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**Special Issue Editorial: ‘Community Voices: Perspectives in  
public service translation’**

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## **Special Issue Editorial**

### *Community Voices: Perspectives in public service translation*

‘Public service translation’ (also known as ‘community translation’) is emerging as an important, distinct subfield in Translation Studies. Its focus on the translation of texts produced by public services for the benefit of speakers of less-established languages makes it a particularly relevant research area in today’s globalizing world. Given the increasing movement of people across the globe and the need for service providers (healthcare centres, police, local administration) to have suitable and pertinent communication strategies in order to engage speakers of less-established languages, community translation is a dynamic and fast growing research (and pedagogical) area.

This reality was acknowledged at the conference titled *Translating Cultures: Translation as a Tool for Inclusion/Exclusion in a Multicultural Society*, held in June 2014 at the University of Westminster, London. The conference attracted 15 high-calibre speakers from across the world, allowing both paper presentations and round table discussions with audience input. The call for papers for the current *New Voices in Translation* special issue saw conference papers complemented by other relevant entries in order to create an in-depth analysis showcasing some of the most interesting and relevant research currently taking place in public service translation.

Public service translation is a young research field, with increasing recognition. Mustapha Taibi’s definition and description of public service translation in the 2011 edition of *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* has helped establish the initial contours of the research area. These contours are being further refined and redefined by subsequent articles, and the present special issue offers a variety of academic and professional perspectives that illustrate the complexity of the research field. In this introduction I would like to acknowledge three of the dimensions that contribute to this complexity. First, in some contexts, what public service literature can be translated and into which languages is a political decision that has to do more with how the host state defines itself, rather than with offering access to services. Second, as Taibi acknowledges, due to its focus on the audience, public service translation shares attributes with both professional translation and public service interpreting. Third, if the role of community translation is to provide access to necessary information, should translation into dialects be considered? These are just some of

the questions that were raised during the 2014 *Translating Cultures: Translation as a Tool for Inclusion/Exclusion in a Multicultural Society* conference. Some of them find an answer in the pages of this special issue, while others are themes for further research.

Community translation is of truly global concern as demonstrated by this special issue which brings together articles authored by scholars from various countries across the globe. The 2014 conference and the subsequent call for papers also demonstrated the global interest in the topic. Beyond the geographical spread, the articles collected here reflect the multifaceted nature of the research area as well as its multidisciplinarity. **Alice Leal** from the University of Vienna, Austria focusses on the European Union as a translation context and her research addresses a number of issues that combine community translation and multilingualism.

**Daniele Orlando** from the University of Trieste, Italy brings the human rights agenda to the forefront while focussing on translation of legal texts in criminal proceedings. An illustrative example of what can go wrong when public service legal translation is not done properly is presented by **Svetlana Vlasenko** from the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia. The role of mediators who interpret and translate for speakers of less-established languages in a medical context is explored by **Carmen Pena** from the University of Alcalá, Spain. A second article that focused on community translation in a medical context in Spain, this time with a focus on the role and success of health care videos for speakers of less-established languages, is presented by **Raquel Lázaro Gutiérrez** also from the University of Alcalá. The policy aspect of community translation in California is explored by **María Sierra Córdoba Serrano** from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, United States. **Zhiwei Wu** from the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China proposes a route to the professionalization of the role of public service translator in a Chinese context. Finally, the special issue editor, **Daniel Tomozeiu** from the University of Westminster, United Kingdom, provides an analysis of the audience in community translation.

These different facets complement each other and define a fascinating, and still emerging, research field. The current special issue aims to contribute to this field and to showcase its importance in order to motivate and inspire other researchers. As I write this introductory note, the “migrant crisis in Europe” is making headlines in news outlets across the globe. This latest movement of people, who, in most cases, will become speakers of less-established languages in their new countries, demonstrates the urgency of this research field.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of Westminster and the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures for supporting the 2014 *Translating Cultures: Translation as a Tool for Inclusion/Exclusion in a Multicultural Society* conference. The reviewers, and their work with the authors in order to improve the articles, has made this special issue possible. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of *New Voices in Translation Studies* for hosting this special issue and, especially during a time of major changes to the Editorial Team, for steering it through to publication.

**Guest Editor:**

Daniel Tomozeiu (University of Westminster)

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