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MEDIATING NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION
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GUEST EDITORS

Raffaela Merlini
(University of Macerata, Italy)

Christina Schäffner
(Professor Emerita, Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom)

EDITORS
David Katan (University of Salento)
Cinzia Spinzi (University of Bergamo)

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Narrating narratives of migration
through translation, interpreting and the media[1]

Raffaela Merlini
University of Macerata, Italy

Christina Schäffner
Professor Emerita, Aston University, UK

Abstract

Rather than providing a unifying framework for its diverse theoretical and methodological applications, this paper attempts to explore the territory of narrative by tracking the routes of a number of germinal core-constructs that have spread across disciplines and fields of activity. Taking migration and migration policy models as our "air-view map", the first leg of the journey follows along the paths of multiculturalism, interculturality and transculturality, discussing the socio-political implications of these conceptual approaches and their repercussions on the provision of translation and interpreting services. Subsequently, the epistemological construct of narrative is observed from the vantage point of socio-narrative theory as applied to translation and interpreting studies, with a specific focus on the identity-contruction dynamics that emerge when mediating migrants' personal stories that clash with public (institutionally acceptable) narratives. Wandering through the theoretical domains of positioning, voice, empathy and media cross-genre recontextualization practices, the paper ends with one of the many possible narratives of the collection of papers in this volume.

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[1] This paper was jointly authored, with Christina Schäffner primarily responsible for Sections 1 and 3, and Raffaela Merlini for Section 2.

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1. Introduction

"It's being quite a journey, this one!" These are the words one of the contributors wrote to us when submitting a revised version of their paper after having engaged with the reviewers' comments. The statement is highly appropriate to this special issue as a whole given that our contributors worked on their papers almost throughout 2020, from the first versions submitted in the early spring and the final ones in the autumn of a year which was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The worries about health and the decisions taken by governments on lockdowns all affected the submission and completion of the papers. It was not easy to focus on writing an academic paper while at the same time suddenly having to switch to the new online modality in conducting one's university lectures and seminars, helping the children with their distance learning, supporting parents and relatives, and being confined to home for months. We are therefore very grateful to all our contributors for their hard work and equally for the support and understanding we received from the general editors of *Cultus* and all the reviewers. In view of these circumstances, this issue is indeed a *special* one, in all senses of the word.

The COVID-19 pandemic understandably dominated the news as well. As a consequence, other topics of political significance somehow receded into the background. One such topic is migration, the key topic for this issue. Migration has been a regular phenomenon in the history of humankind. People have left their homeland, their place of origin, for a variety of reasons, be it to flee war or persecution in their home countries, in search of a better life abroad, to work in another cultural environment, or to reunite with family and friends. Although the overall number of people on the move may not have increased dramatically in the course of time, it is in the last two decades that migration has become a major issue in politics and society. In the European Union, politicians debate how many migrants to accept and how to distribute them across the EU member states. They also adopt regulations to set rules and conditions for granting migrants the status of a refugee, or an asylum seeker, or for granting them a permanent right of residency. The majority of citizens have been open-minded, welcoming migrants and supporting them to settle down in their new environment. Others, however, oppose migration, arguing that it undermines the cohesion of the home culture and traditional values. Discourses of inclusion and integration thus alternate with discourses of exclusion, reflecting a constructed opposition of "us" vs "them".

While political discussions about migrants continue, often dragging on due to polarised opinions and intractable attitudes, many migrants wait in crowded makeshift camps to continue the journey to their destination. Or maybe they are still on a boat in the Mediterranean hoping to reach a safe haven. Others will already be in their hoped-for country of destination, having more or less successfully integrated in the new environment.

For whatever reasons people decide to leave their original place, migration always means movement, displacement, and change. The new destination is a different place with its own history, traditions and behavioural conventions. In this new socio-cultural context, migrants try to establish themselves and start their new lives, hoping these will be better than those they left behind. Hopes and expectations go hand in hand with memories, which can be fond memories of the lives they had before a civil war broke out, or else traumatic memories of life-threatening circumstances they experienced in their home country or during their migration journey. The new environments they reach are also, very often, new linguistic and cultural environments. This makes it difficult for them to tell their stories, to communicate both their hopes and expectations as well as their experience. A new life in a new environment with its own conventions and traditions also challenges the migrants' sense of identity. Do they feel as aliens and outsiders who prefer to keep their own identity, continue their own way of life, speak only their own language? Or do they strive to fully integrate into the new environment, accepting all its rules, adapting to its conventions, acquiring the new language as quickly as possible? Is such an either-or perspective possible and of any value at all since the whole migration process is much more complex and complicated? And what options are there for migrants to tell their stories, to narrate their experience and emotions?

One possibility to overcome linguistic and cultural boundaries and facilitate communication between migrants and the local population in the receiving countries is the support of translators and interpreters. In constructing narratives of migration, mass media too play an important role since it is through media reports that migration is presented as an opportunity or a threat; and it is through the media that the stories of migrants become known to the readers. In all cases, translating and interpreting narratives of migration as told by migrants as well as reporting (about) such narratives in the mass media entail the (re)construction and transformation of these narratives. These all influence not only the policies of social inclusion and community cohesion but also the representations of "self" and "other".

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The aim of this special issue is to explore precisely the role of language, translation and interpreting in constructing narratives of migration. The idea for this issue was born after a Round Table on the topic "Constructing and revising narratives of migration" convened as part of a seminar held by the Associazione Italiana di Anglistica (Italian Association of English Studies) in May 2018 at the University of Macerata on the theme "On the move: sites of change, states of insecurity". The papers, which were selected following a call, address the topic from various perspectives, and apply a variety of methods to their data. They address questions such as: What factors influence the construction of narratives in interpreter-mediated events? How are narratives (re/de)constructed and transformed in processes of translation and interpreting, and in media reports? How do the narratives which are (re/de)constructed influence the representations of 'self' and 'other'? What are the implications of rendering narratives of migration for translators and interpreters in respect of professional ethics? What policies are in place to use (or reject) translation and interpreting that would engage with narratives of migration?

2. Following along the migration routes of key-constructs

In light of both the variety of research fields and the diversity of conceptual and methodological approaches which characterize the contributions to this issue, any attempt at reunifying them under a single theoretical framework would not only be doomed to failure but would also restrain the reader's wanderings along unexpected paths and boundary crossings. Even though the epistemological construct of "narrative" is evidently at the very core of this collection of papers, a more thought-provoking – albeit less cohesive – way to proceed is by tracking the routes of a number of germinal constructs that have spread across disciplines and domains of activity.

To keep to the initial metaphor of the journey, and taking migration as the "air-view map" of our territory, a preliminary discussion of the shift from multicultural and intercultural policy models to transcultural ones might offer some initial bearings. With the theoretical premises of the assimilationist approach to immigration coming increasingly under critique (Bashi Treitler, 2015), multiculturalism became the inspiring principle guiding governments in their relationships with minority groups. The Australian response to immigration in the second half of last century

is emblematic of the transition from a policy of absorption into mainstream British-Australian culture and society to a multicultural "community of communities" model (see Martin, 1978; and Cline, 1991). Multiculturalism upholds the equal dignity of the linguistic and cultural expressions of all the ethnic communities that coexist within the same socio-political space. As such, it places upon the State the obligation to pass legislation that protects and promotes cultural diversity. The aim is thus the demarcation of clearly recognizable cultural identities whose visibility and preservation are to be guaranteed by law.

In the last decades of the 20th century, the multiculturalist model was, in its turn, called into question not only in terms of its practical implementation and financial sustainability, but also for socio-cultural reasons (Spinner-Halev, 2008). Criticism was levelled, in particular, against the risk of social fragmentation ensuing from the emphasis that multicultural policies place on the defence of cultural specificity, and that could paradoxically lead to new forms of self-segregation. An alternative model began to emerge which redrew the contours of such concepts as integration and inclusion, making them into dynamic and creative two-way processes. Although the genesis of the notion of "interculturality" can be broadly traced back to the works of the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1959; 1966), its currency increased when the term was appropriated within the European socio-political context in the 1970s through the work of the Council of Europe. As Dervin *et al.* (2011: 3) note, in this context the "intercultural" was closely associated with migration management and, in particular, with institutional efforts (mainly in the educational field) designed to neutralize the supposed danger that migration embodied. The "politics of interculturality" opened up prospects for mutually enriching "encounter" and "dialogue" between cultures, with the notion of "complementarity between opposites" becoming a popular one in official rhetoric (Moccia, 2016: 44). The migration phenomenon was consequently framed as a vital source of opportunities for both migrants and host countries.

From the many disciplinary fields where it took root – cultural studies, sociology, psychology, education, linguistics, among others – interculturality made a forceful entry into translation studies, following the "cultural turn" advocated by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere in the early 1990s. It was Mary Snell-Hornby who adopted the term in the title of the volume *Translation as Intercultural Communication* (Snell-Hornby *et al.*, 1995) collecting the selected papers from the First International Congress of the European Society for Translation Studies. In interpreting studies, a

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parallel shift was taking place in the same decade. Ushered in by the Critical Link conference series, dialogic contexts came to the fore of scholarly attention, stirring debate on the perception of community interpreting (in healthcare, legal, and social services settings) as an intrinsically cultural practice enabling migrant communities to gain access to institutional service provision. Discussions about cultural agency, cultural brokering, and cultural mediation, that soon occupied centre stage in academic publications, seeped back to the policymaking sphere. As a case in point, where other countries (Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom among the first) had already identified the professional figure of the community or public service interpreter, the Italian legislator opted for a more hybrid and multifunctional profile. This was initially denominated "cultural mediator" in the Italian National Council for the Economy and Employment first ever guidelines (CNEL, 2000). Nine years later, an updated version of the guidelines was issued bearing the title "Intercultural mediation and mediators: Operational instructions" (CNEL, 2009). Albeit hardly noticeable, the change in designation (from "cultural" to "intercultural" mediation) acknowledged the shift in perspective, and was emblematic of the policymakers' attempt to explicitly foreground the inter-relational dimension, by promoting bidirectional openness to dialogue between native and immigrant cultures, with social cohesion and harmony as the ultimate goal (Merlini, 2015: 41). On a conceptual level, the addition of the prefix creates a metaphorical in-between space where cultures can meet while remaining, however, still distinct, as noted in Merlini (2016).

Turn-of-century definitions of intercultural mediation by Italian authors provide clear evidence of this; Tarozzi (1998: 129-130; our translation and emphasis) speaks about a professional practice that is performed "in interpersonal spaces to favour connection between *far-away elements*", while Favaro (2004) assigns the mediator a bridge-like function ("mediatore-ponte") between otherwise separate and distant parties. Even though the transition from the multicultural model to the intercultural one did mark a significant development in how migration-related issues were approached and addressed, the notion of "otherness", as based on the distinction between "us" and "them", remains solidly anchored at the core of both paradigms. To achieve full integration of the migrant population (assuming this to be a realistic or desirable outcome), a new formula had to be sought for. The realization brought in its wake a rethinking of the role of translation and interpreting services, which have increasingly come to be perceived in some countries as obstacles, rather than pathways to

social cohesion. Especially over the last decade, media coverage has offered eloquent documentation of the politicized discourse depicting linguistic diversity as a hindrance to migrants' empowerment and integration (see Federici, this volume). As early as 2009, Schäffner already commented on a number of illustrative examples taken from UK news reports where the availability of public translation and interpreting provision was said to reinforce the "language barrier" between ethnic communities and the rest of the country, "by preventing immigrants from actively learning English" (*ibid.*: 100). The underlying preoccupation voiced in the news reports was not only a financial one, concerning the undue costs that this provision would impose on government budgets, but also that failure to integrate can be a dangerous "breeding ground for extremism" (*ibid.*: 104).

A third conceptual framework where the "us-them" categorization blurs into indistinction is the transcultural one. Here, the prefix substitution goes in the direction of crossing into the hybrid, where the notion of "ethnic identity" is discarded as divisive, being built on the differences that keep social groups apart rather than on their fluid and mutable relationships (Remotti, 2010). Similarly, the concept of "culture", on which identity has traditionally been grounded, is being questioned as a meaningless abstraction, detached as it is from reality where symbolic systems are in constant flux and evolve through mutual contaminations. Modern anthropology itself (see Fox and King, 2002) has increasingly vented dissatisfaction with the homogeneity and continuity that definitions of culture assume in presenting it as "a highly patterned and consistent set of representations (or beliefs) that constitute a people's perception of reality and that get reproduced relatively intact across generations through enculturation" (*ibid.*: 1). Coined by Welsch (1999), the term "transculturality" suggests, on the contrary, a state of permanent interconnectivity, where monolithic cultural entities disappear as do the lines of demarcation between (imaginary) spaces of cultural belonging. The existence of a globalized communication network, expanded physical mobility (which the COVID pandemic brought to an abrupt and hardly conceivable halt), and an accentuated psychological disposition towards exploring otherness are the main factors behind a phenomenon that Bennett (2005) thus describes:

> Once clearly demarcated by relatively static and ethnically homogeneous communities, the 'spaces' and 'places' of everyday life are now highly pluralistic and contested, and are constantly

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being defined and redefined through processes of relocation and cultural hybridization. (*ibid*.: 4)

Just as a "relocated culture" is one which reinvents itself when coming into contact with other "cultures", a "relocated individual identity" is the outcome of negotiation (and hybridization) processes unfolding in multiple interactional contexts and through multiple storylines. As Rossato's contribution to this volume suggests, even food, which in Hall's (1976) iceberg model (see also Katan, 2020) was categorized as one of the most visible ("above surface") manifestations of culture, is no longer a clear-cut marker of either authenticity or cultural belonging.

One of the pathways that is indeed most clearly discernible on the "map" of this issue is the question of how translation responds when faced with the task of giving voice to migrants' relocated identities. A most intriguing (and quintessentially "transcultural") route is marked out by Polezzi in her conversation with Inghilleri (this volume, pp. 30-31), when she suggests abandoning the view of translation as "substitution" and "erasure" to embrace its "knottiness and messiness":

> Migrant narratives seem to me to reach out for a form of translation that is not perfect, linear, harmonious or easy, but which can bear the traces of multiple experiences, positionalities, forms of identification and, indeed, languages. These narratives are themselves translations.

Tormented narratives born out of fragmented storylines are set against attempts at giving them coherence and composure through re-narration and adaptation to the accepted models of the host community. It's here that the epistemological construct of narrative shows its full potential as well as its dangers.

Viewed as "a semiotic phenomenon that transcends disciplines and media" (Herman *et al*., 2005: 344) narrative, in its most radical conceptualization, is the principal mode by which we make sense of the world. As Alasdair MacIntyre (2013 [1981]: 94) argues, the social life of each human being is, in its entirety, a narrative, or rather a unified narrative embedded in several other narratives. Without this narrative form we would be lost in a meaningless description of sensory data, and in the end "we would be confronted with not only an uninterpreted, but also an uninterpretable world". While an overview of the wide domain of narrative goes far beyond our scope, the title of this special issue warrants at least a brief account of the impact on translation and interpreting

studies of the approach known as socio-narrative theory. Our guide along this path cannot but be Mona Baker whose *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (2006) remains to date the most detailed application of this theory, and who, rather felicitously was interviewed by Andrew Chesterman on the ethics of renarration in the very first issue of *CULTUS* (Baker, 2008). Drawing on the typology of narratives first proposed by the social theorists Somers and Gibson (1994), Baker provided plentiful examples of the kinds of choices that translators and interpreters are confronted with when called upon to relay ontological narratives clashing with public ones. Ontological narratives were initially defined restrictively as "personal narratives that we tell ourselves about our place in the world and our personal history" (Baker, 2006: 28). As Baker (2018) herself subsequently clarified, that definition confined the narrative to the cognitive (intrapersonal) sphere, and needed expanding to account for the interpersonal dimension. The category thus came to include also "the narratives an individual tells others and those that others elaborate about the individual, with the main criterion being that a given individual is located at the centre of narration" (*ibid.*: 183-184).

Narrative categories are highly interdependent, and narratives themselves are practically intertwined; so every personal narrative is bound to become at some point a public one, i.e. a story "elaborated by and circulating among social and institutional formations larger than the individual" (Baker, 2006: 33). It is the friction between stories told by discordant voices and the role that translation plays in foregrounding, streamlining, reducing or even occluding some accounts or some aspects of them that was of interest to Baker and is to us as guest editors of this issue.

At the cross-roads between narrative and migration, an emblematic example discussed in Baker (2006) was the construction of an acceptable identity as an asylum applicant, requiring refugees to adapt their personal stories to the narrative frameworks of the adjudicating institution. Interpreters may be found to either improve on the asylum seekers' testimonies during the proceedings, so as to align them to the public narrative as argued by Inghilleri (2005), or offer advice on the appropriate course of action, before the official hearing, as in the study by Merlini (2009). Here, narrative analysis is operationalized through the linguistic-interactional notion of role, and even more productively (following Mason, 2005) through the socio-psychological construct of "positioning" (Davies and Harré, 1990). Significantly, Baker's revised definition of personal narrative echoes the premises of positioning theory, while

implicitly addressing a most critical issue of social constructivism; namely, its construal of the world as a collection of subjective personal narratives that may have little to do with objective reality (Czarniawska, 2004). If the author of the narrative is not one single individual, and "my story" is told and co-constructed by all the people I interact with, then objectivity is (at least partially) reinstated. Much more finely than roles, positions convey a fluid and immanent sense of the multiple identities a person may project, stemming as they do from within interactions, and being thus jointly produced by all participants.

In Davies and Harré's (1990: 46) conceptualization, identity building is "an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices". By taking part in different discourses, people generate a multiplicity of selves, each of which may contradict both the selves located in past storylines, and other present selves located in alternative storylines. As the authors observe (*ibid.*: 59), such discontinuities in the production of self ("reflexive positioning") derive from a complex weaving together of different elements, among which the cultural, social, political, and emotional meanings that are attached to each position, or that have developed as a result of personal experiences of being located in each position, as well as the moral system that legitimizes each positioning choice. As it couples reflexive with "interactional (other-) positioning" and defines alignment with a speaker's storyline in terms of a hearer's power of choice, or lack thereof, Davies and Harré's theory addresses vital issues of power relations. It also invites reflection on the fact that hearers may accept the storyline being suggested not simply because they see themselves as powerless, but because they see potential advantages in adopting it, even though they do not share the stereotypes, biases and reductions it implies. Evidence of this is found in Merlini's (2009) data where the mediator's attempt to replace the asylum seeker's personal story with the more coherently structured (but depersonalized) one of "refugee claimant" was initially resisted by the latter, and then gradually accepted as the refugee understood the advantages of the narrative account proposed by the mediator. Whereas this tension between them was soon resolved, a subtler one permeated the whole encounter. Empathizing with the refugee's sense of cultural uprooting and estrangement that the mediator himself had felt upon his arrival in the new country, the latter was inclined to offer the new claimant advice on the construction of an institutionally acceptable narrative. However, at the same time, the symbolic position accrued to the mediator from his present status as a fully integrated citizen in the host

country pushed him in the opposite direction. Not only did he feel the need to justify his behaviour, but by shifting to a patronizing tone he appropriated the self-celebratory discourse of official European rhetoric to mark the distance between himself and the newly arrived immigrant. At a deeper level, the tension was clearly between the mediator's past identity and his present one. As Davies and Harré (1990: 49) note, the positions created for oneself "are not part of a linear non-contradictory autobiography […] but rather, the cumulative fragments of a lived autobiography".

The emotional meanings attached to both self- and other-positioning have increasingly attracted scholarly attention. A few years ago, Baker (2014: 164) identified "the detail of individual dilemmas, personal suffering, fear, joy and apprehension that appeals to our common humanity", and that characterizes our personal stories, as the privileged site where we exercise our agency and open up spaces for empathy. This is all the more evident in the medical field where healthcare providers and mediators are confronted daily with migrants' narratives of distress. As argued by Rudvin and Carfagnini and, with specific reference to the context of psychological care, by Raga *et al.* (both in this volume), handling emotions is an extremely delicate issue calling for a fine balance between professional objectivity, self-care, and empathic engagement. An interesting example of how the psycho-sociological domain of emotions has been explored in interpreting studies is the study by Leanza *et al.* (2013), where occurrences of exclusion vs. inclusion of affective elements in the interpreters' renditions are analysed on the basis of Mishler's (1984) distinction between, yet again, two discordant voices, i.e. the "voice of medicine" and the "voice of the lifeworld". Starting from an initial definition of "voice" as an ensemble of "relationships between talk and speakers' underlying frameworks of meaning" (*ibid.*: 14), Mishler uses the former label to refer to the expression of and attention to concerns stemming from events and problems of patients' everyday life. In contrast, the voice of medicine designates an abstract, affectively neutral and functionally specific interpretation of facts, as well as compliance with a "normative order", whereby the medical professional controls both content and organization of the interaction with the patient. Revolving around the same theoretical construct of "voice", an earlier study by Merlini and Favaron (2005) outlined the contours of a third voice, the "voice of interpreting". In their set of data relating to speech-therapy sessions between Australian healthcare practitioners and second generation senior Italian immigrants, this voice was revealed to amplify

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the voice of the lifeworld and support an empathic patient-centred communication model. It was not until quite recently, however, that empathy as a specific case of emotional responsivity was investigated.

Among the first authors to use it as the core construct are Merlini (2015) and Merlini and Gatti (2015). Their main findings are two-fold. Firstly, far from clashing with the medical goal of responding appropriately to a patient's problem, empathy can be functionally and successfully used both to show compassion to a human being in need and to complete the institutional task at hand. Secondly, although the empathic process can be initiated by the move(s) of any one participant (including the interpreter), its development and outcome are necessarily the result of complex interactional dynamics and, ultimately, of the deliberate co-construction of rapport by all participants – what Tipton and Furmanek (2016: 6) identify as "an openness to the other in order to understand oneself". Moving beyond one's own reflected image and truly "seeing" the other by entering their own world is, after all, the very essence of empathy, as the father of modern empathy research wrote a few decades ago: "to be with another in [an empathic] way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter another world without prejudice" (Rogers, 1975: 4).

The final leg of our wandering through some of the core-constructs of this issue takes us to the handling of public narratives of a political nature in the media. Exploring an under-researched area in translation studies, and adopting the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis, Schäffner (2014) discusses how discursive events such as political speeches, meetings and press-conferences are recontextualized via the channels of the political institutions themselves (e.g. government websites) and via mass media (e.g. broadcasts and printed news reports). In a globalized world where politics is increasingly international in nature and the effects of politicians' decisions have an impact well beyond the boundaries of national communities (see, as a most eloquent example, the debate on migration policies within EU member countries), the linguistic cross-genre re-contextualization of political events is bound to require acts of interpreting and translation. This, as Schäffner notes, raises questions as to who decides which political speeches get translated and into which languages; which translations are made available where; who prepares transcripts for press conferences and authorizes corrections and stylistic enhancements; and who decides on the editing processes that take place when interpreted speeches and interviews are turned into media reports (*ibid*.: 149-150). The issue of whose "voices" get heard in the mediated

cross-national chain of political discourse is an important one. In particular, it is the use of direct and reported speech that is found to reveal most clearly the (ideological) positioning and identity construction of political actors. Specifically drawing on Weizman's (2008) positioning analysis, Schäffner's 2015 study of interpreter-mediated press-conferences supports evidence of how these events are identity-building (rather than just information-giving) sites. Here, the potential influence of interpreting practice on interactional positioning dynamics is assessed together with larger contextual factors.

Research into news translation (see Kang, 2007; Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009; van Doorslaer, 2009; and Chen, 2011) has illustrated how translation strategies are influenced by the dominant values upheld by a given mass media institution. Yet, wider concerns with (unclear, invisible, possibly collective) agency in translational decision-making practices still remain to be adequately addressed. As Schäffner (2014: 150-151) suggests, so complex an enquiry would call for the complementary use of ethnomethodological tools (such as interviewing and field observation) along interactional and discourse analytical ones. But we will leave this for another journey…

3. Narrating this special issue

Any summary of the papers and the way they are ordered is also one narrative among many possible ones. We decided to arrange the papers around the question: who gets to tell whose story, in whose language(s), for whom, and for which purpose? The issue starts with a stimulating conversation between **Moira Inghilleri** and **Loredana Polezzi** who share their thoughts on the relationship between translation and migration. Both scholars have carried out research on translation and migration and are interested in migrants' stories and stories about migrants. Moira Inghilleri's research includes an investigation of the role of interpreters in political asylum cases in the UK, while Loredana Polezzi has researched links between travel writing and translation. In their dialogue, they address questions such as: Are there different challenges in translating fiction and non-fictional accounts of migration narratives? Who are the key agents when translation and migration meet? What are the gaps and the opportunities as we continue to develop research at the intersection between migration, translation and mediation? They argue

that both travellers and translators are engaged in forms of mediation. In researching the role of translators and interpreters as social agents who operate within social and political processes, both researchers stress the need to (re)present the voices of those involved as carefully as possible, at the same time being aware of the plurality of languages and experiences that are inscribed in migration and in its processes of translation. In this context, they discuss the ethical responsibility translators and interpreters have to the narratives they are (re)telling. They express their dissatisfaction with notions or practices of translation that narrow it down to a "linguistic" activity or to a "neutral" professional concern, and advocate enhancing interdisciplinary dialogue. By conducting research and disseminating it as widely and actively as possible, translation and migration scholars can sensitize everyone involved in the processes and procedures of migration to the role that languages, narratives and their multiple translations play in how people are seen, treated, allowed (or not allowed) to live a human and humane life.

Many of the points raised in the conversation between Moira Inghilleri and Loredana Polezzi resonate in the papers that follow. When we talk about migration, we tend to think of recent and current asylum seekers or refugees who have been on the move due to political or economic crises in their home countries. As **Linda Rossato** reminds us, there are also people who migrated to another country early on in their careers and stayed there. Rossato illustrates such cases with three chefs of Italian origin (Antonio Carluccio, Gennaro Contaldo, Giorgio Locatelli) who chose the UK as their professional home – and who in the meantime have become very popular as a result of their British TV cookery series and accompanying cookbooks on Italian cuisine. In their TV series, these three chefs use English, the language of their new home, to construct narratives of Italian culinary traditions and of their experience of migration. The TV travelogue cooking shows are set in Italy, and the Italian chefs serve as ambassadors for Italian cuisine abroad. Based on an analysis of extracts from these shows, Rossato illustrates how the chefs use a variety of strategies to interpret the Italian cuisine for their intended British audience, and how they construct their individual images of Italy. Finally, she reflects on the sense of identity that emerges from the chefs' accounts.

Not in all cases, however, do we hear the voices of the migrants themselves, let alone in their own language. Their accounts are often mediated for a new audience who do not understand the language of the migrants. One way of mediation is the use of subtitles, the topic of the

paper by **Alessandra Rizzo**. She analyses extracts from two digital series characterised as "emergency cinema": a short film from the Abounaddara collective and a video interview from *The Mirror Project*, both intended to give voice to the lives of Syrian and Iraqi-Kurdish communities. Based on narrative theory and accessibility research, the narratives of two female protagonists who speak Arabic and Iraqi Kurdish as their mother tongues, respectively, are analysed as they are constructed in English subtitles, with English functioning as a lingua franca. Rizzo's focus is on the role of subtitles as narrative devices, as activist spaces, and as frames of re-narration and self-translation. It is through the subtitles, in this case produced by non-professional translators-as-activists, that personal and institutional narratives and identities are constructed and mediated.

Migrants arriving in a new country often do not have the language competence to communicate directly with institutional service providers. For a number of contexts, e.g. interviews with authorities who process their applications for asylum or encounters with health care professionals, they depend on the service of mediators. Such mediators can be professionally qualified interpreters and translators, but since they are not always available for particular languages spoken by the migrants, other migrants who have already been living in the country for a longer period of time, as well as friends or family members act as ad-hoc interpreters. In these processes of translation and interpreting, narratives are (re/de)constructed and transformed. Two papers address interpreter-mediated interaction. In the first one, **Francisco Raga, Dora Sales** and **Marta Sánchez** investigate how mediators in psychological care interviews with asylum seekers and refugees (ASRs) handle emotions in the narration of traumatic experience. Based on fieldwork in Spain, involving interviews with psychologists and interlinguistic and intercultural mediators who work with ASRs, they illustrate how different conceptions of mental illness and cultural differences related to the patterns of communicative interaction can affect the clinical interviews. This is specifically obvious in the expression of emotions during the narration of traumatic events suffered by ASRs. The authors argue for further in-depth reflection on the role of mediators, on the communicative initiatives they can put into practice as well as the verbal and non-verbal strategies they can deploy to prevent the blockages that cultural differences of an emotional nature can generate in the narration of traumatic experiences. In their conclusion, they put forward some proposals for action as offers for discussion.

The crucial role of interpreters, or interpreter-mediators, in relaying migrant narratives is also addressed in the paper by **Mette Rudvin and Astrid Carfagnini**, focusing on distress narratives and empathy. Their empirical research was conducted in Italian migrant reception centres, and the basis of their analyses are recorded mediated interactions and in-depth interviews. Empathy is a valuable human quality, and since interpreters are actively engaged in the mediated sessions, empathy can help them to build a relationship of trust with their interlocutors and encourage cooperation. However, as Rudvin and Carfagnini argue, empathy can also negatively impact the interpreter, in particular if there is a high level of distress in the migrants' narrative content. Excerpts from the interviews illustrate the interpreters' struggle to position themselves both professionally (vis-à-vis the expected professional ethics of neutrality) and personally, and to find a balance between engagement and self-protection. They conclude that it is essential that interpreters or mediators are made aware of the dangers of empathic bonding, and that they be given the tools and resources to pre-empt and manage any potentially resulting trauma.

Mass media play an important role in reporting migration and thus also in (re/de)constructing narratives and identities. Three papers deal with news media representations of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. **Gaia Aragrande** and **Chiara De Lazzari** investigate how a sample of Italian newspapers report political engagement of Italians who live abroad. These expats are legally entitled to participate in elections in Italy, with the votes cast from abroad having an impact on the overall election results. Their paper investigates the way in which Italian newspapers have portrayed the political engagement of Italians living abroad and the narratives they have employed to describe Italian expats. For their methodology, they used Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) and analysed a purpose-built corpus of Italian news outlets reporting on the 2018 elections. They illustrate the results obtained from concordance and collocational analyses of terms related to expat voters. This corpus-based analysis has made it possible to uncover discourse patterns of attitude and stance towards Italians abroad and towards their political engagement. Aragrande and De Lazzari argue that three main reporting trends (informative, investigative, narrative) were detected, with all three patterns verging on a negative attitude. These findings thus also illustrate narratives of belonging and the representations of "self" and "other".

Denise Filmer reflects on journalistic translation in migrant news narratives. She uses the *Diciotti Crisis* as a case study - the events which led to asylum seekers being refused the right to disembark on Italian soil.

Filmer's main interest is in investigating how this event is represented in the British news and what role translation has played in this respect. Her analysis draws on a theoretical framework that combines journalism and media studies, news translation, and critical discourse studies, and uses a corpus of British news texts from major UK media sources. She illustrates how translated quotations (transquotations) are employed in the narration, critically reflecting on translational choices in the journalistic reconstruction of the events. Her investigation of the British newspaper's perspective of the crisis revealed that declarations by the then Interior Minister who had declined to authorise disembarkation, were far more prominent in the news discourse than the asylum seekers' voices.

In narrating migration, stories of language, empathy, identity, loss and renewal are woven together. Migrants not being able to understand what is being said are linguistically excluded. Learning the language of the new country is one option and often welcomed by the authorities. Providing assistance through translation and interpreting, however, is sometimes perceived as both expensive and harmful to social cohesion. In his paper, **Federico Federici** highlights the relationship between language policies and discourses on multilingualism with reference to the United Kingdom. He approaches the investigation of narratives on integration by analysing the use of the metaphorical expression "language barrier" in news items dealing with migration and language needs in online and printed newspapers in the UK between 2010 and 2020. A quantitative analysis investigating the frequency of the usage of the "language barrier" expression is combined with a qualitative analysis to relate its usage to negative or positive connotations. Over the period analysed, the negative connotation which legitimized the conceptualization of linguistic diversity as a hindrance to integration became dominant. Federici discovers a connection between the textual evidence and policy changes: an increased frequency of use of the term in the UK media correlated with restrictive immigration policies and a gradual dismantling of language service provision for the country's culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Federici argues that the politicization of the discourse on multilingualism and the ever stricter migration policies risk increasing societal vulnerability.

Language policies in the United Kingdom is also the topic of the paper by **Elena Ruiz-Cortés**. She is interested in investigating how translation and migration narratives have impacted on the provision of translation services. Her case study is the UK's Home Office as the ministerial department responsible for immigration. In the context of migration

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control, individuals are obliged to follow procedures to gain entry to the country, which include filling out forms and participating in oral interviews. Ruiz-Cortés focuses on the application process of EU nationals and their family members to obtain EU residence documentation which confirms their legal residence in the UK. Her main concern is to identify to what extent translation services are available at the Home Office to migrants during the application process. Her analysis of online information available to applicants revealed that some of them may have problems understanding the immigration procedure and completing the application form due to a lack of translation services. Her initial conclusion is that the Home Office's translation policy is one of non-translation, which is related to the negative EU migration and translation narratives in the UK.

Most of the papers in this special issue refer to the need to raise awareness among authorities, professionals, and the general public of how narratives of migration get (re/de)constructed through translation, interpreting and media reports. As Loredana Polezzi and Moira Inghilleri (this volume, p. 26) point out in their conversation, "researching migration and translation definitely has a political dimension and connects academic work to the world out there. It allows us to reflect on what is happening around us and hopefully to have an impact, however small, on it". We hope that this collection of papers will make a contribution with respect to this ambition.

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