

Development Aid in Translation

Marija Todorova and Kathleen Ahrens

The Oxford Handbook of Translation and Social Practices

Edited by Meng Ji and Sara Laviosa

Abstract and Keywords

This chapter interrogates the translated language used in development aid in terms of its underlying Anglocentric conceptual assumptions as well as in terms of its discursive products. It argues that this export of jargon-specific language has impeded the mission of developmental aid, and it provides a case study to support these arguments. It then discusses two steps that can be taken to facilitate the implementation of development aid practice: (1) directly involve various indigenous and grassroots actors in the translation process and (2) enhance sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural context of the host locale. Integrating these suggestions into ongoing policy creation would enable development agencies, international nongovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations in general to create more comprehensible policy documents and provide more relevant and useful practices for the local communities.

Keywords: development, aid, translation, development agency, intermediary, nongovernmental organization

In the second half of the 20th century, multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank promoted the idea of using donor-funded programs to improve the lives of people around the world with development aid. Ever since, the term development has proven difficult to define, and its meaning has shifted over the years in relation to development aid, encompassing three main senses:

(1) emergency and humanitarian aid (likely to be negatively associated with growth, since aid is given when calamities happen); (2) aid that affects growth only over a long period of time, if at all, such as aid to support democracy, the environment, health, or education; and (3) aid that is directly aimed at achieving growth such as building roads, ports, and electricity generators, or supporting agriculture

(Clemens, Radelet, & Bhavnani, 2004).

Irrespective of the sense used, researchers agree that development aid is a political term that implies positions of power regarding who makes the decisions and sets priorities for the distribution of this aid (Banerjee, 2003).

One aspect of development, especially in relation to people-centered development (Korten & Klaus, 1984), that has received a general consensus is that the language used has power over how development is conceptualized, which in turn directs actions (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995). Cornwall (2007) notes that "the language of development defines worlds-in-the-making,

animating and justifying intervention in currently existing worlds with fulsome promises of the possible” (p. 471). The issue of how to define development is not, however, simply a matter of conceptual difficulty but, in fact, may predetermine both the framework regarding what problems and issues take priority as well as what type of knowledge is needed to best address them, including the locality of knowledge production. Thus, the very definition of development prequalifies the types of action to be taken and who is authorized to take that action (Crush, 1995).

Although translation processes happen with all three types of development aid, this chapter places particular emphasis on the second type of aid, which involves a flow of knowledge and ideas. In most of the developing countries and countries in transition, foreign development aid brings a specialized development discourse that has not been present before (Todorova, 2018). Thus, the role of the translation does not simply include the linguistic transfer of meaning from one language into another. It can also be used as a tool to create innovative language solutions to introduce these new concepts and knowledge. Translators and the sites of translation are thus potentially in a position to become active mediators and creators of meaning as part of the political discourse of the developing country. Translation can be used to facilitate the adoption and incorporation of development-related ideas into the local language(s) as well as for local ideas to find their way back into the development discourse, thereby creating mutual interchange and multidirectional traveling of ideas (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005).

This chapter provides an introduction to research on translation practices in development-related settings in terms of both the underlying Anglocentric conceptual assumptions as well as its discursive products, arguing that the export of jargon-specific language has impeded the mission of developmental aid. First, we provide an overview of the theoretical and methodological approaches relevant to translation as a sociological act and examine the role of translation in the development sector. Then, we provide insight into real-life translation practices of development agencies, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), and national nongovernmental organizations (NNGOs), presenting a case study from the Republic of North Macedonia, which is a new democracy and a developing country in southeast Europe. For the case study, original data were collected through semistructured interviews conducted by the first author with local staff members of development agencies and their “intermediaries” in the distribution of the development aid, namely INGOs and NNGOs.

For the purposes of this chapter, a development agency is understood to refer to a national, supranational, or multilateral organization that provides development aid to developing countries, usually functioning as a donor. NGOs based outside of the country where the development programs are being implemented, with a main office in a developed country, are referred to as INGOs, while the NGOs and foundations based in the developing country that are implementing programs at the national level and are predominantly located in the capital are referred to as NNGOs. Both INGOs and NNGOs are understood as part of the broader category

of civil society organizations (CSOs). In addition, the term NGO refers to both INGOs and NNGOs in the following discussion.

Based on our findings, we discuss two steps that can be taken to facilitate the implementation of development aid practice: (1) directly involve indigenous and grassroots actors and (2) enhance sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural context of the host locale. Integrating these suggestions into ongoing policy creation would enable development agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs to ensure that their policy documents are more easily understood and potentially more relevant and useful to the local communities.

Translation as a Sociological Act

Communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds is one of the key components to the daily operation of INGOs as they seek to engage not only with their local partners, staff, and volunteers but also with the key stakeholders and the general public in the countries in which they operate. Furthermore, as key political actors in international governance, INGOs are currently facing pressures to “maintain their legitimacy by decentralizing their traditionally Western-based headquarters” (Tesseur, 2017). However, translation has so far rarely been considered as crucial to development work. Despite its immense effect on the ultimate success or failure of development projects, translation is often considered only in terms of its role in communicating project goals and results, failing to incorporate the local population in the project evolution.

Therefore, it is surprising that in a sector which would be unable to operate without translation (Sanz Martins, 2018) and despite the interest into the role that language plays in development (Cornwall, 2007; Cornwall & Eade, 2010; Anderson, Brown, & Jean, 2012), the first attempt to connect translation studies with development studies has only been made since 2010 (Marais, 2013, 2014; Marais & Delgado Luchner, 2018). According to Marais (2013), who draws both on the work of Latour (2005) as well as Tymoczko’s (2007) call for the dewesternization of translation studies, the sociocultural contexts surrounding development are “key sites of contestation” (Latour 2005) in which “societies ... still under construction ... may provide valuable insight into the agency of translators in the construction of social realities” (Marais, 2013, p. 412).

Marais’ Translation Theory and Development Studies (2014) further combines theoretical insights from the fields of actor-network theory as well as complexity theory to examine the intersection of translation and development. One of the main benefits of the application of complexity theory to translation and development, according to Marais, is that it allows seeing the local and the global not as mutually exclusive but to “hold on to both parts” (Marais, 2014, p. 46). Drawing from Latour’s study of sociology, he places the focus on the network and the links between the nodes in the network, for these are seen as the true location of existence of the global (Marais, 2014, p. 61). A similar point is made by Korten (1998, p. 74), who says that to achieve a “global civil society” “every locality and participating organization [needs] to be responsible for its own events” and to be “linked into a global dialogue.”

With the advent of the “social turn” in translation studies since the early 2000s, research in the field of translation focused its attention on the role and agency of translators and interpreters in the processes of translation as well as the social (Angelelli, 2014) and cultural (Ahrens & Say, 1999; Kövacs, 2014) considerations that permeate acts of translation and interpreting. Translation scholars have increasingly come to consider translation and interpreting “as sociological acts, in which language mediators make decisions depending on their social, political, and ethical positions and the institutional context in which they are working” (Tesseur, 2018, p. 4).

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1991) and some of his key concepts, including field, habitus, and capital, have had a great impact on the study of different social aspects of translation. Another notable sociological approach taken up by translation studies has been that of Bruno Latour’s (2005) actor-network theory. However, these sociological studies of translation have focused primarily on the translation of literature and in publishing institutions (Buzelin, 2005, 2007; Heilbron, 2010; Jones, 2009; Kung, 2009). Research on translation in specific institutional situations, and in particular the extent to which the institutions’ goals and procedures guide and affect translators’ decisions, has so far concentrated on examining predominantly the institutions in the European Union (Koskinen, 2008; Schöffner, 2001; Tcaciuc & Mackevic, 2017; Tosi, 2003), with very little consideration being given to language policies and practices of development agencies and INGOs.

In recent years, however, there has been a notable change. Large INGOs, such as Amnesty International (Schöffner, Tcaciuc, & Tesseur, 2014; Tesseur, 2014, 2017) and Oxfam (Footitt, 2017; Sanz Martins, 2018), have attracted attention from scholars; and there have been theoretical and prescriptive attempts to examine how communication needs are addressed within these international organizations (Madon, 1999). Even so, Tesseur (2018, p. 4) has noted that there is still “little understanding in TIS [translation and interpreting studies] at the moment of translation and interpreting policies and practices in (international) NGOs, and a lack of in-depth case studies on how specific NGOs may deal with their language needs.”

In addition, as Marais (2018b) points out, translation scholars engaging with the field of development would best be served to start with a non-reductionist view of development— one that doesn’t limit development only to issues of aid or economic growth. Instead, he proposes adopting a much wider view of development, encompassing the humanities and including insights from theories based on work in anthropological and cultural studies such as alternative development and human development. For this to happen in translation studies, it will require no less than a paradigmatic and methodological shift from focusing on written texts to analyzing multimodal phenomena in their specific contexts.

Translation in the Development Sector

Often seen as a space of encounter between the global and the local (Escobar, 1995; Lewis, 2005) or interaction between two value systems and cultures (Marais, 2013), development is ideally

conceived as involving participation, empowerment, and partnership (Anderson et al., 2012; Mansuri & Rao, 2013; Mikkelsen, 2005), as well as negotiation between varying and even conflicting interests of different actors (Mosse, 2005). As defined by Marais (2018a), development studies is “an interdisciplinary that links economics, political science and sociology in an effort to study the ‘development’ of regions, countries, societies, or communities ... in particular by economic growth and political reform” (p. 297). Thus, the field of development is characterized by communication practices (Delgado Luchner, 2018) and two-way communication, with language at the very center as “development cannot reach the most marginalized without speaking to them in their own language” (Romaine, 2013, p. 17). For Mazrui, “the task of translation must be treated as an integral part of linguistic development initiatives” (2016, p. 167).

Translation in International Organizations

Recent research has shed light on the importance of multilingual and translational practices, taking into consideration documents created by INGOs that are focused on development aid. These studies showed that the process of translation involved the export of English-based jargon-specific language and Eurocentric views which impedes the mission of the developmental aid and limits the accessibility to development possibilities. Footitt (2017), for example, studied the internal documents of Oxfam International for a period of about 60 years and noticed that the use of “anglo-dominated lexicon of aid and development” led to “programs which were considerably less effective” (p. 524). The position of power assumed by the INGOs led to “a largely unquestioned practice of feedback and evaluation, rooted linguistically as much as conceptually in Anglophone models of management and strategic thinking” (p. 529). Also focusing on Oxfam International, Sanz Martins (2018) described the specific linguistic needs that led to the development of its professional translation service, but the organization still mainly used English as the sole official language, with Spanish and French as strategic languages and Arabic and Portuguese as tactical languages. He suggests that the fact that “connections with local staff and beneficiaries are ... limited” is a challenge that can be solved if the organization keeps “in touch directly with local staff and partners and not only with intermediary requestors” (p. 116).

Looking at another international organization working in the area of human development with massive translation needs, Amnesty International, Tesseur (2014) focused on Amnesty’s translation policies and practices, noting that translations into small non-core languages “remain much more unregulated and diverse” (p. 574) which led to lower translation quality and lack of terminology consistency. Furthermore, in a study of two Swiss-based INGOs and their language and translation practices in Africa, Delgado Luchner (2018) notes that one used “English as lingua franca” (p. 52) and the other communicated exclusively in French, both depending on translation into the local languages by local staff or volunteers.

Both organizations have reported their “lack of mastery of the local languages spoken by beneficiaries as an asset” (Delgado Luchner, 2018, p. 60), failing to recognize that the availability (or lack of availability) of local translators is influencing the selection of countries and local partners who are able to receive aid. Delgado Luchner (2018) also reports that the use of English

as a lingua franca was especially prominent in the INGOs' communication with development agencies like the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Furthermore, Crack (2019) in looking at the role the UK's Department for International Development notes the "absence of extended commentary, guidance or reflection about language" (p. 166). She also points out that because of their English-language competencies "Northern-based NGOs are more likely to receive funding, regardless of their local language capacity" (p. 166) and, thus, set priorities for local development.

Working within the framework of globalization and postcolonial sociology, Roth (2019) has investigated the nexus between linguistic capital and inequality in the operations of INGOs. She finds that the use of English as a lingua franca and the lack of appropriate translation into vernacular non-European languages impedes the delivery of aid where it is most needed, as well as raising concerns about the "cultural sensitivity and understanding of the local context" (p. 49). These studies demonstrate that translation is not considered a priority at INGOs and lead to the question as to how NNGOs themselves go about identifying potential beneficiaries in a community. If these local partners follow the lead of the INGOs in not prioritizing translation, this may limit who is identified as a potential beneficiary and may also limit the role the beneficiaries can themselves play in the development project, limiting the effect of the aid.

Translators as Agents of Social Change

Since 2010, what is known as the "activist turn" in translation (Wolf, 2012) has gathered steam and posed serious challenges to the long-standing paradigm of the neutrality of translators and the translation process, aiming to replace it with a view of translators and interpreters as situated at a particular point in place and time rather than seemingly cut off from the real-life context of their work. This approach assumes that translators are imbued with both subjectivity as well as agency. The application of sociological approaches to translation and interpreting has shifted the focus onto the political factors affecting translation, including the political habitus of translators and interpreters as well as the intersection of translation and activism.

Marais (2014) explores this viewpoint by considering translators' agency as defined through the use of complexity theory, especially the idea of complex adaptive systems as central to the development of societies. He examines the social setting and context of translation in development through a series of case studies and interviews with practitioners in South African agricultural development and informal economy and concludes at the end of one study that the unavailability of translations into local South African indigenous languages has created conditions for a "dominating, hegemonic perspective" that have been ameliorated only somewhat by locally based "communal translation" (p. 168).

Todorova (2018) also explores this viewpoint by looking at the actors in the development of civil society in post-communist countries and notes that the idea of civil society has largely been facilitated and actively instituted through translation processes in INGOs, primarily through the actions of local staff employed by these organizations. Since civil societies are new to the

historical socioeconomic contexts of most post-communist countries, they require a brand new language to communicate and persuade the public about its importance and relevance. Translation, thus, can be seen as a political tool, “a mechanism for innovating local political discourses by infusing them with concepts and terms from Western democracies with a longer history” (p. 354).

Using translation in this manner has also contributed to the disputed legacy of development in post-communist countries of southeast Europe, where not only the NGO-related terms and concepts but also the NGO’s overall role in development are still very much a target of intense political debates. The global/local dynamic is a key aspect which unfortunately seems to have been overlooked in the development of southeast Europe post- communist countries as the NGO-specific jargon that was created appears to have been aimed primarily at enabling effective communication between the development agencies and the NGOs receiving the funds, paying little attention to the fact that the local stakeholders have largely found such jargon to be opaque and difficult to grasp. Although the development agencies and NGOs seem to speak the same language, to most people outside the NGO offices this particular discourse appears as a foreign language.

In the following section, we look into the linguistic and translation practices in various development agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs in a post-communist country.

A Case Study: The Language of Foreign Aid in North Macedonia

Similar to many of the countries in the Eastern European bloc, the Republic of North Macedonia underwent a transition after the fall of the Berlin wall. It gained independence from former Yugoslavia in 1991 and went through a process of nation-building, simultaneously transitioning from a socialist to a democratic political system. As it was one of the poorest countries in Europe after its independence, foreign assistance was a significant feature of the political and social development of the Republic of North Macedonia. At present, it is classified as a low- to middle-income country (World Bank, 2019), but it is still dependent on foreign support. Thus, many development agencies and INGOs maintain their presence in the country but have shifted the scope and focus of their funding from direct aid to creating sustainability and establishing government systems to achieve goals they had once taken on themselves. This foreign development support introduced a need for translation and interpretation for the local population speaking the local languages including Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Romani, Serbian, Bosnian, and Aromanian, as well as other minority languages.

The Flow of Development Aid

The presence of numerous development agencies and INGOs in the Republic of North Macedonia makes the development sector a complex field of study as they cover different aspects of economic growth and improvement of living standards. Their approach to development and developmental priorities and the flow of development aid vary significantly for each organization. However, for the purposes of our discussion about language use, we first provide a general

summary of some of the main actors in the development aid distribution network: development agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs.

Development agencies (both national—that is, those with ties to a national government— and supranational—that is, with no allegiance or ties to any particular government) are the main providers of development funding. Many of them decided to have a physical presence in the developing country where they implement their development programs, and they work directly with the local government institutions and other local partners. As an example, such development agencies in the Macedonian context include the UK's Department for International Development (national), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (national), and the World Bank (supranational). Other development agencies, for example, the US Agency for International Development (USAID; national) and the Swedish International Development Agency (national), have chosen to implement their development programs via INGOs. One such example is the Civil Society Strengthening Program, which was implemented by the Macedonian office of the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), based in Vermont.

In an attempt to achieve “a visibly strengthened ability of ordinary citizens, working through networks of indigenous, non-profit organizations, to engage public officials and entities on issues of vital national importance on a self-sustaining basis,” USAID recently decided to change its approach to development aid for some of its development programs in the Republic of North Macedonia.¹ Instead of using an INGO like the ISC, USAID has switched to working with multiple locally based intermediaries who have developed the capacity to implement a large development program on the national level (NNGOs) or a consortium of INGOs and NNGOs. Still, these NNGOs are often established by the same former local staff of INGOs, and they have already internalized the language of the development agency.

For example, the Center for Institutional Development (NNGO) was established by the local staff of the ISC (INGO), and the Macedonian Civic Education Center (NNGO) was established by the local staff of Catholic Relief Services (INGO) who had previously implemented the Civic Education Project funded by USAID. In both cases, USAID provided funding for the NNGO to implement specific development objectives in the area of development of civil society and education, respectively. This approach was adopted to establish a closer link between local organizations, institutions, and beneficiaries on the “journey for self-reliance.”² In theory, this meant that it also allowed for more sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural background of the area where the NNGOs are implementing their activities, allowing more access to indigenous communities and languages in its policy and development documents.

In our analysis, we will take a look at the translation and linguistic practices across agents in the development aid chain, from development agencies to INGOs to NNGOs.

Methodology

For the purposes of the study, six people were interviewed. All were locally engaged employees; three are staff members of development agencies, one works at an INGO, and two have

management positions in NNGOs. Although their wish to stay anonymous prevents us from stating the exact organizations they work for and their position, we can generally say that they include individuals in leadership positions with management responsibilities and long-term experience in the country's development and NGO sector. The interviewees represent the country's diversity in terms of both their gender and their ethnic background; however, they all work and live in the capital, Skopje. An interview analysis was combined with examining the data available on the websites of the organizations under study.

Semistructured interviews were conducted using online technologies and lasted about 1 hour. The interviewees shared their ideas and observations in their private capacity. The main questions asked of each participant included the following: What is the role of language in the relationship between development agencies, INGOs, NNGOs, and local communities? Where does translation occur and why? How are translators recruited and used in the local context? How is translation, or non-translation, affecting the development in the country? In some cases follow-up questions were asked for clarification or for providing further examples. Although the interviewees did not directly respond to the question of how translation affects the development of the country, some shared their views on how translation affects the local language, especially in the development sector.

Findings

In terms of the use of languages, all of the different organizations working in the development sector have their own specific approach, but some common issues can be observed. First, all project reports and communication with the international public is conducted in English and is presented in English on the websites of these organizations.

Second, the locally engaged staff at developmental agencies, as well as INGOs and NNGOs, without exception, have a high working proficiency of English. Consequently, the most commonly used language in all of these institutions is English, with some occasional use of Macedonian and Albanian.

The multilingual locally engaged staff offer benefits to the development agency in terms of their linguistic ability, as interviewee 4 notes that "to understand the context of the sector, which the project is potentially trying to develop, it is essential to use research and insight from local organizations. The locally engaged staff usually understands, besides English, most of the languages of the region (e.g., ex-Yugoslav languages plus Albanian, excluding Romanian) and there is no need to use translated research produced in the local languages." However, interviewee 4 also mentioned a growing trend, especially in smaller countries, to produce increasingly more research in English, rather than the local language.

Third, all interviewees working in the main office of the development agencies confirm that all office communication and written documents are conducted in English and that English is the language of communication from the development agencies toward the local partners. For

example, interviewee 4 notes that “letters, memorandums and other documents sent to the counterpart agencies are written in English.”

Lastly, English is also primarily used in establishing relationships between local civil society organizations, including NNGOs, and the development agency. While there is no written requirement for the project proposals to be written solely in English, interviewee 5 noted that “all implementers [organizations of any type that are the recipients of development funding and implement a development project in the country] decide to approach the development agency with project proposals in English.”

As a consequence, while the grantees focus on mastering the language of their grant-making institutions in order to achieve success in the “donor-driven” model of development assistance, the people who are to benefit from the project remain largely left out of the process of developing concepts relevant to the local area, as well as decisions on development priorities. Instead, they remain merely recipients of project activities. Additionally, interviewee 3 stresses that “local partners, both government officials, and rural educators, have become accustomed to the use of specialized terminology related to grant application and they use it as part of their everyday activities in the workplace.”

In conclusion, English is being used as a lingua franca regardless of the national origin of the agency and across all levels of the development aid flow, especially at the level of development agencies.

Translation from English into the local language is done for direct and indirect official communication with local government institutions and sometimes for public outreach within the country. When translations are made, usually it will be to translate English into Macedonian and more recently into Albanian. Sometimes the translations from English in local languages include studies done by the development agency. Less often, official or nonofficial documents received in Macedonian or Albanian are translated into English. Interviewee 5 notes that translation into the Macedonian language is mainly the responsibility of the “implementer,” meaning any organization receiving funding and responsible for implementing the development project in the country.

Answers the respondents gave regarding translation indicated that development agencies do not have a systematic approach to translation into the local language. Sometimes translation services are provided by a translation company contracted through a tender. Consecutive translation is often used in meetings with the government authorities, both formal and nonformal, and field trips. Written translated materials are mostly of laws and bylaws. However, most development agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs “don’t have official translation practices nor a translator position” (interviewee 6) and decide to conduct translations in-house, using instead their “executive or admin assistants, technical staff or project managers on an as-needed basis” (interviewee 6 and interviewee 5).

In INGOs some of the most commonly translated documents were the training materials for civil society development in Macedonia. These were translated from English into at least two local languages (Macedonian and Albanian) and sometimes five languages (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Bosnian, and Serbian). Interviewee 2 noted that local NGO partners were not consulted or directly involved in the design of the training materials “[it] was a process imposed from the INGO, and was in an attempt to quickly disseminate knowledge.”

Although local staff draw on their own skills and local knowledge to advance development goals and activities, they have been trained and educated abroad and have developed fluency in English which influences the way they approach development. Either the translation is conducted in-house by bilingual or sometimes multilingual staff or translation agencies are engaged for the translation of large documents, usually due to time restraints.

However, the local staff of development agencies and even more so of INGOs and NNGOs are in a position to act as true mediators and promote the production of more comprehensible discursive products. For example, interviewee 5 reports that based on the staff’s personal attempts to provide translation that is comprehensible and true to the spirit of the Macedonian language, they consult translators, colleagues in the sector, language experts, as well as the beneficiaries or users themselves.

All participants in the study agreed that very often the vocabulary and terms used in the area of development in Macedonia are influenced by the dominance of the English language as *lingua franca* among organizations working in the development. Very often jargon-words related to project cycle management are directly borrowed in the Macedonian language system. In addition, the English language has penetrated deeply into newly established terminology for project management, suppressing the use of indigenous terminology and concepts. For example, words such as имплементира, имплементатори, аплицира, апликант (“implement,” “implementer,” “apply,” “applicant”) permeate the Macedonian language of development aid. Another frequently used group of words borrowed directly from English is таргет or таргетира (“target”). Although this terminology has its counterparts in the Macedonian language, the actors in the development sector have over time developed their own language.

Even more significant are examples of words that link directly to “newly introduced” concepts that require more creative translation solutions. For example, in the Republic of North Macedonia, the terms civil society and community are not familiar to the general population (Todorova, 2018). Another similar example comes from the area of “good governance” that has been literally translated in the Macedonian добро владеење. Other directly translated words include rule of law (владеење на право), open data (отворени податоци), and transparency (транспарентност) that are difficult to explain to the general population.

From the discussions with staff at development agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs, we have identified a shortage of creative translations of development-related discourse. The issue is aptly summarized by interviewee 6: “using foreign (English) terminology in the local context that has

become common practice by many CSOs ... [it] is incomprehensible and not authentic to the local population and their messages are not understandable or acceptable to a wider audience." This illegibility not only threatens to alienate the local population from the work of the NGO sector but can also ultimately contribute to severing the local/global nexus by preventing ordinary citizens from being "linked in a global dialogue" (Korten, 1998, p. 174). In addition, as Nuti (2006) points out, "democracy must find its own 'voice' wherever it unfolds. It must be rooted in the constructions and universe of meanings that animate life, and it can be sustained only if people own it" (p. 94).

Discussion

By looking at the role of translators, we can conclude that the terms related to development have been imported into developing through use of the English language, mediated in that process by the locally engaged staff of INGOs. These translators have had the unique position of acting as true mediators by means of generating innovations to the development discourse. In addition, both the local staff of NNGOs and INGOs are in a position to impose particular language solutions because of their power to control "the modes of allocation and redistribution of resources" (Olivier de Sardan, 2005, p. 174). However, "instead of creating new concepts that never existed before, or adapting existing concepts to the new realities, these 'translators' have often missed an opportunity to work as mediators and generate a series of innovations to political discourse" (Todorova, 2018, p. 363).

This situation can be mitigated by a two-step process of eliciting ownership and inclusion, namely by directly involving indigenous and grassroots actors in various stages during the translation process as well as by enhancing sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural context of the host locale. Interviewee 1 proposes that the issues can largely be overcome by engaging professionals from various fields, as well as language specialists, to take part in the translation and adaptation of certain terminology in order for it to be understandable to the local, indigenous population.

One such instance was described by interviewee 6 when the Institute for Macedonian Language was consulted in order to determine the best translation for the word competence. However, even in this case the outcome was the direct borrowing of the word into the Macedonian language, компетенција, which was approved by the institute. Yet, as a new word, it will still need further explanation of its meaning to the general population. Interviewee 5 suggests that "with the use of these [new] terms in the strategic communication, through media, social networks and used by influences in the area of interest, the word becomes 'domestic.'"

The same happens in schools where the terminology spills into the education system and permeates the local languages. Interviewee 5 concludes that English is not only supplementing the local language in terms of development-related discourse but is increasingly becoming most widely used, especially among young people: "For the past decade, English has been taught in school all over Macedonia since grade 1 [which is from age 6]. This, along with exposure to English

via social media, make it a very popular language among the younger generation. Young people are sometimes more familiar with the English terms than the Macedonian.”

Additionally, there is a need for more translations from the local languages into English. Interviewee 4 stresses that “translated materials from the local languages into English help the product, knowledge, and findings generated from the civil society [organizations] to become accessible to the wider audience. Translation helps possibilities for more international cooperation as well as the improvement of the products.”

Finally, the local, bilingual or multilingual, staff of development agencies, as well as INGOs and NNGOs, is one of the most important agents in the process of transfer of concepts and ideas. In his work on anthropology and development, mainly focusing on Africa, Olivier de Sardan (2005) recognizes NGOs as development agents and provides a classification of “development brokers” and “brokerage networks” (pp. 173–175). He also points out that one of the crucial skills of the “development brokers” is their “rhetorical competencies, that is to say the ability to speak the language that development institutions and donors expect” (p. 174).

However, he does not include the locally engaged staff working for development agencies and INGOs in this process. Our position is that it is exactly the locally engaged staff of these development agencies and INGOs, in addition to the staff at the NNGOs, that is key to presenting the new ideas and new vocabulary relating to community practices. The locally employed staff of development agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs is fluent in English as well as at least one (and sometimes two or three) of the local languages used in the country. These locally engaged staff members are not only the “intermediaries” between the foreign concepts and ideas and the local beneficiaries but also in a position to act as mediators, enabling the traveling of ideas of development and their absorption by various local actors.

The key difference between an intermediary and a mediator, according to Latour, is that an intermediary “transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs,” while mediators, “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” (Latour, 2005, p. 39). Furthermore, it is largely the actions of the locally engaged staff that facilitate the traveling of ideas and concepts about development from one particular social and political context into another. Unfortunately, their role in this critical process remains largely unacknowledged.

Conclusion

The study of development is complex, and language is at the very center of it. We would like to acknowledge that the case study presented here is limited by its small sample size that can only provide a limited window onto a wider and complex situation that has been changing since 2000. Still, it gives an idea of some of the language issues connected to the development sector. In particular, the dominance of anglophone models, concepts, and terminology in the field of development, along with the lack of historical precedence of such models in developing countries, has resulted in the export of jargon-specific language related to development. The anglophone

import of development-related language in developing countries is evident in the language used by NNGOs and other local NGOs, created through translation by the local staff of the terms used by INGOs (Todorova, 2018). Thus, the language of development in countries outside of the anglophone world is primarily used to communicate with and to be understood by the development agencies and INGOs, with resulting unintelligibility for the local general population.

While the grantees focus on mastering the language of their grant-making institutions in order to achieve success in the “donor-driven” model of development assistance, the grassroots actors remain largely left out of the process of localization of development concepts and ideas. Thus, more research is needed to support the efforts to truly facilitate the traveling of the idea of development, in particular through direct involvement of local experts from various fields, including language experts, who can facilitate mediation by providing translations from the locally used languages into English. In addition, greater sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural context of the host locale could motivate local staff to develop creative language solutions and would enable NNGOs to provide better accessibility to their policy documents and practices to the local communities involved. As Chibamba (2018, p. 313) notes, “[t]he most important consideration in the communicative process is not how much the target text adheres to the source text but rather how the message is designed and packaged for a specific audience and how it is received.”

Of course, future research is needed to shed light on an additional aspect that further complicates these issues, namely the fact that many developing countries are multilingual. The processes of democratization and development in these ethnically heterogeneous societies have encountered specific problems, resulting in limited sustainability for development, which is still largely centered on intellectual elites. To ensure proper dissemination and absorption of development concepts, different grassroots actors from various local sites need to be involved in the process. In short, we hope that the study presented herein will allow development studies scholars to benefit from cross-pollination with the field of translation studies and, in particular, social and activist approaches to translation, with language being used as a tool for transformation and change (Baker & Saldanha, 2011, p. xxi), for as Mazrui (2016) argues, “the task of translation must be treated as an integral part of linguistic development initiatives” (p. 167).

Acknowledgments

The first author would like to thank the interviewees for making this chapter possible by kindly agreeing to share their ideas and observations.

The second author would like to acknowledge the support of the Research Center for Professional Communication in English and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Start-Up Fund (I-ZE8V).

References

- Ahrens, K., & Say, A. L. T. (1999). Mapping image-schemas and translating metaphor. In J.-F. Wang & C.-H. Wu (Eds.), *Proceedings of 13th Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation* (pp. 95–102). Tainan City, Taiwan: National Cheng Kung University.
- Anderson, M., Brown, D., & Jean, I. (2012). *Time to listen: Hearing people on the receiving end of international aid*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.
- Angelelli, C. V. (Ed.). (2014). *The sociological turn in translation and interpreting studies*. London, England: John Benjamins.
- Baker, M., & Saldanha, G. (Eds.). (2011). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. London, England: Routledge.
- Banerjee, S. B. (2003). Who sustains whose development? Sustainable development and the reinvention of nature. *Organization Studies*, 24(1), 143–180.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power* (G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Buzelin, H. (2005). Unexpected allies: How Latour's network theory could complement Bourdieusian analyses in translation studies. *The Translator*, 11(2), 193–218.
- Buzelin, H. (2007). Translations "in the making." In M. Wolf & A. Fukari (Eds.), *Constructing a sociology of translation* (pp. 135–169). London, England: John Benjamins.
- Chibamba, M. (2018). Translation and communication for development: The case of a health campaign in Zambia. *The Translator*, 24(4), 301–317.
- Clemens, M. A., Radelet, S., & Bhavnani, R. (2004). *Counting chickens when they hatch: The short-term effect of aid on growth*. Working Paper 44. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Cornwall, A. (2007). Buzzwords and fuzzwords: Deconstructing development discourse. *Development in Practice*, 17, 471–484.
- Cornwall, A., & Eade, D. (Eds.). (2010). *Deconstructing development discourse: Buzzwords and fuzzwords*. Rugby, England: Practical Action Publishing.
- Crack, A. M. (2019). Language, NGOs and inclusion: The donor perspective. *Development in Practice*, 29(2), 159–169.
- Crush, J. C. (1995). Imagining development. In J. C. Crush (Ed.), *Power of development* (pp. 1–23). London, England: Routledge.
- Czarniawska, B., & Sevón, G. (Eds.). (2005). *Global ideas: How ideas, objects and practices travel in the global economy*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Liber.

Delgado Luchner, C. (2018). Contact zones of the aid chain: The multilingual practices of two Swiss development NGOs. *Translation Spaces*, 7(1), 44–64.

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the third world*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Footitt, H. (2017). International aid and development: Hearing multilingualism, learning from intercultural encounters in the history of OxfamGB. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 17(4), 518–533.

Heilbron, J. (2010). Towards a sociology of translation: Book translations as a cultural world system. In M. Baker (Ed.), *Critical readings in translation studies* (pp. 304–316). London, England: Routledge.

Jones, F. (2009). Embassy networks: Translating post-war Bosnian poetry into English. In J. Milton & P. Bandia (Eds.), *Agents of translation* (pp. 301–325). Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Korten, C. D. (1998). *Globalizing civil society: Reclaiming our right to power*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.

Korten, D., & Klauss, R. (Eds.). (1984). *People-centered development*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Koskinen, K. (2008). *Translating institutions: An ethnographic study of EU translation*. Manchester, England: St. Jerome.

Kövacs, Z. (2014). Conceptual metaphor theory and the nature of difficulties in metaphor translation. In D. R. Miller & E. Monti (Eds.), *Tradurre figure: Translating figurative language* (pp. 25–40). Bologna, Italy: Quaderni Del CESLIC.

Kung, S. C. (2009). Translation agents and networks, with reference to the translation of contemporary Taiwanese novels. In A. Pym & A. Perekrestenko (Eds.), *Translation research projects 2* (pp. 123–138). Tarragona, Spain: Intercultural Studies Group. Retrieved from <https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/11350>

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network theory*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, D. (2005) *Anthropology and development: The uneasy relationship*. In J. G. Carrier (Ed.), *A handbook of economic anthropology* (pp. 472–486). Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar.

Madon, S. (1999). International NGOs: Networking, information flows and learning. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 8(3), 251–261.

Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2013). *Localizing development: Does participation work?* Washington, DC: World Bank.

- Marais, K. (2013). Exploring a conceptual space for studying translation and development. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 31(3), 403–414.
- Marais, K. (2014). *Translation theory and development studies: A complexity theory approach*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Marais, K. (2018a) Introduction: translation and development, *The Translator*, 24(4), 295– 300, doi:10.1080/13556509.2019.1602306
- Marais, K. (2018b). Translation and development. In J. Evans & F. Fernandez (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and politics* (pp. 95–109). London, England: Routledge.
- Marais, K., & Delgado Luchner, C. (2018). Motivating the translation development nexus: Exploring cases from the African continent. *The Translator*, 24(4), 380–394.
- Mazrui, A. M. (2016). *Cultural politics of translation: East Africa in a global context*. London, England: Routledge.
- Mikkelsen, B. (2005). *Methods for development work and research: A new guide for practitioners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Mosse, D. (2005). *Cultivating development. An ethnography of aid policy and practice*. London, England: Pluto Press.
- Nuti, P. (2006). Toward reflective practice: Understanding and negotiating democracy in Macedonia. In K. Brown (Ed.), *Transacting transition: The micropolitics of democracy assistance in the former Yugoslavia* (pp. 69–94). Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Olivier De Sardan, J.-P. (2005). *Anthropology and development: Understanding contemporary social change* (A. Tidjani Alou, Trans.). London, England: Zed Books.
- Romaine, S. (2013). Keeping the promise of the Millennium Development Goals: Why language matters. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 4(1), 1–21.
- Roth, S. (2019). Linguistic capital and inequality in aid relations. *Sociological Research Online*, 24(1), 38–54.
- Sanz Martins, A. (2018). Development in so many words: The Oxfam GB experience. *Translation Spaces*, 7(1), 106–118.
- Schäffner, C. (2001). Translation and the EU: Conditions and consequences. *Perspectives*, 9(4), 247–261.
- Schäffner, C., Tcaciuc, L. S., & Tesseur, W. (2014). Translation practices in political institutions: A comparison of national, supranational, and non-governmental organisations. *Perspectives*, 22(4), 493–510.

Tcaciuc, L. S., & Mackevic, V. (2017). Translators' agency in translating economic metaphors in European Union institutions: The case of the European Central Bank. *Perspectives*, 25(3), 417–433.

Tesseur, W. (2014). Institutional multilingualism in NGOs: Amnesty International's strategic understanding of multilingualism. *Meta*, 59(3), 557–577.

Tesseur, W. (2017). Incorporating translation into sociolinguistic research: Translation policy in an international non-governmental organization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 21(5), 629–649.

Tesseur, W. (2018). Researching translation and interpreting in non-governmental organisations. *Translation Spaces*, 7(1), 1–19.

Todorova, M. (2018). Civil society in translation: Innovations to political discourse in southeast Europe. *The Translator*, 24(4), 353–366.

Tosi, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Crossing barriers and bridging cultures: The challenges of multilingual translation for the European Union*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Tymoczko, M. (2007). *Enlarging translation, empowering translators*. Manchester, England: St. Jerome.

Wolf, M. (2012). The sociology of translation and its “activist turn.” *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 7(2), 129–143.

World Bank. (2014). *Macedonia, former Yugoslav Republic of—Country partnership strategy for the period FY2015-18* (English). Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/870671468053680320/Macedonia-former-Yugoslav-Republic-of-Country-partnership-strategy-for-the-period-FY2015-18>

World Bank. (2019). *The World Bank in north Macedonia: Country snapshot*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. Retrieved from <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/828941555084923681/North-Macedonia-Snapshot-Apr2019.pdf>

Further Reading

Marais, K. (Ed.). (2018). *Translation and development* [Special issue]. *The Translator*, 24(4).

The six articles included in this special issue of *The Translator* approach development and translation from a grassroots perspective, using a range of theoretical and methodological approaches and covering four different continents.

Pieterse, J. N. (2010). *Development theory: Deconstructions/reconstructions* (2nd ed.). London, England: Sage.

This book provides an overview of the evolution of ideas and theories related to development studies and suggests new ideas with relation to development thinking. The author also provides his views on the future of development and globalization.

Tesseur, W. (Ed.). (2018). Translation and interpreting in non-governmental organisations [Special issue]. *Translation Spaces*, 7(1).

The authors of this special issue of *Translation Spaces* look at the intersection of international organization and their use of translation to bring development and humanitarian aid to the developing countries.

Notes:

(1.) <https://www.usaid.gov/macedonia/fact-sheets/civic-engagement-project>

(2.) USAID, <https://www.usaid.gov/selfreliance>