Research into translation as a specialism: an analysis and recommendations

Daniel Gile, Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle – Paris 3

ABSTRACT

Research into Translation (translation and interpreting) is to a large extent conducted by practitioners ('practisearchers') as opposed to 'professional researchers' from cognate disciplines, due to academic requirements in training programmes and to personal interest. Many of them can be said to 'specialise' in TIS. Research requirements from students are challenging because they take much time and personal investment away from the acquisition of Translation skills. There is also a lack of research training which translates into endemic weaknesses in the practisearchers' scholarship. Recommendations are formulated to address both issues.

KEYWORDS

TIS, practisearchers, research methods, scholarship level, awareness-raising.

1. Introduction: looking at TIS as a Translation specialism

Some disciplines taught at university are to a large extent research disciplines: their practice centrally involves (scientific) research, i.e. systematically exploring reality and developing theories to account for existing knowledge and to help extend it. Such is the case of many branches of mathematics, of physics, of psychology, of sociology, of history and of economics. Such is not the case of Translation (written translation and interpreting), which is not about exploring reality, but about performing certain transformations on texts (written, oral or signed) for the purpose of making their informational content and other features more accessible to people who do not master the language in which they were or are being formulated originally.

Unsurprisingly, the first scholarly studies devoted to translation were conducted by linguists — the names of Eugene Nida, Georges Mounin, Roman Jakobson and John Catford are well-known examples, and the first scholarly studies on interpreting were conducted by psychologists and psycholinguists — Henri Barik and David Gerver stand out among them. However, starting in the 1970s, translators and former translators, and — more strikingly because of their status as active practitioners and teachers — conference interpreters showed interest in exploring Translation scientifically as well. With the increasing academisation of Translator training programmes over the years, their proportion in the population of Translation and Interpreting studies (TIS) researchers has been rising constantly to the extent that in most branches of TIS, non-Translators have become a small minority.

Every year, Translators and Translation students write at least dozens of doctoral dissertations, hundreds of Master's theses and thousands of papers which are published in collective volumes and in specialised Translation journals. Most of their essays and empirical studies are devoted to issues linked to the practice of Translation and the training of Translators. It is therefore not unreasonable to consider research into Translation a 'Translation specialism' for them. Actually, for some, TIS has become the main or even exclusive specialism along with Translator training, with little time left for actual translating or interpreting.

2. Motivation

Since translation and interpreting are not intrinsically an exploratory knowledge-building exercise, one question that naturally arises is what makes these 'practisearchers' do research. Two drivers stand out:

a. Academic requirements:

- In many Translator training programmes, students do research as part of academic requirements, generally as a graduation or Master's thesis/dissertation. Interestingly, this is not the case at some old, prestigious Translation schools such as ESIT, Paris and ETI, Geneva, which pride themselves on training high level professionals at graduate level. In other programmes, students write some kind of 'final' project, which can be a glossary or an annotated translation, but every year, hundreds of research theses are completed by translation and interpreting students (see for instance lists of research theses in various branches of interpreting in the *CIRIN Bulletin*.
- Increasingly, a PhD is required when applying for teaching positions in Translator training programmes, and research is mandatory for academic promotion.
- Permanent academic staff are required to supervise graduation and MA theses and thus engage in research with their students. This sometimes leads to co-authored projects and publications with their former students.

b. Personal interest:

Beyond these requirements, which may or may not apply in various training programmes, Translation teachers and even translators and interpreters without an academic affiliation are found to engage in research of some sort. They may have read existing publications and wish to contribute their own reflection and experience around a theoretical or practical issue about which they feel strongly, or like the idea of seeing their own names and texts in print, or like to devote serious, systematic thinking to their Translation activity, or enjoy the intellectual stimulation of exploration and critical analysis of ideas and of data, or the atmosphere and social interaction with colleagues at TIS meetings.

These two types of motivation have proved strong and sustainable enough to generate a growing population of TIS researchers. There is a high turnover among students, most of whom just do a graduation or Master's thesis and then 'retire' from research, but many of their trainers have a more lasting TIS activity.

3. The status of TIS scholarship

Researchers are found in many disciplines, and in all of them critical analysis is conducted systematically and gradually improves the quality and productivity of their scholarship. Is there anything about TIS that warrants special consideration?

Firstly indeed, since the acquisition of Translation skills includes no associated (scientific) research skills, Translation students who need to comply with a thesis requirement for graduation and professional Translators who decide to go into research face the challenge of having to learn not only techniques, but also a new mindset. This is not unique to Translation, but puts Translators at a disadvantage when they engage in research which uses sociological, psychological or linguistic approaches, which is often the case. The problem is compounded by the short duration of graduate Translator training programmes, which are devoted to the acquisition of practical Translation skills as opposed to training in research. When they reach the stage at which they need to prepare a research thesis, many students have had little preparation.

A second point has to do with the wide spectrum of approaches and types of issues tackled in TIS, covering human sciences, including history, philosophy and literature, behavioural sciences such as psychology and sociology, linguistics, neurolinguistics, corpus linguistics, naturalistic observation, ethnographic methods, linguistic analyses, experiments with and without physiological measurements, to list major categories. Most TIS researchers will only engage in one or two research paradigms during their career, but interdisciplinarity, including interdisciplinarity within TIS, holds attractive potential, and opening up the beginners' minds to a wide set of possible approaches to research seems even more relevant in Translation and Interpreting Studies than say in psychology, sociology, literary studies or linguistics. This point will be mentioned again later in this paper.

Thirdly, in many cases, whatever 'theory' is presented to translation and interpreting students is taught in the form of postulates, categories and rules, typically formulated as "Proper Translation consists of comprehension, deverbalisation and reformulation;" "Translators work better into their A language and should only work into their A language;" "Translation depends on the product's skopos;" "Translators should be neutral and as transparent as possible;" "In consecutive, notes should be taken in the target language" etc. Some teachers may disagree with some or all of them and say so, some teachers may ignore them, but students

are not necessarily presented with information on how such theory was developed, from what baseline, with what data and what analytical process, whether competing theories exist and what the relative strengths and weaknesses of each are.

Regardless of their didactic value, such postulates and rules are not a good introduction to research. Neither are reference texts written by first-generation TIS pioneers with much practical experience and deep intuition but no research training. Their papers and books make claims and defend ideas many of which are based on such experience and intuition, but without systematic engagement in critical and self-critical reflection taking on board competing ideas, evidence and counter-evidence. As to advanced TIS research which uses sophisticated theories, methods and tools, mostly borrowed from other disciplines, it is not quite within easy grasp for most beginning TIS researchers, be they students or experienced translators and interpreters themselves.

As a result, serious challenges do indeed surface in many published TIS texts (see Toury 1980: 26, 80; Pym 1994: 147; Toury 1995: 262; Jääskeläinen 2000; Pöchhacker 2009), and even in doctoral TIS projects. As a peer-reviewer and editor of collective volumes and as a member of the teaching staff of CE(T)RA, an international TIS doctoral summer school of KUL, Leuven, I have read hundreds of manuscripts and PhD projects from many parts of the world which show insufficient understanding of the very nature of research and of feasibility issues by TIS authors, including PhD candidates. The situation has been improving markedly over the years, but the problem is still endemic. Needless to say, it is even more salient among MA students working on their MA thesis.

If there are persistent weaknesses in TIS research conducted by Translators, should it not be taken away from them and entrusted to 'professional researchers' from relevant disciplines, who have the training, the time, and who are employed to do research? Clearly, cooperation with such experts from psychology, sociology, education science, comparative literature, linguistics, communication studies and other disciplines can be beneficial to TIS. However, few of them are interested in Translation, while the motivation of some Translators is strong. Moreover, Translators are in a better position to steer research towards the needs of the profession with topics like training and learning, Translation quality, the Translator's role in various settings in society, professional tactics and strategies, and they have a better understanding of Translation environments and practices. The role of practisearchers in TIS is therefore important, and it makes sense to invest some effort in improving the scholarship of those who need it.

In this paper, a few ideas and suggestions will be formulated with a view to facilitate the newcomers' grasp of the nature of research and pave the way for more technical knowledge and skills acquisition at a later stage. Underlying these suggestions is my sustained interest over close to four

decades in TIS as a research activity and in TIS researcher training. This interest stemmed initially from the contrast between my own training (mathematics and sociology) and the way translation and interpreting were theorised at ESIT, where I studied conference interpreting in the second half of the 1970s. It grew in the 1980s and 1990s when I met with colleagues in Trieste and elsewhere who called for a new approach (see Gran and Taylor 1990), when I joined CERA (now CETRA) and similar initiatives, and as I engaged in discussions of the matter with like-minded colleagues.

4. Recommendations for beginning researchers in TIS

4.1 What research and how much research is reasonably useful for Translation students?

Translation and interpreting students in professional Translator training programmes essentially seek to acquire and hone practical Translation skills, not academic skills. This is particularly true in graduate programmes which generally last one or two years and which are a form of specialisation in which they engage after basic academic culture was acquired during the course of undergraduate studies in some other discipline, often modern languages. One or two years is a short period to reach mastery of high-level professional Translation skills, and the extra load of an active research requirement is not necessarily welcome by students.

However, in many institutions, a thesis is mandatory for a postgraduate taught degree. In such a case, many students choose to do a non-research thesis. This legitimate option is a loss of opportunity for TIS, and perhaps for many students who might find a first experience in research stimulating. The prospect of research which would not tax their time and energy more than the preparation of a good glossary or an annotated translation — and open their mind to science — therefore deserves some consideration.

This paper focuses on this very common case and formulates recommendations for awareness raising and guidance towards an initial specialisation of Translators, and especially Translation students, in research.

4.2 Early awareness-raising

Irrespective of their later involvement — or lack thereof — in research, as part of their general education, students can only benefit from becoming better-informed 'consumers' of science through awareness-raising. This can even start at undergraduate level, with two major aims:

a. Raising their awareness of the tentative and critical nature of scientific activity, which is not about claiming that certain ideas or beliefs are The Truth, no matter how widespread they are. It is about examining them

critically, testing their truthfulness and accuracy with data, coming up with tentative confirmations or with alternative ideas which will then be examined critically and tested as well, in an iterative process. Such awareness should help students accept the idea that some of the theories, rules and methods taught to them by their teachers, though didactically useful, may be worth re-examining and perhaps improving, which could make research into Translation more meaningful to them than its usual perception among students.

b. Showing that 'science' encompasses not only the natural sciences but also behavioural sciences and human sciences, not only experiments and quantitative analysis, but also naturalistic observation and qualitative analysis. It is important to open the students' mind to this fact in view of the persistence of restrictive and forbidding misconceptions of science which can inhibit any attraction they might feel towards TIS and thus deprive the field of welcome new researchers.

Rather than start with a set of lectures to introduce students to technical and abstract concepts such as inductive and deductive approaches, various types of validity, various types of experimental design, statistical significance and the like, which would require substantial investment for benefits that would not be immediately apparent to them, it is also possible to get the messages across through translation and interpreting exercises which can easily be integrated into their practical Translation training.

More specifically, a series of translation exercises with source texts describing the evolution of scientific knowledge and theories over time should do the job, provided the texts are selected so as to highlight improvements associated with *changes in theory* as opposed to just increased accuracy of existing knowledge. Interpreting students can use similar texts to prepare class presentations for exercises in consecutive or simultaneous interpreting — or in sight-translation. Accounts of the history of science, including Wikipedia articles and other online resources provide a wealth of such texts, referring to classical examples such as the adoption of the heliocentric system in astronomy after a long domination of the geocentric system, or the gradual discovery of various particles in the allegedly indivisible atom. More recent examples can be found in scientific extension journals. It is desirable for such exercises to be offered in series rather than in isolation so that the message comes across more clearly — it may take some time and repetition until the pattern of tentative theories being replaced by others is perceived by students as natural in science. In view of the fact that Translation is primarily a behavioural set of activities, it is also desirable to have texts not only from natural science disciplines, but also from social and human sciences, including psychology, sociology, linguistics, history, archaeology and cognate disciplines to show that they are also part of science and subject to the same cycle of observation, analysis, theorising, testing with data and improved or alternative theories.

TIS also offers numerous examples of research and of competing theories, but it is probably better to start with established sciences as an authority argument before moving on to examples from Translation research, lest students with a narrow view of science reject them offhand – negative views similar to those expressed in Danaher, 1992, can still be found in oral exchanges between TIS researchers and Translators. Another concern is that such examples from TIS may highlight weaknesses in theories and ideas used to teach practical skills in the relevant Translation training programmes — examples are note-taking systems in consecutive interpreting and prescriptive ideas about directionality in both translation and interpreting. This can be counterproductive at the initial skills acquisition stage, though such issues can usefully be tackled later by teachers and by doctoral students.

Ideally, instructors in charge can seize the opportunity to comment in the classroom that these texts reflect the critical and tentative nature of science and the diversity of disciplines, with their associated methodological approaches and techniques. But even if they do not, translating or interpreting a series of texts and presentations which follow the same thread is likely to prepare the students for more explicit coaching at a later stage.

4.3 Active research for beginners

In some training programmes, research is considered a necessary evil imposed by academic requirements. In other programmes, it is viewed as a substantial part of the curriculum. Some institutions also provide distinct research programmes for graduate students (ESIT, Paris, has a specific one-year curriculum devoted to TIS which is attended mostly by graduates of practical Translator programmes). A widespread idea within TIS is that ideally, doctoral coursework and research should come when Translators already have some professional experience. In contrast, more generally in the academic community, doctoral work is done by students who have already had not professional experience, but a first experience in research at second degree level. In TIS, this is not always the case, and doctoral students are often raw beginners in research, in which case they can only benefit from going through conceptual preparation and preparatory exercises as described below, just like MA students, before moving on to more advanced training.

4.3.1 Conceptual preparation

Before engaging in active research in the form of a thesis, it is probably best if students are offered some conceptual if not theoretical preparation to help them understand available options and choose one which best suits their interests and resources – and to put them in direct contact with some fundamental skills they will be using when doing research.

The conceptual and practical introduction to science proposed here focuses on research which involves the analysis of data, in other words to research which has a strong empirical component, rather than on philosophical reflection and the development of conceptual frameworks and theories without data-oriented testing. The reason for this preference is that it is easier to show beginners what solid and less solid research is when explicitly defined datasets are used as a basis for exploration and inference than in conceptual analyses and formulations. It is of course important to acknowledge the legitimacy and value of this other, more conceptual or theoretical type of exploration of reality, e.g. through the example of Toury's theoretical reflection on the concept of norms and its later use for further theoretical elaboration on one hand, and for empirical research into Translation norms on the other.

In training programmes where research is marginal, conceptual preparation as it is defined here, upstream of training in research methodology proper, can be given in the form of a few lectures and/or recommended reading about the distinctions between basic and applied research, theoretical and empirical research, naturalistic and experimental methods, about fundamental scientific norms, about the major scientific culture families (basically canonical scientific cultures and human sciences cultures) and associated research methods, about critical reading, about sampling (including the issue of bias and the separate issue of accuracy in how samples represent populations), about the traps associated with the deceptively 'easy' popular representation of interviews and questionnaires (with a special attention to social desirability bias), without going into technical details. In programmes where research is central, it makes sense for such conceptual preparation to be more technical and unfold along the lines of traditional introductory courses in research methods for social sciences, covering both naturalistic research, including ethnographic research, and experimental research. In programmes which have specialised research teams working on linguistic, corpus-linguistic or neuro-linguistic topics with associated methods or which use specialised equipment such as eye-trackers and keyboard logging devices, an introduction to these techniques (and associated theories) on top of the general conceptual preparation makes sense as well.

4.3.2 Preparatory exercises: critical reading

Critical reading exercises are perhaps the best way to turn principles underlying science as taught conceptually into experiential reality for beginners, since they involve active participation in analysing concrete case studies.

This can be done with two types of materials. One is synoptic descriptions of research strategies or inferences found in publications from the TIS literature, to be prepared by the instructor. They can be as long as a couple of paragraphs or as short as one sentence, for instance: "To investigate

conference interpreting quality perception by users of their services, interpreters were asked to take advantage of meetings to which they had been assigned to interview delegates." Students are asked to think about them critically and make comments. They might for instance question the truthfulness of responses by delegates to questions put by interviewers whom they may have identified as interpreters, especially as regards negative reactions they might have had to the service, or doubt the interpreters' ability to conduct the interviews objectively, or wonder about the selection of delegates for interviews by the interpreters and the representativeness of those showing availability and willingness to respond. The other type of material is actual texts from the literature, going from an extract from a paper, in which a specific point can be highlighted, to a full paper, to be read critically and analysed by students. This is a more comprehensive exercise in critical reading, but a more sensitive one insofar as it can highlight not only strengths, but also weaknesses in research by authors that students could identify. One might claim that research papers are published to be read and critically assessed and are therefore fair game for critical reading. However, while mutual criticism by researchers is not only natural, but also necessary, having a researcher organise student criticism of other researchers, many of whom teach translation or interpreting and may be known personally to the students, is more problematic.

The issue can be partly addressed by anonymising papers and changing identifying elements such as names of institutions, working languages mentioned etc. – provided they have not been published online, or by choosing papers in foreign languages to which students do not have access and translating them. In all cases, instructors should make it a point to stress the innovation and strengths found in papers submitted to critical reading in the classroom, the message being that no study or research report is perfect, but that despite their limitations and weaknesses, they may well have contributed significantly to the field.

4.3.3 The thesis – students and supervisors

A critical part of a beginner's first steps in research is her/his first (MA or graduation) thesis. Not only is the positive or less positive perception of the experience a strong determinant of his/her future interest in research, but its quality as research performed under the guidance of a supervisor will strongly influence the research quality norms and standards s/he will use as a benchmark for some time. It is therefore desirable for the thesis experience to be as pleasant as possible, and for the supervision to be as didactic as possible.

Selecting a topic for the thesis is the first and often most difficult step in this experience, one which can take months and which may never be completed satisfactorily (this is discussed at some length in Gile 2001). It is therefore particularly important to help students in this respect. One way

is for instructors to suggest a topic, a research question or several, and associated methods. This minimum effort-maximum effect strategy can save much time and result in good research, especially if the topic is part of an overall project within the same institution, hence an environment with the possibility of exchanges with and advice from other participants in the project. A replication study is another possibility. By definition, its innovative potential is small, but its value for TIS is significant, as replications are essential to establish that findings are not due to chance, and there are not enough replications in TIS. It is also an opportunity for the beginning TIS researcher to scrutinise closely the original study so as to gain good understanding of existing knowledge about the topic and about the rationale underlying the methodological approach adopted in the original study – and perhaps to improve on it.

However, most students prefer to take on a topic of their own choice. For them, specific guidance in topic selection is often necessary. There are numerous texts which offer some guidance (e.g. Williams and Chesterman 2002), but practical, individual advice can be far more efficient. Such advice can be given by the student's supervisor or by other experienced researchers (and is in fact a major contribution of individual tutorials in summer schools for research and doctoral students such as CETRA). Collective topic selection seminars and exercises can also help. In such exercises, students explain the topic they should like to work on and other students are guided into contributing questions and critical thoughts about feasibility and planning as well as suggestions for optimisation. Alternatively, the instructor suggests a fictional topic and asks students how they would go about planning a study around it in order to get a discussion rolling.

Close supervision during the preparation of the thesis is an excellent opportunity to further consolidate the students' practical understanding and implementation of fundamental scientific norms, especially as regards (self-)skepticism and rigorous logic. For such supervision to be efficient, what is required is not so much good mastery of research techniques as constant attention to the logic underlying the student's strategic choices in determining research questions and selecting methods to find answers to them, sampling issues, hidden biases in questionnaires and interviews, potential biases in the interpretation of data, inferences made. Ideally, supervisors should be specialised in the relevant branch of TIS and methodology, but the current demography of TIS makes this case all too rare, and a rigorous mindset and attention to the student's work can be found even in supervisors who are not specialised in the particular branch of TIS on which the student is working. They can miss 'thematic' weaknesses, including errors and omissions with respect to the relevant theories and recent studies, but can still contribute — and in so doing hone their own critical reading and thinking skills. Actually, for most of them, except for a relatively small number of TIS authors who consistently conduct research of their own, supervision of theses, along with peer-

reviewing, may be the most powerful way of improving their own scholarship over the years.

5. More advanced research

While motivation to do research is low in the majority of students who engage in MA and graduation theses, there are also cases of strong motivation, often associated with a specific topic or research area in which the institution with which they are affiliated conducts sustained activity. This is often found among doctoral students, who commit to several years of research efforts. In such cases, more comprehensive training can be conducted, with more technical content, and research topics, questions and methods. Such training can and should be more demanding. However, even for these students, preparatory activities as described above, including practical exercises, are desirable before more advanced training is given.

When strong motivation is present and it is likely that the students will become active members of the TIS community for some time to come, as already mentioned earlier, it is particularly important to introduce them to different approaches to science at the beginning of training because of the diversity of approaches found in TIS combined with its demographic features; some TIS researchers work on literary translation doing literary or linguistic analysis and taking literary and sociological theories as a conceptual framework, while others work on the translation process using key-logging or gaze-tracking analysis, some consult and analyse archives to investigate history or the influence of political regimes on publication policy and censorship while others use questionnaires, interviews and focus group methodology to look at social status issues, Translator recruitment policies, quality expectation issues, and still others do ethnographic observation, sometimes as participant-researchers, to find out about behavioural patterns or socialisation, or analyse Translation corpora to find out about Translation-specific linguistic patterns, to mention just a few topics and approaches found within TIS. The diversity of topics and approaches is a positive feature in the discipline insofar as it fosters interdisciplinarity in the TIS community. However, in spite of its considerable growth over the past two or three decades, demographically speaking, TIS is still very small, with not more than a few dozens to a maximum of a few hundreds of truly active researchers in most countries, and a fraction of this population in each Translation branch and research approach. This means that in each university or Translator training programme, some TIS branches are virtually absent, with no opportunity for students to get acquainted with them unless a deliberate effort is made in that direction. Without it, students could well only encounter those approaches and theories found in their institution (e.g. cognitive approaches or corpus linguistic approaches or sociological approaches) and remain unaware of other possibilities they might have found more attractive. Such a situation results in lost opportunities for the students — and for TIS.

Another related point is that as far as possible, when introducing students to techniques, their underlying rationale, strengths and weaknesses should be explained as well. This is particularly relevant when introducing inferential statistics, which tends to be taught as a set of techniques to be applied on the basis of recipes, without making sure that students understand fundamental concepts such as significance, or the importance of effect size, or the uncertainty of the power of statistical tests conducted on small samples and with baseline assumptions not being checked. Equally relevant is understanding not only the potential power of experiments, but also their limitations, including ecological validity issues, and their nature as quasi-case studies which need to be replicated repeatedly before conclusions can be drawn with some confidence. Such awareness is likely to open up the students' mind to the advantages of some technically less sophisticated methods and to their legitimacy as fully scientific methods extending to advanced research.

6. Practical challenges and resources

Ideally, Translator training institutions where research is a requirement should be able to implement the recommendations formulated in this paper with their teaching staff, which should include qualified researchers with good critical reading skills and some familiarity with more than one scientific paradigm used in TIS. In reality, most Translator training institutions only have a small number of qualified researchers on their staff, and as mentioned earlier, the range of paradigms covered by them and their knowledge of research in TIS branches outside their own specialism can be very limited.

There are several practical ways to remedy this at a reasonable cost. One is inter-institutional agreements allowing members of one institution to supervise or co-supervise from afar students from another. Another way is for those instructors in charge of research and supervision at Translator training institutions to widen their horizons by reading about scientific approaches in specialisms other than their own and about TIS work that follows these approaches.

For general scientific culture, TIS authors writing about research often refer to introductory textbooks in psychology or more generally in what is referred to as the social sciences. There is a wealth of such books, many of which have been repeatedly revised and improved and provide high quality and clearly formulated content. Babbie 2012; Coolican 2014; Patten and Newhart 2018 are examples of such resources written in English, and good examples in other languages can be found as well. They are a good choice for highly motivated instructors and students who wish to conduct advanced research. For less motivated instructors, their generally highly technical content, e.g. with respect to experimental design and to statistics, may require more effort than instructors are willing to invest. Another drawback

is that they sometimes posit restrictive norms which are legitimate within their discipline but not flexible enough for the very wide spectrum of scholarly activity in TIS. In particular, some claim that there is no research without a hypothesis, or that the (sole) aim of experiments is to test causality. Examples from other disciplines show that research questions are not necessarily formulated in the form of hypotheses and that many experiments have exploratory aims such as detecting regularities and potential associations between phenomena rather than testing hypothesised causal relations. This is important for beginners in TIS potentially interested in exploring uncharted areas of Translation who should be encouraged — not inhibited by the feeling that the study they contemplate would be 'unscientific' because it would not be in line with this or that allegedly 'universal' norm of science. Unfortunately, TIS scholars in charge of supervising/training young researchers are not necessarily aware of the problem and some actually teach them the same restrictive rules. Reading a few awareness-raising texts (e.g. Gile 2013 and references it lists) may help. It is important for the message to be clear in doctoral programmes, so that this general scientific culture is disseminated widely among future supervisors who will teach it to their own students.

Some TIS authors have gathered enough experience and confidence to write or edit their own research methods books, as monographs (e.g. Hale and Napier 2013, Saldanha and O'Brien 2014) or collective volumes (e.g. Gile et al. 2001; Angelelli and Baer 2015). They offer much good advice, in spite of the fact that some are not specific enough in methodological advice and not totally reliable when their authors go beyond methods for which they have had solid training themselves.

TIS organisations (e.g. EST or CETRA), universities which specialise in research or even professional translator and interpreter associations which are interested in research could also be asked to organise short training seminars dedicated to the topic 'introducing research to TIS newcomers' which members of the teaching staff of Translator training institutions could attend and replicate at a later stage to train other staff members.

Finally, taking advantage of modern communication and information technology and inviting lecturers who specialise in teaching and explaining specific research approaches and methods to make online presentations from wherever they are or to produce video-recorded presentations which can be viewed at a convenient time by students requires less personal investment by the local teaching staff and solves partly the problem arising from the lack of local expertise in some research specialties.

7. Conclusion

Most researchers from cognate disciplines working on translation and interpreting are interested in Translation from a linguistic, social, cultural

or cognitive viewpoint. For instance, they view Translators as a special case of bilinguals, or wonder about the cognitive athletics that make it possible for simultaneous interpreters to share their attentional resources between listening to a speech in one language and reformulating it in another at the same time. Many TIS practisearchers are interested in similar topics, which may be perceived by practitioners as too remote from practice to be useful (see for instance Wagner and Chesterman 2002). However, practisearchers are the ones who do research on central professional issues such as quality expectations and perception in interpreting — see among many other publications on this topic papers in the collective volume edited by Zwischenberger and Behr (2015), or texts on the relative efficiency of various modes of translation revision by Robert (2012), on the effect of short internships on conference interpreting students by Bartłomiejczyk (2010), on culture-related obstacles to critical thinking in the translation classroom by Kim (2013), on the success of bilingual educational interpreting in South African Universities by Verhoef and DuPlessis (2008), on expectations from 'designated' signed-language interpreters by Miner (2015), on the Deaf viewers' actual comprehension of interpreted TV news by Wehrmeyer (2015). These are just a few examples of endeavours that have already produced useful data and provide Translation practitioners and teachers with food for thought. Encouraging those Translators who are inclined to specialise in TIS and helping them achieve good scholarship levels can only be of benefit to all. A particularly positive environment in this respect just experienced by this author is that of ASLI, the British Association of Signed Language Interpreters. At its 2-day 30th anniversary conference held in London in September 2017, more than half of the programme was devoted to presentations of studies by practisearchers, and practicing interpreters who attended showed interest in their research through their attendance, comments and questions. This successful interaction is probably due to a large extent to the fact that those researchers who presented were seen as members of the 'family' by the community of practitioners, were able to communicate with their non-academic colleagues easily, and were interested in similar topics and issues — another very positive initiative is ASLI's 'bridging the gap' series of meetings devoted to collaborative work between academia and the British Deaf community (Dixon 2017).

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- **EST** (European Society for Translation Studies) www.est-translationstudies.org (consulted on 26.09. 2017)

Biography

Daniel Gile studied mathematics, sociology and Japanese and worked as a translator before studying interpreting at ESIT, Paris, and becoming a conference interpreter. He started doing T&I research in the late seventies, earned a PhD in Japanese and a PhD in linguistics on topics related to T&I and has persisted ever since without interrupting his professional activity as a conference interpreter. He has a strong interest in Translation and Interpretation Studies as an object of research and in T&I researcher training.



Email: daniel.gile@yahoo.com