used as indicators to match the module content of the programmes in both countries.

The crux of this book is Chapter 5, which recaps on the contextual issues proposed in Chapter 1 and uses the findings from Chapters 3 and 4 to make in-depth comparisons. More specifically, Chapter 5 provides a thorough discussion of the impacts of neo-liberalism on the HE systems in the UK and China, and also contrasts the analysis by placing both contexts within a ‘global system’. This chapter also argues the direct result of the market forces: the tension between education and training in universities, and how this tension is interrelated with Translation Studies. The final section of Chapter 5, from the aspects of course aims, module content, ethos of teaching and education resources, compares how differently the six translation programmes in the UK and China have reflected the ‘tension’ and have responded to market forces.

Finally, the concluding remarks review the main research findings in this book and provide readers with possible directions for future research.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A (language)	Native Language
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AQSIQ	General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China
ATS	Applied Translation Studies
B (language)	Foreign Language
BFSU	Beijing Foreign Studies University
BTI	Bachelor of Translation and Interpreting
CAT	Computer-Assisted Translation
CATTI	China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters
CBT	Competence-Based Training
CCTV	China Central Television
CGTN	China Global Television Network
CI	Confucius Institute
CPC	Communist Party of China
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSSCI	Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index
DGT	European Commission's Directorate General for Translation
DipTrans	Diploma in Translation
EMT	The European Master's in Translation
EU	The European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIT	International Federation of Translators
FLTRP	Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GSTI	Graduate School of Translation and Interpreting

HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IO	International Organisations
IP	Intellectual Property
KTPs	Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
LSP	Language Service Providers
MATI	MA in Translation and Interpreting
MATIS	MA in Translation and Interpreting Studies
MATS	MA in Translation Studies
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MLA	Master of Language Administration
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPA	Master of Public Administration
MTI	Master of Translation and Interpreting
PACTE	Process of Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation
PBL	Project-based learning
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
REF	Research Excellence Framework
T&I	Translation and Interpreting
TAC	Translators Association of China
TOT	Training of Trainers
TS	Translation Studies
UCL	University College London
UN	The United Nations
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WEG	Wanli Education Group
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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