Investigating Information Literacy: A Growing Priority in Translation Studies

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Information literacy has been implicitly recognized as a key aspect of translation competence in various theoretical models of translation competence (e.g. Göpferich 2008; PACTE 2008; Risku 1998). However, researchers have only recently begun to systematically examine information behaviour in the translation processes of students and professionals to determine how information literacy develops (e.g. White et al. 2008). The questions of how and whether translators use the multitude of electronic and non-electronic resources at their disposal and of how novices and professionals differ in this regard remain to be investigated in detail. The multi-method approach that we use to analyse translation competence and information behaviour combines data from ethnographic observation of the translation situation, surveys and semi-structured interviews to determine self-reported practices, keystroke logging, screenshot recordings of everything that happens on the computer screen, cue-based retrospective verbalizations of recorded translation processes as well as additional techniques such as eye-tracking. This combination of techniques in our approach opens a window onto the mind of translators and releases hidden expert knowledge, allowing inferences to be made about the practices and strategies that guide translation processes, considerations translators might make, and the awareness translators have of what they are doing.

The diverse aspects of translation processes we capture as students and professionals translate and revise their texts allow us to gain insight into their information literacy by triangulating the data from observation, self-report, and computer recordings (cf. Ehrensberger-Dow & Massey 2008). We will report on the results of two small studies using these techniques that suggest that professionals can profit from the media competence of less experienced translators but that media-savvy students still have things to learn from professional practice about information literacy. This type of research can contribute not only to understanding the development of translation competence but also to improving the teaching of information literacy (cf. Massey et al. 2008; Podhajecka 2006). Because we assume that translation competence is never complete, we will also present a learning portal that is being developed to prepare students and professional translators to cope with the changing information demands of the knowledge age.
References:


