



# Introduction.

## Translating solidarity: Charting an emerging field

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### 1. Solidarity and translation

Over the last decade, there has been a surge in publications addressing the political impact of translation and interpreting across a variety of locations and settings (e.g., Baker, 2016a and 2016b; Doerr, 2018; Evans and Fernández, 2018; Fernández, 2020a and 2020b; Valdeón and Calafat, 2020; Tesseur, 2022). In this context, this special issue seeks to highlight the importance of translation and interpreting for the practice of *solidarity*.

Although this is a powerful and frequently used concept, it is also conflicting and has generally remained undertheorized (as argued by Bayertz, 1999; Pensky, 2008; Featherstone, 2012). Although it generally involves “a readiness to act and/or to make sacrifices” (Bayertz, 1999, p. 3) out of a sense of duty towards other individuals or groups, its key point of contention is precisely how to define the motives and affinities that foster this moral “readiness”; in other words, to clearly establish with whom we are morally expected to be solidary and on what grounds. As Sangiovanni and Viehoff (2023) show, the range of moral relationships can be rather diverse, from the class-based solidarity advocated by socialism to the ‘national’ and ‘civic’ solidarity that enabled the emergence of modern nation-states.

A central contribution to contemporary understandings of solidarity has been David Featherstone’s monograph *Solidarity* (2012). Here, Featherstone argues (2012, p. 5) that solidarity should be understood as “a relation forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression”. Importantly, this also implies that solidarity is ‘transformative’, as it constructs “relations between places, activists, diverse social groups”, while creating “new ways of relating” (ibid). In other words, solidarity does not need to happen exclusively between groups that are similar and homogeneous; quite on the contrary, it can be innovative, developing unexpected links between previously unconnected realities.

In this light, the practice of solidarity shows strong similarities with the work of translation and interpreting, as both seek to establish new connections between individuals and groups. In fact, translation can be the decisive factor

in the construction of solidarity, as it brings to the fore an issue or conflict that would normally remain unnoticed due to linguistic and cultural barriers. Despite these affinities, solidarity has been rarely used as a frame of analysis in Translation Studies (some exceptions being Abou Rached, 2020; Baker, 2016b, 2016c and 2020; Mortada, 2016; Cussel, 2024). This seems even more striking if we consider that solidarity could play a central role in understanding a variety of cases and settings that are already relevant within the discipline, such as the activity of volunteer translators—either individually (Guo, 2008; Cheung, 2010) or as part of communities (Baker, 2006; Boéri, 2012; Pérez-González and Susam Saraeva, 2012)—and the involvement of interpreters in the protection and wellbeing of migrants (Aguilar-Solano, 2015; Taronna, 2016; Fathi, 2020). Therefore, the overarching aim of this special issue is to highlight how solidarity is a relevant lens for a variety of approaches within (and beyond) Translation Studies. We hope that the articles gathered here will give further momentum to this emerging field of research.

## 2. This special issue

The opening article for the issue is “Thinking solidarity and translation together: Towards a new definition of solidarity”, written by Dorota Goluch. This paper highlights the intimate connection between translation and solidarity, beginning with an extensive revision of the literature in Translation Studies and the different ways in which the concept is addressed. Results show that, although there is a growing interest in solidarity—especially in the fields of feminist translation and activist translation—, there still is a need to define the term from within Translation Studies. To this end, in the second part of her article, Goluch turns towards theorizations of solidarity in philosophy, political science, and sociology, focusing on three main questions: who is involved in solidarity and who is excluded; what the main reasons are for practicing solidarity; and what constitutes solidarity. This second revision reveals the most relevant notions which are attributed to the term, which finally allows the author to propose her own definition of ‘solidarity’, which encompasses ideas from both Translation Studies and this set of disciplines. However, the author highlights the fact that philosophy, political science, and sociology may benefit greatly from a higher intersectionality with translation when it comes to dealing with solidarity, and she calls for a more intimate collaboration in the future.

The second article, “Unsettling lingua franca through translation: Solidarity in migrant cities”, by M<sup>a</sup> Carmen África Vidal Claramonte and Tong King Lee, explores the concept of ‘lingua franca’ and how multilingual spaces destabilize its meaning by means of translation, to then propose new multimodal ones reshaped by solidarity. Vidal and Lee begin their article with a revision of the term ‘lingua franca’, traditionally understood as one language that facilitates communication among speakers of disparate tongues. This understanding of the term implies an apparent state of monolingualism which in fact covers a multilingual reality, perceived as faulty or undesired. Similarly, it implies a homogeneity which marginalizes non-native speakers of the lingua franca, whose accents and lack of fluency are considered as defective. Thus, Vidal and Lee explore the possibility of seeing translation not as a linear progression from source to target, but as a bilateral relation between both languages and the creation of a third middle space characterized by multimodality—an intersemiotic space where source and target codes are transfigured into a repertoire of *throwntogetherness*. This new perception of translation implies the

creation of a heterogenous lingua franca which recuperates its historical meaning of a hybrid language originated by blending several languages. Furthermore, as the authors point out, this new perspective on translation and lingua franca implies the destigmatization of the migrant speaker, the subaltern who recovers their voice: based on the principles of solidarity and justice, it undermines institutional monolingualism, thus advocating for a translation which, far from trying to erase difference, places it at the centre.

The following two articles deal with the role of volunteer translators in crisis situations. “Cosmopolitan solidarity in crises: Volunteer translation as a prosocial collective action”, written by Marija Todorova, explores the motivations that volunteer translators declare when intervening in order to help crisis victims. In her paper, she covers three different types of crisis situations: natural disasters, war or conflict zones, and climate-change related emergencies, and she extracts her data from four interviews with translators with different profiles. Results show that volunteer translators intervening in crisis situations are moved by a feeling of cosmopolitan solidarity, that is, a willingness to help that is not based on affinity, but rather on an awareness of community and an interest in seeking stability through collective effort and collaboration. Furthermore, it discusses the role of volunteer-driven translation projects in giving voice to victims, thus countering the usually negative discourse that the media unfairly creates around them, making real personal experiences visible and highlighting the need to respond with a humanitarian spirit. Additionally, this article calls attention to the key role that technology plays in the development of different projects based on volunteer translation action.

Continuing with the topic of volunteer translation in times of crisis, the fourth article in this special issue, “Towards building networks of solidarity: A co-designed training model for non-professional interpreters and translators in regional Australia”, written by Margherita Angelucci and Rita Wilson, discusses the positive impact that the IMPARO project had in assisting migrants to access social services. Since 25% of the inhabitants in the regional hub of Shepparton, Victoria, were born overseas, there is a very high demand for translation and interpreting services, and the perception before the project was introduced was that relying on non-professional volunteer action was not sufficient nor even ethical, which is the reason why this project was developed. The main objective of IMPARO is to provide volunteers with training and professional development opportunities in translation and interpreting, which entails a very intense mutual collaboration between universities and local communities. This article stresses how the success of the project relied heavily on the principles of solidarity and cooperation, understanding diversity as an enriching trait of a multicultural community from which all members can benefit.

The next article in the special issue, which also pays attention to the role of solidarity as a key element for motivation in volunteer translation, is Néstor Singer and Gustavo Góngora-Goloubintseff’s “Mind the gap! An interpretative phenomenological analysis of solidarity among Ibero American female translators in the Spanish Wikipedia”. Their research takes as a starting point the well-known inequalities that plague the collaborative website Wikipedia and how a group of female activists/editors have been devoting their time to translating women’s biographies into Spanish as a way of reversing masculine domination in the contents of the encyclopaedia. Drawing on interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the study emphasises the agency of these activist translators and, importantly, shows how they see solidarity as a

transformative activity that reinforces their project, protects them from harassment, and promotes equality through translation. As one of the participants in the study says, “translating is making [things] visible to other people” — a motto that could be well applied to other projects based on translational solidarity.

Sofía García-Beyaert is the author of “How can I help? An archetype-based approach to community interpreters’ solidarity”, an article in which she proposes certain archetypes for interpreters, with the objective of helping them single out their underlying personal motivations, so that they are fully aware of their decision-making when facing ethical dilemmas at work. To this end, the author presents a solidarity roadmap which helps interpreters understand their tendencies for action and how these imply identifying with one of the two different archetypes she proposes in her model: reliable professional—for whom boundaries are very clear and never crossed— or fellow human—who, above all, chooses to advocate for the client, even if that means stepping out of their professional role. Then, to put her roadmap into perspective, she interviews three interpreters with different profiles, and she analyses the narratives generated from her conversations with them. The data collected from her meetings with the interpreters reveal the complexity of solidarity and the different manners in which it can be exercised, as well as the deep dilemmas with which interpreters are faced on a daily basis, given the multidimensional nature of their work. Very importantly, this article emphasizes how crucial it is for interpreters to become aware of one’s archetype, in order to anticipate action and be able to act appropriately at all times.

To finish, the last two articles in this special issue deal with the connection between translation as a practice of solidarity and its invaluable contribution to the publishing field during the transition to democracy after the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Pilar Godayol’s article, “Feminist publishing projects after Franco: Solidarity through cultural translation”, presents three feminist solidarity publishing projects which played a key role in the introduction of feminist movements in post-Francoist Spain: the journal *Vindicación Feminista*, founded in Barcelona by Lidia Falcón and Carmen Alcalde, which worked regularly for over two years and published thirteen issues, thus becoming one of the most outstanding publications of the feminist theoretical debate of the 1970s in Spain; the series *Tribuna Feminista*, a project created by the publishing house Debate, which imported both classic and contemporary works by feminist authors which had remained unpublished in Spain thus far; and the publishing house LaSal, Edicions de les Dones, which focused on disseminating feminist culture, and published more than sixty titles over a period of thirteen years. This article simultaneously visibilizes the impact that these three platforms had in importing feminism into a country that was void of several progressive political discourses, and reflects on the essential role that translation played in this phenomenon.

As a closure for this special issue, Alejandrina Falcón’s article “Argentine exiles in Spain: Translation as a practice of solidarity” presents the creation of a transnational publishing space during the Spanish transition to democracy which was strongly based on translation as a practice of solidarity, and which involved the collaboration of both local publishers and members of the Latin American diaspora. Unlike the previous article, in which translation is perceived as an act of solidarity given its activist nature, this article focuses on the act of solidarity that lies in the selection of immigrants to be assigned translation and interpreting projects, thus helping them survive in a climate of economic instability for exiles and political refugees. Falcón’s paper discusses

the central role that translation had in the publishing industry during this period of time, as well as the manner in which translation as a practice of solidarity managed to weave nets connecting people on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, thus enabling translators to simultaneously operate on a personal level, by assisting disfavoured individuals, and on an intellectual level, by contributing to enriching a very young system of political discourses that had barely been born.

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