

Educating for ergonomics: Building translators' awareness in and beyond the curriculum

Gary Massey

Andrea Hunziker Heeb

Zurich University of Applied Sciences

Recent research on ergonomics at and about the translator's workplace has shown how physical, cognitive, sociotechnical and other environmental factors can impact on professional translators' performance, efficiency and motivation (e.g. Ehrensberger-Dow 2017, Ehrensberger-Dow and Hunziker Heeb 2016; Ehrensberger-Dow and Jääskeläinen 2019; Ehrensberger-Dow and Massey 2014; Ehrensberger-Dow and O'Brien 2015; Ehrensberger-Dow and Massey 2017; Ehrensberger-Dow et al. 2016; Meidert et al. 2016; Martikainen and Kübler 2016; Teixeira and O'Brien 2017, 2018). This, in turn, can and does have consequences on the quality of translators' and post-editors' work. The detrimental effects of poor physical, cognitive and organizational ergonomics suggest strongly that improved knowledge and awareness should inform the (continuing) education of future and practising translators. This has been recognized by, among others, the 2017 European Master's in Translation (EMT) Competence Framework, which lists considering and adapting to the organizational and physical ergonomics of the working environment as an essential skill (EMT Board 2017). An ergonomic perspective can help prepare students for workplace realities and empower them and professionals alike to identify and change dysfunctional practices (e.g. Ehrensberger-Dow 2017; Ehrensberger-Dow and Jääskeläinen 2019; Peters-Geiben 2016). In this paper, we present and evaluate dedicated seminars for translation students and professionals undertaken at the authors' institute and briefly outline assessments conducted at professionals' workplaces as part of a large-scale research project on translation ergonomics. We report on a questionnaire study of the students, graduates and professionals involved in the seminars and assessments aimed at gauging the learning effects and sustainability of these initiatives. Moving beyond the curriculum, we conclude by exploring the feasibility and forms of educating professionals so as to empower them to take an active part in identifying and, wherever necessary, transforming physical, cognitive and organizational ergonomic practices at the workplace.

References

- Ehrensberger-Dow, M. (2017). An Ergonomic Perspective of Translation. In J. W. Schwieter & A. Ferreira (Eds.), *The Handbook of Translation and Cognition* (pp. 322-349). London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ehrensberger-Dow, M., & Hunziker Heeb, A. (2016). Investigating the Ergonomics of the Technologized Translation Workplace. In R. Muñoz Martín (Ed.), *Reembedding Translation Process Research* (pp. 69-88). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ehrensberger-Dow, M., Hunziker Heeb, A., Massey, G., Meidert, U., Neumann, S., & Becker, H. (2016). An International Survey of the Ergonomics of Professional Translation. *ILCEA Revue de l'Institut des Langues et des Cultures d'Europe et d'Amérique* 27. Retrieved January 29, 2019, from <https://journals.openedition.org/ilcea/4004>
- Ehrensberger-Dow, M., & Jääskeläinen, R. (2019). Ergonomics of Translation: Methodological, Practical, and Educational Implications. In H. V. Dam, M. N. Brøgger & K. K. Zethsen (Eds.), *Moving Boundaries in Translation Studies* (pp. 132-150). London: Routledge.

- Ehrensberger-Dow, M., & Massey, G. (2014). Cognitive Ergonomic Issues in Professional Translation. In J. W. Schwieter & A. Ferreira (Eds.), *The Development of Translation Competence: Theories and Methodologies from Psycholinguistics and Cognitive Science* (pp. 58-86). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars.
- Ehrensberger-Dow, M., & Massey, G. (2017). Socio-technical Issues in Professional Translation Practice. *Translation Spaces*, 6 (1), 104-121.
- Ehrensberger-Dow, M., & O'Brien, S. (2015). Ergonomics of the Translation Workplace: Potential for Cognitive Friction. *Translation Spaces*, 4 (1), 98-118.
- EMT Board (2017). *European Master's in Translation: Competence Framework 2017*. Retrieved January 29, 2019, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/emt_competence_fwk_2017_en_web.pdf
- Martikainen, H., & Kübler, N. (2016). Ergonomie cognitive de la post-édition de traduction automatique : enjeux pour la qualité des traductions. *ILCEA Revue de l'Institut des Langues et des Cultures d'Europe et d'Amérique* 27. Retrieved January 29, 2019, from <https://journals.openedition.org/ilcea/3863>
- Peters-Geiben, L. (2016). La prévention comportementale et contextuelle : intégrer une approche ergonomique dans la formation des traducteurs. *ILCEA Revue de l'Institut des Langues et des Cultures d'Europe et d'Amérique* 27. Retrieved January 29, 2019, from <https://journals.openedition.org/ilcea/4026>
- Teixeira, C. S., & O'Brien, S. (2017). Investigating the Cognitive Ergonomic Aspects of Translation Tools in a Workplace Setting. *Translation Spaces*, 6 (1), 79-103.
- Teixeira, C. S., & O'Brien, S. (2018). Overcoming Methodological Challenges of Eye Tracking in the Translation Workplace. In C. Walker & F.M. Federici (Eds.), *Eye Tracking and Multidisciplinary Studies on Translation* (pp. 33-54). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.