

Seminar series

TRANSLATING IN DANGER ZONES

Wednesdays 5-6 pm

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In a globalised world we are confronted with an increasingly diverse mix of languages and cultures, bringing new challenges to language professions. This series explores the role of language and translation in danger situations, and considers what it takes to work as a translator or interpreter in these contexts. Presented by a mix of practitioners and academics, it will demonstrate how language professions have changed because of these situations, and how translating/interpreting involves more than linguistic knowledge.

Dr Carmen Delgado Luchner, University of Geneva

Training field interpreters for humanitarian organisations

26 October 2016, Room 2s12, URS, 5 pm

Sue Fortescue & Farideh Afshari Colthart, Translators Without Borders

Communication is aid - but only if delivered in the right language

9 November 2016, Room 128, HUMSS, 5 pm

Dr Teresa Piacentini, University of Glasgow

Interpreter, advocate, researcher, sister, friend: Reflections on relationships, roles, responsibilities, dangers and privileges when working and researching with asylum seekers and refugees in multilingual contexts

23 November 2016, Room 128, HUMSS, 5 pm

Dr Fabrizio Gallai, University of Bologna

Police interpreting: beyond the existing Codes of ethics

18 January 2017, Room 128, HUMSS, 5 pm

Dr Catherine Baker, University of Hull

Translation, Interpreting & Peacebuilding after Ethnopolitical Conflict

25 January, Palmer 105, 5 pm

Professor Hilary Footitt & Dr Wine Tesseur, University of Reading

Languages in post-conflict development: working with NGOs

1 February 2017, Room 128, HUMSS, 5 pm

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Abstracts

Seminar 1, 'Training field interpreters for humanitarian organisations', Dr Carmen Delgado Luchner

Numerous interpreters work in conflict zones, not as military interpreters, but as civilians working for humanitarian organisations. Through several years of training, InZone, a humanitarian initiative launched by the University of Geneva in 2010 in order to train interpreters in conflict zones, has identified two "archetypes" of humanitarian language intermediaries. The first are employees of humanitarian organisations who are sent into a conflict or post-conflict zone with other aid workers, as is generally the case for the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC). The second are themselves beneficiaries of humanitarian aid, for instance refugees, a model commonly implemented by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Both positions come with specific advantages and risks that have direct implications for training. In the humanitarian space, interpreter trainers therefore need to be adaptive experts and develop solutions for the numerous technical and, more importantly, ethical challenges inherent to this particular context, while at the same time upholding the fundamental principles of humanitarian action. In this presentation, Dr Delgado Luchner summarises the main lessons learned from training interpreters for ICRC and UNHCR, and presents some of the ethical dilemmas the research team has been confronted with in the process.

Watch Dr Carmen Delgado Luchner's seminar [here](#).

Seminar 2, 'Communication is aid - but only if delivered in the right language', Sue Fortescue & Farideh Afshari Colthart, Translators Without Borders

Sue Fortescue, Volunteer Manager, TWB, provides an overview of the work of Translators without Borders (TWB). Our mission is: 'Vital information, in the right language, at the right time'. To date we have translated over 37 million words for over 600 non-governmental organizations. We have a network of over 3,500 professional translators, who provide their services pro bono, and we translate over 190 language pairs.

Farideh Afshari Coulthart, TWB Volunteer Interpreter (English – Farsi) provides a first-hand description of her work with European refugees in the camps on the Greek islands, and how she aims to 'Help them thrive, not just survive'.

Watch the seminar on Translators Without Borders [here](#).

Seminar 3, 'Interpreter, advocate, researcher, sister, friend: Reflections on relationships, roles, responsibilities, dangers and privileges when working and researching with asylum seekers and refugees in multilingual contexts', Dr Teresa Piacentini

This talk falls into what is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon in research with asylum seekers and refugees that involves the researcher having previously worked with the participants and/or continuing to work or volunteer during fieldwork. Already 'being there' raises important sociological questions about the different roles we take on in different, and sometimes overlapping, settings. When do we stop performing one role and when does another start? What happens when our fluid social identities intersect and overlap, and when the social worlds we are advised must be kept separate collide? Things get even more complicated when we acknowledge that as social researchers we are constantly navigating the minefield of 'taking sides' (Becker 1967): it is impossible to be neutral, but is it possible to take more than one side? How far is our research and/or practice distorted or strengthened by forming a sympathetic understanding of those we study? What is the relationship between values and social science? Although perhaps formulated differently, as community interpreters we face similar questions around impartiality, objectivity and indeed the place of empathy, understanding and emotions in our practice. In this talk Dr Piacentini tries to bring together these two fields of practice - ethnographic social research and community interpreting practice - to trace out some of these complexities. This talk presents a sociological analysis of my own tales from the field of interpreting and researching in Glasgow, Using Goffman and Hochschild's work on role analysis and emotional labour respectively

be useful to recentre the self in one's practice, especially when 'already there'.

Watch Dr Teresa Piacentini's seminar [here](#).

Seminar 4, 'Police interpreting: beyond the existing Codes of ethics', Dr Fabrizio Gallai

This presentation focuses on the power differential, the intimidating/traumatic nature of exchanges on police settings, and the police interpreter's role - which is no longer seen as a fixed notion, as s/he adjusts his/her positioning along a spectrum from invisibility at one end to advocacy at the other. Working with Wadensjö's (1981) framework of interpreter roles and Sperber & Wilson's (1986/1995) relevance-theoretic approach to pragmatics, Dr Gallai's research shows that the interpreters' frequent pragmatic shifts are evidence of their pronounced involvement impacting on their neutrality enshrined in interpreters' Codes of Practice, the various stages of the Enhanced Cognitive Interview (including rapport building, retrieval strategy, and, more generally, evidence- and information-gathering) and, ultimately, on the fairness and effectiveness of the legal process. This approach leads to better understanding of what adjustments need to be agreed between the police and interpreting professionals, depending on whether a victim, witness or suspect is interviewed, in order to facilitate communication rather than rely on prejudices about 'what should happen' according to existing codes/guidelines.

Watch Dr Fabrizio Gallai's seminar [here](#).

Seminar 5, 'Translation, Interpreting & Peacebuilding after Ethnopolitical Conflict', Dr Catherine Baker

When the first United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops were deployed to former Yugoslavia in 1992, military and civilian linguists were not far behind – albeit never in sufficient number and rarely with enough continuity for their distinctive insights into the dynamics of peacekeeping and peacebuilding to be recognised and developed. UN forces would have a presence as peacekeepers in Croatia until 1998, while in Bosnia-Herzegovina the NATO force that replaced UNPROFOR after the Dayton Peace Agreement was heavily involved in peace support operations until 2004 and still maintains a headquarters in Sarajevo today to support its involvement with defence reform in the Western Balkans. Another NATO force, KFOR, has operated in Kosovo ever since the Kosovo War in 1999. In all these settings, foreign military forces have depended on locally-recruited interpreters not only for strictly interlinguistic mediation but also for 'translation' of situated local knowledges about post-war ethnopolitics and other forms of post-conflict (and post-socialist) everyday insecurity. This presentation explores these questions with a focus on contentious politics and social alternatives in Bosnia, one of two case studies in the 'Languages at War' project.

Watch Dr Catherine Baker's seminar [here](#).

Seminar 6, 'Languages in post-conflict development: working with NGOs', Professor Hilary Footitt & Dr Wine Tesseur

International NGOs are confronted with a large variety of languages in their fieldwork, yet languages do not tend to have a high profile within international British NGOs. Foreign language policies are often not in place, and funding for translation and interpreting needs tends to be limited. Moreover, evaluative processes usually omit references to languages. This seminar draws on early findings of the AHRC-funded project "The Listening Zones of NGOs: languages and cultural knowledge in development programmes" (2015-2018), a joint project by the University of Reading, with the University of Portsmouth and the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), Oxford (www.reading.ac.uk/listening-zones-ngos). Professor Footitt and Dr Tesseur discuss how their previous research, such as on Languages at War and Translation Policies at Amnesty International, has led us to the present project. They then describe the aid and humanitarian working space in more detail, and share some preliminary results from our interviews with NGO practitioners and translators/interpreters working for and in development projects.

Watch Professor Hilary Footitt and Dr Wine Tesseur's seminar [here](#).