

Minding the Gaps: Translation and Interpreting Studies crossing interdisciplinary boundaries

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Translation and interpreting (T&I) are areas of inquiry supported by substantial scholarship. However, the scholarly study of T&I is fairly recent. Only in the last 30 years have anecdotal and largely prescriptive writings on translation and interpreting given way to empirical research and descriptive studies. In addition, recently, the scholarly study of T&I has expanded at a rapid pace. This development is evident in the increasing number of university programs, specialized journals, conferences, scholarly associations, and publishing houses. Translation and interpreting is an interdisciplinary endeavor. Its interplay with other sciences such as sociology, artificial interpreting or with the language industry, however, is incipient. Although we have seen projects that bring together T&I scholars and Computer Sciences, for example, the gap between these two fields still exists and offers many opportunities for cross-fertilization.

In our societies today, linguistic and cultural diversity permeates every thread of human interaction. Communication in general, and inter-linguistic/cultural communication in particular, is perceived, valued, and understood differently by peoples across space and time. In addition, goals, ideas, or messages are not immune to the interplay of social factors (e.g., ethnicity, age, gender, and socio-economic status) to which T&I studies add a layer of complexities.

For TIS experts concerned with issues of language, access, linguistic minorities, and interaction, the field of T&I opens possibilities to explore many areas such as: T&I as a situated practice, the characteristics of communication between speakers of societal and non-societal languages, the nature of language transfer, the processes and products of high-level development of two languages, or the effects of instruction on the development of non-societal languages and its measurement. To that end, in this presentation, we will explore some issues arising from interdisciplinary T & I projects in healthcare, law and education that have resulted from crossing boundaries, yielding important empirical data.