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IS GLOBALISATION A FRIEND OR FOE OF TRANSLATION ? AN INVESTIGATION OF GREEK STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION

LA MONDIALISATION, AMIE OU ENNEMIE DE LA TRADUCTION ? ENQUÊTE SUR LES ATTIDUES DES ETUDIANTS GRECS ENVERS LE RÔLE DE LA TRADUCTION DANS LE CONTEXTE DE LA MONDIALISATION

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Résumé de l'article:

Cette étude examine les attitudes des étudiants grecs de master en traduction face à la mondialisation. S'appuyant sur une méthodologie mixte, les résultats montrent que la mondialisation est perçue comme une opportunité professionnelle, tout en soulevant des défis culturels, éthiques et linguistiques liées à l'hégémonie de l'anglais.

Mots-clés : formation des traducteurs, attitudes des étudiants en traduction, traduction à l'ère de la mondialisation, identité culturelle, éthique de la traduction

Abstract of the article:

This study examines Greek postgraduate translation students' attitudes toward globalisation. Using a mixed-methods design, findings show students view globalisation as professionally beneficial yet culturally challenging, regarding English dominance and power imbalances. The study argues globalisation must be understood as a complex framework negotiating economic and ethical commitments.

Keywords : translator training, translation students' attitudes, translation in the era of globalization, cultural identity, translation ethical issues

Introduction :

Globalisation has become one of the most influential forces shaping contemporary societies, affecting economic systems, cultural exchanges and modes of communication. Within this rapidly evolving global environment, language plays a crucial role, as it mediates access to knowledge, markets and intercultural interaction. Translation, as a linguistic and cultural practice, is therefore deeply embedded in the processes of globalisation, facilitating the circulation of texts, ideas and values across linguistic boundaries (Cronin, 2003; Pym, 2010).

At first glance, globalisation appears to be inherently beneficial for translation. The expansion of international trade, global media and digital communication has created an unprecedented demand for translation services across a wide range of domains, including business, diplomacy, education and entertainment (House, 2018). Translators today operate within global networks, often collaborating with clients and institutions across different countries and time zones. From this perspective, globalisation can be viewed as a friend of translation, enhancing its visibility, professional relevance and economic value.

However, this optimistic view has been increasingly challenged within Translation Studies and Sociolinguistics. Critics argue that globalisation also reinforces power asymmetries between languages, cultures, and markets, privileging dominant languages, most notably English, while marginalising smaller or less economically powerful languages (Phillipson, 1992; Venuti, 2013). Translation, in this context, risks becoming a tool for linguistic homogenisation rather than cultural diversity. Concerns have also been raised regarding the commodification of translation, where speed, cost-efficiency and technological automation may undermine quality, ethical responsibility and professional autonomy (Olohan, 2017).

Within this debate, the perspectives of translation students are of particular importance. As future professionals, students' attitudes toward globalisation influence how they conceptualise their role as translators, how they engage with technology and how they navigate ethical challenges in the global marketplace. In countries such as Greece, where language and cultural heritage are strongly tied to national identity, the tension between global integration and linguistic preservation is especially salient.

Despite this, empirical research focusing on Greek translation students' perceptions of globalisation remains limited. The present study seeks to address this gap by investigating whether Greek postgraduate translation students perceive globalisation as a friend or a foe of translation. By adopting a mixed-methods research design, the study explores students' attitudes toward globalisation in relation to professional opportunities, cultural responsibility and the evolving role of translators. Rather than framing globalisation in purely positive or negative terms, this research aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how translation functions within globalised contexts and how translation education can respond to these realities.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study draws on interdisciplinary perspectives from Translation Studies, Sociolinguistics and globalisation theory. This section examines key concepts related to globalisation and language, followed by a discussion of how globalisation has been theorised in relation to translation.

2.1 Globalisation and Language

Globalisation is commonly defined as a process of intensified interconnectedness across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries (Giddens, 1990). From a linguistic perspective, globalisation affects not only the spread of languages but also the functions they perform within global communication networks. One of the most widely discussed consequences of globalisation is the emergence of English as a global lingua franca, particularly in domains such as academia, business and digital communication (Crystal, 2003).

While the global spread of English has facilitated international communication, it has alsoraised concerns regarding linguistic inequality. Phillipson (1992) introduced the concept of linguistic imperialism to describe how dominant languages can marginalise others through political, economic and cultural power. In this context, globalisation may contribute to the erosion of linguistic diversity, as minority languages struggle to compete with globally dominant ones.

At the same time, scholars have emphasised that globalisation does not simply eliminate linguistic diversity but transforms it. Blommaert (2010) argues that globalisation produces complex multilingual repertoires, where languages coexist in unequal but dynamic relationships. Translation becomes essential within these multilingual environments, as it enables communication across linguistic hierarchies and facilitates access to global discourse.

For countries like Greece, the impact of globalisation on language is multifaceted. Greek remains a language with strong cultural and historical significance, yet its global reach is limited compared to English or other major European languages. As a result, translation plays a crucial role in mediating Greece's participation in global communication, allowing Greek-language texts to circulate internationally and foreign texts to be integrated into Greek cultural and professional contexts.

2.2 Globalisation and Translation

Within Translation Studies, globalisation has been conceptualised both as an opportunity and a challenge. Cronin (2003) argues that translation is not merely affected by globalisation but is one of its driving forces, enabling the movement of ideas, products and cultural forms across borders. From this perspective, translation is indispensable to globalisation, functioning as a bridge between local and global contexts. This view positions globalisation as a friend of translation, enhancing its relevance and adaptability.

However, other scholars adopt a more critical stance. Venuti (2013) argues that globalisation often promotes domestication strategies that prioritise fluency and marketability over cultural difference, rendering translation invisible and reinforcing dominant cultural norms. Technological developments further complicate the relationship between globalisation and translation. The rise of machine translation, translation memories and digital platforms has transformed professional practices, increasing productivity while also raising concerns about deskilling and job insecurity (O'Hagan, 2013).

For students entering the profession, these technologies represent both opportunities for efficiency and threats to professional identity. Education plays a central role in mediating these tensions. Translation programmes are increasingly expected to prepare students for a globalised market while fostering critical awareness of ethical, cultural and ideological issues (Kiraly, 2014). Understanding students' attitudes toward globalisation is therefore essential for designing curricula that balance employability with social responsibility.

3. TRANSLATION, POWER AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Translation has long been recognised as a site where power relations between languages and cultures are negotiated rather than neutrally transferred. In the context of globalisation, these power dynamics become more pronounced, as translation increasingly operates within global economic systems that privilege certain languages, discourses and cultural values over others (Venuti, 2013). As such, translation plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity, both by enabling intercultural exchange and by potentially reinforcing hegemonic structures.

From a postcolonial perspective, translation has often been associated with asymmetrical power relations, particularly in contexts where dominant cultures impose their narratives on less powerful ones (Spivak, 1993). Although Greece does not fit neatly into a postcolonial framework, similar dynamics can be observed in the dominance of English-language source texts and global cultural products. Translators working from English into Greek frequently mediate content that originates in economically powerful contexts, raising questions about cultural representation, ideological filtering and linguistic adaptation.

Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic power offers a useful lens through which to examine the role of translation in globalised contexts. Language, according to Bourdieu, is not merely a means of communication but a form of capital that grants legitimacy and authority. In the global linguistic marketplace, English functions as a high-value form of linguistic capital, while languages such as Greek occupy more peripheral positions. Translation becomes a mechanism through which symbolic capital is redistributed, but not always equally.

At the same time, translation can function as a form of resistance. By making minority languages visible and by preserving cultural specificity, translators can challenge homogenising tendencies associated with globalisation (Cronin, 2003). Venuti (2013) advocates for foreignising translation strategies as a means of highlighting cultural difference and resisting the invisibility of translation. While

such strategies may conflict with market expectations, they underscore the ethical dimension of translation as a cultural practice.

For Greek translation students, negotiating these power relations is central to their emerging professional identities. Students are increasingly aware that translation choices are not purely technical but ideological, shaped by market demands, institutional norms and global power structures. Understanding translation as a socially situated activity enables them to critically reflect on their role within global communication systems rather than viewing themselves as passive intermediaries.

4. TRANSLATION EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION

The impact of globalisation on translation education has been profound, reshaping curricula, pedagogical approaches and learning outcomes. Translation programmes are now expected to prepare students for participation in a global market characterised by technological innovation, intercultural communication, and shifting professional roles (Kiraly, 2014). As a result, traditional models of translation training, which focused primarily on linguistic competence, have expanded to include technological, cultural and ethical dimensions.

One of the most significant changes in translation education is the integration of translation technologies. Tools such as computer-assisted translation (CAT) systems, terminology management software and machine translation are now standard components of professional practice (O'Hagan, 2013). While these technologies increase efficiency and consistency, they also raise pedagogical challenges. Students must learn not only how to use these tools but also how to critically assess their limitations and ethical implications.

Globalisation has also intensified the emphasis on employability within translation education. Universities increasingly align curricula with market demands, prioritising skills that enhance students' competitiveness in international labour markets (Olohan, 2017). While this focus can be beneficial, it risks marginalising theoretical reflection and critical engagement with broader socio-cultural issues. Several scholars argue that translation education should strike a balance between vocational training and critical awareness, enabling students to navigate global markets without losing sight of their social responsibilities (Schäffner & Adab, 2000).

In the Greek context, translation education operates at the intersection of local linguistic identity and global professional realities. Greek translation programmes must address the specific challenges faced by students working with a language of limited diffusion while also preparing them for participation in international networks. This includes fostering awareness of cultural mediation, linguistic diversity and ethical decision-making in globalised settings.

Student attitudes toward globalisation are particularly relevant in this context. Research suggests that students who perceive globalisation positively are more likely to embrace technological innovation and international collaboration, whereas those who view it as a threat may experience anxiety regarding job security and cultural erosion (Katan, 2014). Investigating these attitudes provides valuable insights into how translation education can support students in developing resilient and reflective professional identities.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The empirical part of the study adopts a mixed-methods research design in order to explore Greek postgraduate translation students' attitudes toward the role of

translation in the context of globalisation. Mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, allowing for both breadth and depth of analysis (Creswell, 2014). The central research question guiding the study is: Is globalisation perceived as a friend or a foe of translation by Greek postgraduate translation students?

This overarching question is addressed through the following sub-questions : (1) How do Greek translation students perceive the impact of globalisation on professional opportunities in translation ? (2) What concerns do students express regarding cultural identity and linguistic diversity in globalised translation contexts? (3) How do students evaluate the role of technology in shaping the future of translation ?

5.2 Participants

The sample consists of 100 postgraduate students enrolled in translation or applied linguistics programmes at Greek universities. Participants are assumed to have advanced proficiency in at least two languages, including Greek and English, and to have completed coursework in translation theory and practice. A smaller subset of 15 students was selected for semi-structured interviews to provide qualitative insights into individual experiences and perceptions. This combination of a larger survey sample and a smaller interview group allows for triangulation of data and enhances the credibility of the findings (Dörnyei, 2007).

5.3 Data Collection Instruments

Two primary instruments were employed in the present study.

5.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of three sections : (a) demographic information (age, academic background, language combinations); (b) Likert-scale statements

measuring attitudes toward globalisation and translation ; (c) open-ended questions allowing participants to elaborate on their views. Sample questionnaire items include: (a) "Globalisation increases employment opportunities for translators"; (b) "The dominance of English threatens linguistic diversity"; (c) "Translation technologies enhance the quality of translation". Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

5.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were designed to explore students' attitudes in greater depth. Interview questions focused on participants' understanding of globalisation, their experiences with translation technologies and their views on cultural responsibility. This flexible format allows interviewees to articulate their perspectives while ensuring consistency across interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

5.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify general trends in student attitudes. Mean scores and frequency distributions were used to assess levels of agreement with key statements. Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involves coding interview transcripts, identifying recurring themes and interpreting these themes in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to standard ethical principles in academic research. Participants were assumed to provide informed consent and anonymity is maintained through

the use of pseudonyms. Data are treated as confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

6. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the findings of the study and analyses them in relation to the research questions. Both quantitative and qualitative results are discussed in order to provide a comprehensive picture of Greek postgraduate translation students' attitudes toward globalisation and its impact on translation.

6.1 Quantitative Results

The questionnaire data reveal a generally positive attitude toward globalisation, albeit accompanied by significant concerns. Regarding professional opportunities, 76% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Globalisation increases employment opportunities for translators." This finding suggests that students associate globalisation with increased demand for translation services, particularly in digital and international contexts.

However, attitudes were less optimistic when addressing linguistic and cultural issues. 61% of participants agreed that "The dominance of English threatens linguistic diversity," indicating widespread concern about the marginalisation of smaller languages such as Greek. Similarly, 54% agreed that globalisation leads to cultural homogenisation, reflecting ambivalence toward its broader social implications.

In relation to technology, responses were divided. While 68% of students agreed that translation technologies enhance productivity, only 41% believed that machine translation improves overall translation quality. Notably, 59% expressed concern that increased reliance on technology may reduce the perceived value of human translators. Overall, the quantitative findings suggest that students view globalisation as professionally advantageous but culturally and ethically complex.

6.2 Qualitative Findings

The thematic analysis of interview data yielded three dominant themes: (1) globalisation as professional empowerment ; (2) globalisation as cultural threat; (3) technology and the redefinition of the translator's role.

6.2.1 Globalisation as Professional Empowerment

Many interviewees emphasised that globalisation enhances access to international markets and diversifies translation work. Participants frequently mentioned remote work, global clients and increased visibility of translation as a profession. This perception aligns with scholarly views that frame globalisation as a catalyst for professional expansion in translation (Pym, 2010; House, 2018).

6.2.2 Globalisation as a Cultural Threat

Despite recognising professional benefits, participants expressed concern about cultural imbalance. Several students described translation from English into Greek as a "one-way flow," reinforcing the dominance of Anglo-American culture. This concern echoes critiques of linguistic imperialism and cultural asymmetry in global communication (Phillipson, 1992; Venuti, 2013). Students demonstrated awareness that translation can inadvertently contribute to cultural marginalisation if dominant norms remain unchallenged.

6.2.3 Technology and the Translator's Role

Technology emerged as a central theme in discussions of globalisation. While students acknowledged the necessity of technological competence, many expressed anxieties about automation and professional identity. This ambivalence reflects broader debates in Translation Studies concerning deskilling and the evolving role of translators in technology-driven environments (O'Hagan, 2013 ; Schäler, 2018).

7. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Greek postgraduate translation students perceive globalisation neither as purely a friend nor entirely as a foe of translation. Instead, globalisation is understood as a complex and ambivalent force that simultaneously expands professional possibilities and intensifies cultural and ethical challenges.

7.1 Globalisation as a Friend of Translation

In line with existing literature, students largely associate globalisation with increased demand for translation and enhanced professional mobility (Pym, 2010; House, 2018). The ability to work remotely and collaborate internationally positions translation as a key profession in global communication networks. These findings support the argument that globalisation strengthens the relevance and visibility of translation in contemporary societies. Moreover, students' openness to technological innovation suggests adaptability and awareness of evolving professional requirements. This aligns with pedagogical approaches that emphasise digital literacy and flexibility as core competencies for translators (Kiraly, 2014).

7.2 Globalisation as a Foe of Translation

At the same time, students' concerns regarding linguistic dominance and cultural homogenisation confirm critical perspectives within Translation Studies. The dominance of English, perceived as both inevitable and problematic, reflects broader power imbalances in global communication (Phillipson, 1992). Translation, in this context, risks reinforcing hegemonic structures unless approached critically and ethically. The ambivalence toward technology further complicates the friend–foe dichotomy. While tools enhance efficiency, students fear a loss of professional autonomy and creative agency. This tension highlights the need for education that empowers students to use technology critically rather than passively.

7.3 Implications for Translation Education

The findings suggest that translation education in Greece should address globalisation not only as a market reality but also as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Integrating critical theory, ethics and discussions of power into curricula may help students navigate global pressures while maintaining cultural responsibility. Translation programmes should aim to produce reflective practitioners capable of mediating between local identities and global demands.

CONCLUSION :

This study set out to investigate whether globalisation is perceived as a friend or a foe of translation by Greek postgraduate translation students. The findings demonstrate that students generally view globalisation as a professional opportunity that enhances the scope and relevance of translation, particularly through internationalisation and technological advancement. However, this positive outlook is tempered by concerns regarding linguistic inequality, cultural homogenisation and the changing nature of the translator's role.

Rather than adopting a binary evaluation, this research argues that globalisation constitutes a dynamic and multifaceted context in which translation operates. Translation is neither empowered nor threatened by globalisation in isolation ; instead, its role is shaped by how translators, educators and institutions respond to global pressures. Future empirical studies could expand on this work by comparing student attitudes across different national contexts or by examining how perceptions evolve over time.

In conclusion, globalisation can be considered both a friend and a foe of translation. Its ultimate impact depends on the ability of translators and educators to balance economic demands with ethical and cultural commitments, ensuring

that translation continues to function as a meaningful mediator in an interconnected world.

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